



*Kalakbay*

CHARTING THE COURSE TOWARDS RESILIENCE AND INCLUSION





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# *Contents*

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Chapter 1 PAG USWAG: Striving to be Visible</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Chapter 2 KAUPOD Hand-in-Hand, Journeying Together</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Chapter 3 KAMABASKUG: Weathering the Storm</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Stories of Change</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Chapter 4 Standing Up for Inclusion</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>58</i>



# Introduction

The journey for the rights and welfare of persons with disability is a long and tortuous journey. It is not a straight path nor a smooth one, rather, it is stony, uphill, with its own ups and downs. There are significant thorny and unpaved parts, that represent the many paths that are still less traveled.

The progress and milestones in the global and national policy frameworks is a cause to celebrate including the convention on the rights of persons with disability. Said framework documents capture the significance that persons with disabilities play in society including in disasters and development. They serve as hallmarks in the journey for visibility of persons with disability.

Having a positive policy environment provides the opportunity and space for persons with disability to be visible and recognized, highlighting their significance and value in all spheres of society not only in the country today but at the global level as well. These are important actions that make persons with disability visible, heard and accounted for. They are persons 'who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments (including visual, speech and hearing impairments), which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'. Accounting for 15% of the global population, they are a significant force that requires recognition and participation as they could contribute a lot to society. How a society values and treats persons with disability is a mirror of that society.

The different stories contained in this book is a testament of the many triumphs and hard efforts of many people in the journey with persons with disabilities.

Standing up for inclusion is the most significant challenge that leaders and champions among persons with disabilities face today even from among advocates. It is a long way to go. Considering the different inherent and acquired challenges by persons with disabilities, it is difficult to identify leaders and champions that could represent the whole streams and nature of persons with disabilities. Such situation hinders and diminishes the faster way for persons with disability to achieve their destination. As fellow advocates and stakeholders for persons with disabilities, it is our task and responsibility to bridge and facilitate the filling up of such gap.

There are beacon lights in the journey, and it provides inspiration and encouragement in the journey for the long haul. There are also small and big successes and victories at varying levels and it serves to keep the passion in our hearts and to lift our spirit up.

There is no other way but to proceed with the journey. And there is no turning back. We may be surprised that lots of people are joining and accompanying us, all over the country and all over the world. Padayon!

**Ms. Loreine Dela Cruz**

*Executive Director*

Center for Disaster Preparedness Foundation, Inc.





**PROJECT ELEVATE: MARIG-ON ESTEHANON!**  
Building Community Resilience and Preparedness for Effective  
Disaster Prevention and Response: All of Society Twin Approach

## **Community Risk Assessment Barangay-level Worksop**

Balangiga, Eastern Samar

Funded and supported by:







# Chapter 1

## *PAG USWAG: Striving to be Visible*

This chapter provides us a picture of what it means to be a person with disability in the Philippines and beyond. It also describes the global, regional, and national policies that support and advocate for Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DiDRR).

### A BRIEF SITUATIONER ON DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DiDRR)

#### Who are the Persons with Disabilities?

Persons with disabilities are identified as “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments (including visual, speech, and hearing impairments), which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”<sup>1</sup>

Currently, it was estimated that there are about 15% of the global population living with disability, where around 2-4% have severe disabilities.<sup>2</sup> Numbers are perceived to be higher in developing countries as a result of inequalities, which exacerbate the conditions for persons with disability.<sup>3</sup> Poverty was identified as said to be both a cause and an effect of disability, and this makes the proportion of persons with disability highest among the poor.<sup>4</sup> Older people, women, and children who belong to underprivileged ethnic groups are most likely to live with disability; and women and girls are more at risk to physical and sexual abuse and exploitation.<sup>5</sup>

1 UN General Assembly, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-1-purpose.html>

2 World Health Organization (2011). World Disabilities Report. Retrieved from: [http://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/world\\_report\\_disability\\_easyread.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/world_report_disability_easyread.pdf?ua=1)

3 Handicap International and French Development Agency (2012). Disability and Development. Retrieved from: [http://www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/Handicap\\_Developpement/www/en\\_page21.html](http://www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/Handicap_Developpement/www/en_page21.html)

4 Ibid

5 Handicap International. (2016). cited Lancet (2012), “global women population have some form of disability and are twice as likely to be affected by violence than their peers without disabilities”

With these estimates, there are at least 15.5 million people living with disability in the Philippines.<sup>6</sup> Half of these are women, where most are children and adolescents. About 7 out of 10 persons with disability are from rural areas.<sup>7</sup> However, the real number and diversity of persons with disability have not been reflected accurately in the country's data collection systems. The national census only reported the sector to be less than 2% of the population in the years 2000 and 2010 (see Table 1), while the recent 2015 census entirely excluded the sector.<sup>8</sup> Such conditions reflect the need to further advocate for the persons with disability's inclusion in state programs, plans, and projects; and to an extent, reflect government accountability to the sector. To be seen, disability education must be central across different actors, and the state must systematize and standardize practice in data collection to reflect the real number of the sector.

**Table 1. Percentage of persons with disability vis-à-vis national population**

Year	Percentage
2000	1.23%
2010	1.57%

(SOURCE: NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE)

Given the absence of reliable data to account for persons with disability, basic social services are less likely to reach persons with disability. In the country, only 1 out of 10 Filipinos with disability is able to access programs and services. Employment opportunities and social services for persons with disability are either scarce or absent<sup>9</sup> as the sector is largely underserved by government agencies, and struggles with basic access to disability cards, health care, and education. As of 2009, only 2% of children with disability have access to Special Education (SPED) programs.<sup>10</sup> Women and girls who care for persons with disability and

6 Government of the Republic of the Philippines - Department of Social Welfare and Development. 2015 Listahanan (National Housing Targeting System), Table 5. Number of poor households by type of disability. Retrieved from [http://listahanan.dswd.gov.ph/download/reports/profile\\_of\\_the\\_poor\\_/source%20table%200082912.pdf](http://listahanan.dswd.gov.ph/download/reports/profile_of_the_poor_/source%20table%200082912.pdf)Data reports that among the poor, 15% are in rural areas (2 percent more than in urban areas; most proportion of persons with disability among poor are in Cordillera Administrative RegionAR at 32.4 percent.

7 Asian Development Bank (2005). Disabled People and Development: Philippines Country Report. Retrieved from: <http://library.pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/disabled%20people%20and%20development.pdf>. cited government estimates at 70% of persons with disability are in rural areas. DSWD 2015 Listahanan statistics show that 60% of the total persons with disability in the country are in rural areas.

8 Philippine Star. Jake Soriano (23 Nov 2015). Census Leaves persons with disabilities angers Disability Council. Retrieved from: <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2015/11/23/1525063/census-leaves-out-pwds-angers-disability-council>

9 Asian Development Bank (2005). Disabled People and Development: Philippines Country Report. Retrieved from: <http://library.pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/disabled%20people%20and%20development.pdf>.c The document describes basic social services and the access of persons with disability.

10 As of 2009, only 2 percent of children have been reached by SPED, as mentioned in: Government of the Republic of the Philippines - Department of Education (2009). Department Order 72, series of 2009 - Inclusive Education as Strategy for Increasing Participation Rate of Children. Retrieved from: <http://www.deped.gov.ph/orders/do-72-s-2009>





women with disabilities are also more likely to take on the burden of care and household work. To address the institutional discrimination and make state programs and services responsive to the needs of the sector, a multi-approach of changing cultural beliefs and practices at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels must happen.

## THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Most of the persons with disability are still left unseen, unheard and unaccounted for,<sup>11</sup> making them one of the most marginalized sectors in the society. They struggle daily with multiple and intersectional barriers to basic services, opportunities, self-reliance, independence, and participation, which are rooted from cultural beliefs, politics and governance, and utilization of limited resources along many others. These factors also lead to discrimination and inequality as manifested in the practices of individuals and institutions, and are reproduced systemically. In order to cater to the issues and concerns of the said sectors, policy frameworks were enacted at the global, regional, and national levels as summarized in the following section:

### United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

At present, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) provides the most comprehensive framework for the rights of persons with disability, and outlines the principles recognizing and upholding the rights thew sector. The Philippines ratified the UNCRPD in 2008, reaffirming its commitments to promote, fulfill, and uphold the rights of persons with disability. While disability-inclusive development has been gaining ground and there has been an increasing interest and growing practice around disability-inclusive DRR in the Philippines, putting empowerment of the sector at the core of practice has yet to be sharpened. This still needs to be embedded in cultures, institutions, and systems to reach country commitments to UNCRPD and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Article 11 of the UNCRPD on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies stipulated the obligation of State parties to undertake all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Emma Calgaro, et. al. (May 2015). Global Resilience Challenge Problem Statement: Disability and Disasters: Empowering people and building resilience to risk. Retrieved from: [http://www.globalresiliencepartnership.org/assets/downloads/GRP-DisabilityandDisasters\\_ProblemStatement.pdf](http://www.globalresiliencepartnership.org/assets/downloads/GRP-DisabilityandDisasters_ProblemStatement.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Retrieved from: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/ConventionRightsPersonsWithDisabilities.aspx#11>



**WHAT WILL MOTIVATE YOU?**

Ang makikilang ng kakaiba ang grupo

WORDS of WISDOM

MABULIGAN AN MA KAPALHO HA MGA SOLD

MAKAIMPLWENSA SA ISANG MAY KAPANSEHAN

discrimination (bullying)

KUNG MAKAKA-BULIG HA PANG ARAW-ARAW NGA GASTUSIN

MAKAKAPAG bulagi Ako ng Akin kaalaman sa grupo o sa kumunibad

An nakadagis ha aton pagbulig hira nga grupo an kadugang ng hira matitugod hin nga balac hin usa nga mayda kopansaran

Ang nakatagapalac sa da na surely an organizasyon an Para natami along natatag at hira along knowledge na natatag sa hin a opinion

MABULIG HA I BA NGA MEMBER

**CHAIRMAN- Lou Bajade**

**Budget**

\$20.00/Member

Remaining Fund from the registration fee Pledges from the officers as voluntary amount

**Solicitation**

1 Hundred Thousand/DSWD

**NGO**

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NGO

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## Incheon Strategy

Based on the principles of the UNCRPD, the Incheon Strategy provides the Asia and the Pacific Region with the first set of regionally agreed disability-inclusive development goals.<sup>13</sup> This was adopted by member states of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) region, including the Philippines, in 2012.<sup>14</sup> Aiming to “make the right real” for persons with disabilities, the strategy is comprised of 10 goals, 27 targets, and 62 indicators; with its seventh goal focused on ensuring disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM). This goal specifically targets strengthening disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction planning and the implementation of measures on providing timely and appropriate support to persons with disabilities in responding to disasters.<sup>15</sup>

## Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR)

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030 serves as the successor instrument to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. The SFDRR was adopted during the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) 2015 in Sendai, Japan. The framework is the first major agreement of the Post-2015 development agenda and lays out seven (7) global targets and four (4) priorities for action.

Compared to the HFA, the SFDRR highlights the needs of persons with disability to a much greater extent, with specific mentions in its preamble, the guiding principles, the priorities for action, and the role of stakeholders.<sup>16</sup> The SFDRR has acknowledged that for disaster risk reduction to be efficient and effective,

they need to be inclusive and accessible.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the SFDRR’s Section V on the Role of Stakeholders, under Paragraph 36(a), ‘recognizes the critical role of persons with disabilities and their organizations in the assessment of disaster risk, as well as the design and implementation of plans that are in line with the principles of universal design.’<sup>18</sup>

## Dhaka Declaration on Disability and Disaster Risk Management

In 2015, the Dhaka Conference on Disability and Disaster Risk Management was held to call for the greater inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in the processes of DRRM, through implementation of the SFDRR. The outcome of the conference is the Dhaka Declaration that provides eight (8) specific action targets towards the global implementation of Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DiDRR) globally by the year 2017.<sup>19</sup> Its targets include ensuring a people-centered approach; strengthening governance, partnership, and cooperation; integration of gender, age, and disability-disaggregated data; promotion of empowerment and protection; removal of barriers to reduce the impact of disasters on persons with disabilities empowerment and protection; and action from local to national to global.

## National Frameworks

Over the years, even prior to the UNCRPD, the Philippines has proven that the disability sector should be valued as members of the greater society as reflected in the country’s disability-related laws and policies, prioritizing the sectors’ basic rights on employment, education, health services, rehabilitation, special privileges and incentives, auxiliary social services, accessibility, political and civil rights, economic independence, deliverance from discrimination, ridicule and vilification, among others.

13 ESCAP - Social Development Division. (2014). Incheon Strategy. Retrieved from: <http://www.maketherightreal.net/incheon-strategy/background>

14 Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. (2012). Retrieved from: <http://www.unescap.org/resources/incheon-strategy-%E2%80%9Cmake-right-real%E2%80%9D-persons-disabilities-asia-and-pacific>

15 ESCAP - Social Development Division. (2014). Incheon Strategy Goal 7. Retrieved from: <http://www.maketherightreal.net/incheon-strategy/goal-7>

16 Stough, L. & Kang, D. (2015). The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Persons with Disabilities. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs13753-015-0051-8.pdf>

17 UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction). 2015a. Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction 2015–2030. Retrieved from: [http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/Sendai\\_Framework\\_for\\_Disaster\\_Risk\\_Reduction\\_2015-2030.pdf](http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/Sendai_Framework_for_Disaster_Risk_Reduction_2015-2030.pdf)

18 Ibid.

19 DiDRR. (2015). The Dhaka Conference on Disability and Disaster Risk Management (DRM): A Way Forward for Inclusion. Retrieved from: <http://www.didrr.net/newsread-7-the-dhaka-conference-on-disability-and-disaster-risk-management-drm-a-way-forward-for-inclusion.html>









POPO Ba  
RESIBO NG  
NGA ORGANI-  
NAYDA KAPAG-  
NATUNANIN HIN MGA  
ADAD NG NATUNANIN  
HIN MGA NATUNANIN.

2016 GOAL  
MAGIN ORGANISADO  
AN DOKUMENTO HAN I  
UNATUNANIN NG MGA  
HIN NATUNANIN  
NGA NATUNANIN  
MAYADA KU  
HIN NATUNANIN

GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY

PLANNING

IMPLEMENTASYON

ASSESSMENT

President  
(Toga Pangulo)

VICE-Pres  
(Pangalawang Pangulo)

Secretary  
(Kalihim)

Treasurer  
(Inyap - Yaman)

Education  
Committee  
(Komite sa Edukasyon)

Advocacy &  
Communication

Resource  
Generation  
(Komite sa Paggagana)

TL  
VTL

DREAM DREAMS

20



The image shows a group of people, including a man in a blue and white shirt, gathered around a table, working on a large yellow sheet of paper. They appear to be engaged in a collaborative activity, possibly a workshop or training session. The background shows a banner for "PROJECT ELEVATE" and "Training of Trainers on Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DIDRRM)".



communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from, the impacts of likely, imminent or current hazard events or conditions.

3. Disaster Response: the provision of emergency services and public assistance during or immediately after a disaster in order to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected.
4. Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery: measures that ensure the ability of affected communities/areas to restore their normal level of functioning by rebuilding livelihood and damaged infrastructures and increasing the communities' organizational capacity.<sup>20</sup>

Despite existing norms and policies that respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of persons with disability in the country and the national declaration of 2013-2022 as the 'Decade of Persons with Disability', the sector remains largely unheard in deciding over matters that affect their lives. In formal participation, only around 22% of registered persons with disability voters were able to cast their votes in the 2013 elections. Such number fell further to 14% in the 2016 elections.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, while Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) have been formed in recent years and have advocated for the sector's rights, an enabling environment to meaningfully participate in governance has yet to be realized across the country.<sup>22</sup> To raise voices and be heard, contributions must be made in strengthening the sector and in engaging the state to create mechanisms, adhere to practices that build inherent and evolving capacities of the sector, and enable meaningful participation. The succeeding chapters of this coffee table book will chronicle the current milestones, stories of change, and the ways forward towards the realization of the rights and promotion of the welfare of the persons with disabilities.

20 Republic Act 10121. Retrieved from [http://www.ndrrmc.gov.ph/attachments/article/45/Republic\\_Act\\_10121.pdf](http://www.ndrrmc.gov.ph/attachments/article/45/Republic_Act_10121.pdf)

21 Philippine Star, Maria Feona Imperial and Lala Ordenes (February 16, 2016). Fewer registered persons with disability voters for 2016 elections. Retrieved from: <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/02/16/1553628/fewer-registered-pwd-voters-2016-elections>

22 Asian Development Bank (2005). Disabled People and Development: Philippines Country Report. Retrieved from: <http://library.pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/disabled%20people%20and%20development.pdf>.



# Chapter 2

## *KAUPOD Hand-in-Hand, Journeying Together*

This chapter takes us to the voyage of Center for Disaster Preparedness in doing Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DiDRR) reflected on the empowerment of persons with disability, training and development, research, advocating for inclusive governance, collaboration and network building, strengthening of emergency preparedness, and institutionalization of inclusion in the organization.

### EMBRACING INCLUSION

CDP's journey towards inclusion can be likened to dancing in a crowded room: It takes the right moves, precision and perseverance to saunter and sashay into the sea of players in the field of community-based disaster risk reduction and management (CBDRRM). In the center stage full of advocates and practitioners in disability inclusion, the organization has taken the risk of putting the shoes of inclusion on to gracefully prance in the stage.

Albeit a neophyte in disability inclusive DRRM, CDP has done concrete measures to polish its movement from personal to organization to mainstreaming into various levels. Through its practice and its partnership with persons with disabilities, it fully embraced inclusivity and sought ways to learn and upscale as an organization.

From intensified sensitization and awareness-raising efforts to its staff to developing organizational thrusts responsive of the needs of vulnerable sectors, CDP incorporated inclusion in its day-to-day tasks and functions. The organization became more proactive in responding to the needs of persons with disabilities in its operations and implementation of programs, projects, and activities.







CDP has also raised the bar of its standards in its policies, making it more inclusive and responsive to the rights and welfare of vulnerable sectors while consciously and continuously innovating and improving its modules and training materials, its means of addressing the communication needs of community people by providing sign language interpreters, closed captioning of live events, and distributing Braille materials, and pushing for substantive reforms at the local, national, and international arenas.

But it takes two to tango.

In the course of its efforts towards disability inclusive DRRM, CDP has enjoined persons with disabilities to be at the forefront of its advocacy and projects. This is to ensure that everyone is visible: that everyone is seen and heard and can walk in the long trail of community resilience.

## EMPOWERING PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

Crucial in DiDRR is the affirmative action of persons with disability. As such, CDP has contributed in organizing, and strengthening barangay and municipal-level Disabled Peoples Organizations (DPOs), empowering them to lead and organize their own programs, and involving them in the project development cycle that benefit them and maximize their full potentials.

### Training and Development

CDP has developed inclusive approaches and technologies in capacity-building on CBDRRM, utilized by many organizations at the grassroots and national levels.

It also trained and mentored local trainers composed of persons with disabilities, local government units, community people, and organizations in disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction (DiDRR) using the LAHAT HANDA module.

And at the local level, it mentored local trainers composed of LGUs and DPOs to lead the conduct of barangay and municipal risk assessment workshops, contingency planning, DRRM planning, and simulation exercises



# BARANGAY HAI

BRGY. BACJAO BALANGIGA E. SAMAR











## Research

CDP has produced evidence-based researches on issues that concern persons with disabilities. As a research institution, it has undergone researches on good practices in DiDRR, inclusive approaches, and the plight of persons with disabilities before, during, and after disasters to complement its policy advocacy and capacity-building initiatives.

CDP has published two (2) guidebooks that documented good practices and important lessons on DiDRR for the past decade, namely, *Prospects in Retrospect: A Guide to Mainstreaming Disability Inclusive DRRM in an Organization's Programming Framework*; and *Fostering Inclusive Communities: A Guide to Facilitating Disability-Inclusive CBDRRM*.

## Advocating For Inclusive Governance

For many years, CDP has advocated for higher budgetary allocations for persons with disabilities at the municipality and barangay levels. As a result, local government units have increased support for investment in DiDRR activities. Also, CDP advocated for LGU support on the adoption of ordinances establishing PDAO and localization of the Magna Carta of Persons with Disability

## Collaboration And Network Building

Through its programs, CDP has provided avenues for persons with disabilities and their carers to link with and influence local and national stakeholders on issues that concern them.

It also pushed for mainstreaming of disability inclusion in government programs, projects, and activities through dialogues and person-to-person interactions among duty-bearers and stakeholders and supports initiatives on DiDRR of various local government units.





### **Strengthening Emergency Preparedness**

The organization has also sought to strengthen the capacities of persons with disabilities on emergency preparedness through formulation of inclusive psychosocial first aid materials and mainstreaming of ater, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in DRRM plans.

### **Institutionalizing Inclusion inside the Organization**

CDP has strived to institutionalize inclusion in its operations through the conduct of accessibility audits to ensure a barrier-free working environment. The organization has also reviewed and reformed its human resources policies and manual of operations with the aim of fostering more respectful and inclusive working environment. Also, CDP has built on its staff capacity to provide psychosocial support using inclusive approaches among persons with disability.





## Trail of CDP's significant contributions on Disability Inclusive DRR

### 2014

Contributed in developing the CBDRRM Basic Instructors' Guide (BIG) module which included sections for persons with disability

### 2015

Participated and lobbied at the 3rd World Conference in Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDDR) in Sendai, Japan on the issue of vulnerable sectors, including persons with disability

Contributed in developing LAHAT HANDA, a more inclusive module on CBDRRM as an offshoot to the BIG Module

Implemented project, "Persons with Disability: Engaged, Empowered," in Balangiga and Lawaan, Eastern Samar the first CBDRRM project focused on persons with disability in Eastern Samar in partnership with Arbeiter Samariter Bundt

Participated and presented in the Dhaka Conference on Disability & Disaster Risk Management

### 2016

Conducted simulation exercises with persons with disabilities as lead actors

Localized Washington Group of Questions to improve data on disability





## 2017

Developed the capacities of persons with disability as trainers on Disability Inclusive CBDRR in selected areas in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao

Re-organized Disabled Peoples Organizations in Balangiga and Lawaan, Eastern Samar

Supported LGUs in formulating inclusive risk assessments, DRRM plans, and contingency plans

Supported in piloting DiDRR in Quezon City and Valenzuela City

Strengthen the capacities of service providers and institutions on Mainstreaming DiDRR in Organizations

Documented good practices on Disability Inclusive CBDRR

Conducted simulation exercises that mobilized persons with disabilities as key players

Conducted a nationwide consultation on Disability Inclusive DRR









## *Chapter 3*

# *KAMABASKUG: Weathering the Storm*

**T**his chapter chronicles the stories of change inspired by the project, *Persons with Disability: Empowered, Engaged* divided into four themes that begins with the “Life of persons with disability and their carer,” featuring the experience of Ardie, a 15-year old boy with cerebral palsy and Flora, his grandmother and carer living in Balangiga; and Leila, a survivor of polio from Lawaan.

The second theme focuses on, “Women in action” that narrates the experiences of women leaders Jane, an officer of local parish pastoral group, ABANTE Kababaihan Women’s group, and Disabled People’s Organization of Balangiga; and Eva, a Barangay Health Worker of Lawaan.

The third theme resonates on, “Uplifting people towards Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DiDRR),” which tells about the development of confidence and personality of Judy and Grace, who are both from Lawaan.

The fourth and last among themes highlights the, “Empowering of local government unit officers,” that details the significant changes in the lives of Engr. Ivan of the Balangiga Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office and Jay, PDAO focal person in Lawaan, Eastern Samar.

This chapter commences with a retrospect on how the convergence of CDP, ASB, and its LGU and DPO partners succeeded in its contribution in community resilience.





## IN RETROSPECT: WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

Is it possible for persons with disabilities and government agencies to converge and create a more inclusive environment?

Four years after Haiyan struck Eastern Visayas and more than a thousand of interventions from different agencies, the vision of inclusion still seemed elusive; but through the efforts of persons with disabilities through the disabled people's organizations (DPOs) in Lawaan and Balangiga, Eastern Samar, new doors opened for the possibility of bringing together the community, the government and the persons with disabilities.

When CDP and ASB facilitated projects that started in 2015, DPOs in the said municipalities mustered the courage to be at the forefront of organizing, advocacy and partnerships with a myriad of agencies that were simply aware of the issues of persons with disabilities, but still taking baby steps towards providing meaningful participation.

Through the partnership forged between and among CDP, ASB, LGUs and DPOs, the local duty bearers and rights holders of Balangiga and Lawaan were further strengthened. The collaborations ensured that programs are directed towards contributing to community resilience and improving the delivery of basic social services especially among persons with disabilities.



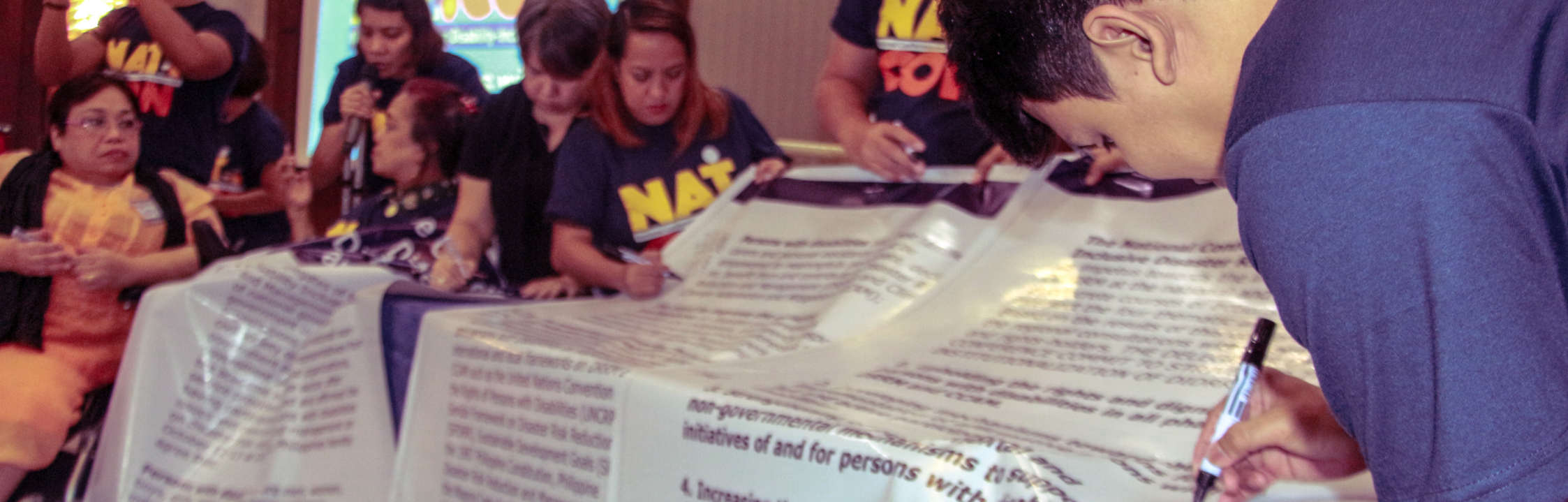


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Meanwhile, LGU representatives, Disabled People's Organization members and their carers, and community members were capacitated to form a local pool of trainers. Together, they led the conduct of trainings on inclusive community risk assessment, contingency planning, and DRRM planning workshops at the barangay and municipal levels. Through the convergence, both the LGU and DPOs complemented in utilizing local capacities during the first-ever municipal typhoon drill held in Balangiga and Lawaan, Eastern Samar.

These efforts made a mark in governance as key people in the LGU improved their existing systems and structures. Ms. Judith Alde, Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officer (MDRRMO) of Balangiga shares, “before we only have designated officers for DRRM, but now, we have a plantilla post and staff. We were also able to refine our data, our plans...we became more aware, and we were capacitated. We have a resource pool composed of persons with disabilities which we would maximize for our trainings.”





Another opportunity of convergence took place during the National Conference on DiDRRM. With the banner theme, Inclusion begins with I, the NatCon served as a venue that gathered key government agencies, advocates on the disability and DRR sectors, and local organizations of persons with disabilities and highlighted the need for local, regional, and national actors to come together for concrete actions towards institutionalizing Disability Inclusive DRR in the Philippines. “The National Conference is a significant opportunity to look into the enablers and barriers on DRR among persons with disabilities. It will set the direction towards arriving at better programs and policies that would address the issues of persons with disabilities,” Ms. Jocelyn Garcia of WOW LEAP says.

For Ms. Carol Dagani of Philippine Federation of the Deaf, the NatCon is an opportunity to be heard when they are treated as voiceless and invisible in the society. “This is an opportunity for me to express and represent my community for people to be aware that we are here, that the deaf are everywhere, we have intersectionalities: we come in different races, religion, gender, and that they should know that the deaf have equal rights like everybody else.”

Above all, DPOs and persons with disabilities have stepped forward to organize and advocate for their personal and collective issues. “Our experience in Yolanda made us realize that we need to take part in various activities related to DRR,

that we need to be prepared, to be aware. Persons with disabilities must raise our awareness on DRR,” Ms. Norly Cordero of Special and Differently Abled People’s Organization of Lawaan (SDAPOL) recounts.

Their efforts allowed them to better engage local duty bearers and other stakeholders to uphold their basic rights. They were also better equipped not just to be trainers of DiDRR but also in terms of managing their own organizations. Their efforts also paved the way for them to learn the basics of organizational development, project proposal writing, financial management, and advocacy and lobbying. “Our organization was strengthened and we learned to assert our rights as stipulated in the Magna Carta (for Persons with Disabilities) and develop our personal capacities, as well,” Mr. Mario Ellerna of DPO Balangiga adds.

For members of DPOs, the convergence served as a reinvigorating moment. “When we were reorganized, I became active again. I had regained my vigor. I realized I am not behind, and that everything was possible. I was really inspired,” Leila Benaso of SDAPOL tells.

Still, a lot has to be done. To journey with persons with disabilities means commitment until the barriers are all gone. “For inclusion to happen, we must work together and involve all sectors, the community and the government, most especially persons with disabilities,” Norly ends.







# Stories of Change

## THE PERSON WITH DISABILITY AND THE CARER

### A sense of Assurance

Ardie Maraya is a fifteen-year-old boy with cerebral palsy. He lives alone with his paternal grandmother, Flora Salazar, in Balangiga. Ardie's condition makes it difficult for him to move and talk. Aside from his impairment, Ardie's physical appearance has made him a target for bullying. It is for this reason, as well as the absence of a special education class in the municipality, that Ardie was not able to go to school. The lack of socialization has made Ardie shy and withdrawn. Like many in the area, Ardie is prey to a culture that propagates the exclusion of persons with disabilities.

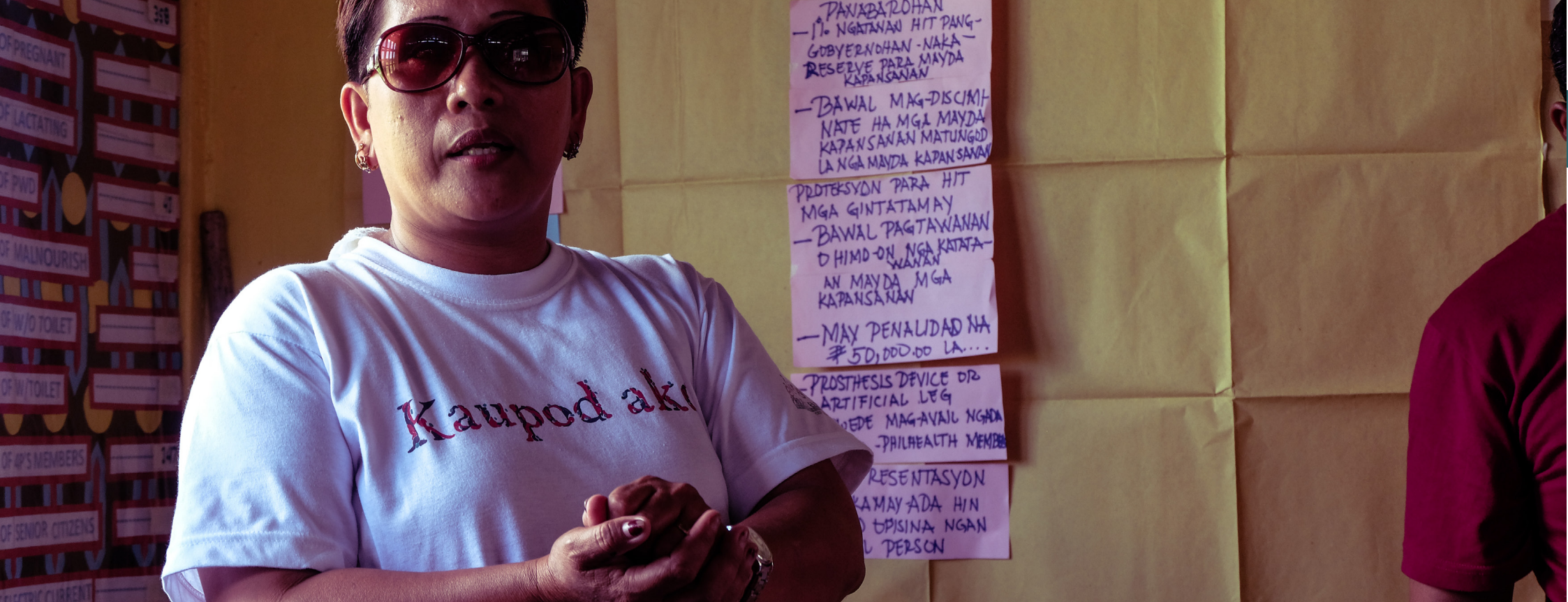
The Project Persons with Disability: Empowered, Engaged has made a powerful impression on the outlook of persons with disability because of its emphasis on inclusion. From Flora's participation in the project's workshops, she has realized that as a carer, there is a great sense of assurance in the knowledge that she is not alone in taking care of her grandson. One form of support is through the person with disability ID card, which enables the holder to avail of certain discounts in medicine and services. Many carers and persons with disabilities were unaware of these ID cards, but now, because of their awareness of their rights, they have the confidence to do follow-ups on the MSWDO and other offices.

Flora has also learned to be more prepared in case of disasters. During the typhoon Ruby, she and Ardie were one of the last to leave because she was still securing her store. Now, she knows the importance of preparedness. "We have a bag. Ardie also has a bag of his own just for his things," she said, explaining that the go-bags are always filled with emergency clothes and Ardie's maintenance medicines.

As for Ardie, the change is subtler. As a child with disability, he has yet to think about his rights as an individual. His concerns are simpler and more immediate: that he can man his sari-sari store and receive the right amount for his goods, that he is recognized for his abilities, and that he can go out into the community without fear of being discriminated.







## WOMEN IN ACTION

### Determined to Change Mindsets

Jane S. Macawile is an active community member of San Miguel, Balangiga. She is an officer of several community organizations including the local parish pastoral group, ABANTE Kababaihan women's group, and the Disabled People's Organization of Balangiga. Apart from her daily activity of cooking and selling food from her stall outside her house, she actively participates in seminars, trainings, and workshops. However, Jane noted that, "Only CDP tried to level up the capacities of person with disability."

Jane shared that it was only through CDP's activities that she learned about the Magna Carta of Persons with Disability. "I did not know that we had rights. I did not know that we have privileges and services that we should be receiving from the government." Because of her new-found knowledge, she is determined to assert their rights and privileges.

Becoming one of the trainers after participating in the project activities, one of her favorite topics to facilitate during the DIDRR workshop is the sensitization on disability-inclusion. Even in her personal time, she tries to change the negative attitude and mindset of community members towards her fellow persons with disabilities. She said, "I cannot stop myself from not calling out and correcting the people's wrong use of words or actions. I tell them in a calm way that what they are doing is wrong and that there is a penalty based on the law against bullying of persons with disability."

Jane said that because of all the activities she participated in she realized that she can do things that she did not expect she was capable of. What keeps her going are CDP's words of encouragement: "CDP always tells us that 'You can do it! You can do it!' That is why we really strive to do whatever we can."





### Regained Confidence

Eva is a barangay health worker. She also owns a sari-sari store and ready-to-wear clothes stand in front of her house. Her husband works as a tricycle driver, and their income goes into raising their nine children. Eva has lived in Barangay Guinob-an, Lawaan in Eastern Samar for nineteen years. She claims, in those nineteen years, she has never experienced a disaster like super typhoon Haiyan.

“We did not evacuate because we were confident that our house was strong. We’ve experienced many typhoons but nothing happened to the house,” she said. “When our roof started shaking, we transferred to the day care center. At the day care, the winds became stronger, and this is where the hollow blocks collapsed on us,” she said. Eva describes the experience as terrifying in a way that can’t be understood, and it is this experience that has made her want to learn about disaster risk reduction and management.

Through her participation in the project “Persons with Disability: Empowered, Engaged”, Eva claims that she has learned many things about disaster preparedness. She has also learned the importance of prioritizing and respecting persons with disabilities. However, according to her, the biggest impact of the project is that community members—many of whom were not able to go to college—gained confidence through participation in the workshops.

“Of course, before, we didn’t attend trainings and face people who went to college. But now, it’s like we have a sense of worth. Even if we’re just civilians, we have what it takes to face other people. Our understanding before was; only barangay officials could face you. I didn’t even know what DRRM was before! Now, I do,” she said, with a hint of pride in her voice.

### Taking Great Strides to Inspire Others

Leila Benaso believes that standing up for human rights is essential to achieve the quality of life that persons with disability deserve. She tirelessly juggles her time between her personal life and advocacies to inspire her community and become a role model among persons with disabilities.

In 2003, Leila, along with other persons with disabilities in the municipality of Lawaan in Eastern Samar, organized themselves and formed the Special and Differently-abled Persons of Lawaan (SDAPOL). A polio survivor, Leila’s personal experiences and involvement with the SDAPOL compelled her to become a champion for the rights of persons with disabilities in their municipality. “In Lawaan, persons with disabilities are very behind in terms of access to services and empowerment. We lack awareness on our rights which makes it difficult for us,” she stresses. “If you are less educated, it’s difficult to assert your rights.”

After her participation in Project Elevate’s myriad of activities that empower persons with disabilities, Leila felt a sense of deepened commitment to SDAPOL. Her reinvigoration has motivated her to become a beacon of hope for persons with disabilities. “Whenever I see my fellow persons with disabilities unable to speak out and fight for their rights, I am inspired to strive, because I can do a lot to help myself and others,” Leila explains. She takes pride that the project has initiated the reorganization of SDAPOL after many years. It has also bridged them to government offices, which provided them another wave of livelihood support.

Currently, SDAPOL is gearing towards the organization’s accreditation and involvement in the local development planning. “We have to be hands-on if we want to become resilient and productive, and to gain recognition in the society. You have to give time and dedication,” an optimistic Leila concludes.







## UPLIFTING PEOPLE TOWARDS DIDRR

### A New-Found Vision

Judy Gacita used to be uninvolved in community affairs. She used to stay at home, tending to the needs of her family. She describes herself as timid because of how other people view her and her visual impairment. She never thought that one day she would be involved in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, an issue very close to her heart.

When she was encouraged to participate in Project Elevate's community-based disaster risk reduction and management trainings, she realized her role in ensuring the safety of her family and community.

Since then, she has become involved in the project's activities. During the reorganization of the SDAPOL, the 31-year old resident of Poblacion 10 in Lawaan, Eastern Samar, was elected as the secretary. Through these experiences, Judy has realized that it is never too late to speak out. "I have gained trust and self-confidence," she said.

Judy credits her new-found vision to her colleagues in SDAPOL whose passion to improve their conditions resonates among the group. "If my fellow persons with disability can do it, I can do it too," she says with conviction. She thinks that a lot is yet to be achieved, especially on the issues of children with disabilities.

Judy shares that her daughter is a victim of bullying because of her visual impairment. "She is bullied because of her disability but I always remind her not to mind them because they cannot do what she can do." She views that her continuous involvement in the project motivated her to teach her daughter to face the stigma given to persons with disabilities like them.

Judy sees that empowerment of persons with disabilities begins with one's self. "Just continue improving yourself. Do not let others bring you down," she concludes.







### Stepping Outside the Circles

A cheerful Grace Abayan describes herself as a good mother and wife who strives to meet the needs of her family. Her daily routine includes selling cosmetic merchandise, and sometimes, earning extra from selling native delicacies and ready-to-wear clothes. “As a person with disability, I believe I have the capacity to support my family,” she shares.

To her, her disability is not something to be ashamed of. “To the best of my ability, I reach for my dreams for my family. I embrace who I am,” she enthuses.

Through PROJECT ELEVATE: Marig-on Estehanon, she has stepped out of her circles to advocate the rights of persons with disabilities. She has become a trainer after completing the training of trainers together with municipal head offices, barangay officials, and persons with disabilities in Lawaan and Balangiga, and a leader in various activities organized by the project.

Since then, she has been able to express herself confidently. “From just a simple housewife, I have learned to express myself, contribute to discussions and provide information on the rights and privileges of persons with disabilities in our society.”

Grace also takes pride in having actively participated in strengthening their organization, SDAPOL or Special and Differently-Abled People of Lawaan. “We have gone through intensive training from the leadership up to resource generation to sustain the livelihood of persons with disability.”

She hopes to reach out to many persons with disabilities through the SDAPOL to give voice to them, and to empower them.

“This is just the start. There are still a lot to be done and we need to persevere and help each other achieve our goal for persons with disabilities,” she ends.



## EMPOWERING THE LGU

### Finding a new Niche

“I usually work on technical papers, drawings and documents in the engineering office,” this was how Engr. Ivan Rosaldo, the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer (MENRO) of Balangiga, Eastern Samar described his work.

From being a shy, observant participant, Engr. Rosaldo found a new niche apart from his paper work in the MENRO office. He surprised himself by becoming a community facilitator under Project ELEVATE: Marig-on Estehanon. “During my first time, I was nervous as I was not able to deliver the right words; but I am thankful for this opportunity because I am not used to speaking in front of many people.”

For Engr. Rosaldo, the skills he obtained from his participation set a clearer perspective on his work as the MENRO. “My communication skills were enhanced. In engineering, communication had always been the most powerful tool especially in the integration class. I was able to transform my negative side into a positive one. I overcame my fear of public speaking.”

His involvement in the project activities such as the Training of Trainers (ToT) and community rollouts also encouraged him to enhance his work. “Through the project, I was given the opportunity to improve myself, explore other fields and become a facilitator of learning,” a smiling Engr. Rosaldo added.

He emphasized that Project Elevate did not only help the facilitators, but also the municipality of Balangiga. “If we compare the behavior of people before Yolanda, we can say that a lot has changed after. Yolanda has taught us many lessons. The project has helped the municipality appreciate the planning process. The communities and the municipal government have become empowered,” he proudly said.





## Embracing the Passion to Serve

Jay Catalogo is concerned with the visibility and awareness of people with disabilities. He was born with limb length discrepancy, a condition wherein one leg is shorter than the other. In spite of his impairment, Jay claims he never felt mistreated or ostracized. However, he acknowledges that there are those with more severe disabilities who need prioritization and help. For this reason, he is passionate about the formation of a functional organization in the municipality of Lawaan and the Project Persons with Disability: Empowered, Engaged provided a venue to realize such endeavor.

“It’s a big opportunity for me. At that time, I was told that this will be centered on persons with disabilities. Wow, I said, very nice. I know that time, before Yolanda, I wasn’t aware of any people’s organization or something from the government that focused on persons with disability. Aside from senior citizens and program for 4Ps. Always for the poor and senior citizens,” he said.

The project conducted activities at the local level to promote resilience using a community-based disaster risk reduction and management approach. It emphasized the importance of partnership between the local government and the barangays as well as the inclusion of all sectors. The project became instrumental in the reestablishment of Special Disabled People of Lawaan (SDAPOL), a disabled people’s organization, which made an impact on the visibility and participation of the sector.

Currently, Jay serves as the focal person for the Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office in Lawaan, Eastern Samar, and for him, his work with CDP has honed him to be a better civil servant. “The biggest help or impact that I have acquired, from the start [of the project] till the end, is I became stronger. I became knowledgeable. I learned about the legal bases [and] rights of persons with disability. Before, I don’t have any knowledge that people like us had those rights. The benefits that I just learned are such as a big help,” he shared.





















# Chapter 4

## *Standing Up for Inclusion*

**H**ow do champions, leaders, parents, carers, and government workers view inclusion? Why is inclusion necessary to be heard and to be seen in a society full of barriers and limits? This photo essay seeks to unravel the stories behind those smiles: a dream, a vision of a barrier-free society.

### CARMEN ZUBIAGA

Carmen Zubiaga believes that an inclusive environment casts away doubts and fears. "...Always including me in every step of the way without feeling any doubt, without any second thoughts...that I could always visit places or participate in various affairs of the community," the executive director of the government-led National Council for Disability Affairs (NCDA) says.

For her, everyone should be given equal opportunities to express themselves and articulate their needs. "If my needs are taken care of and I feel a sense of belongingness, and I am not taken from granted, that for me is inclusion," she stresses.

However, to reach inclusion, one must be strong enough to stand up to be counted. Her advice for persons with disabilities is simple: have courage. "I envision them to find courage and believe that they have capacities which they can use and share to their communities."



**HAVE COURAGE.**





MAKE IT HAPPEN.

## DR. BENJAMIN BERNARDINO

“We are still in the process of achieving it,” says Dr. Benjamin ‘Jun’ Bernardino of Life Haven about inclusion. “The sector, its supporters, the government, and the service providers are exerting concerted efforts, but there are still limitations in addressing the needs.”

Raising one’s awareness and advocating for the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities can resolve the limitations; however, government and CSOs cannot do it all by themselves. Doc Jun explains, “We have to share our knowledge, participate in dialogues, and analyze the situation.”

He sees every one’s role in bringing about changes. “Every one of us is responsible in making inclusion happen,” he points out.





VALUE LIFE,

BE INFORMED

## ABNER MANLAPAZ

For Abner Manlapaz, to reach out means to clear the paths towards inclusion. “Know what the person really needs to be included—listen to what the person thinks and what the person feels. That way, you would know what to do and how to do it.”

He encourages stakeholders to constantly seek information to address the needs for inclusion. “At this point, you can easily gather enough information. You can ask your partners, the internet, and other sources that you use to include everyone in the processes.”

“We should always value human life and not limit ourselves just because the work is difficult to do,” the director of Life Haven says, especially when it comes to disaster risk reduction and management. “Disasters affect our lives and the lives of our loved ones, our livelihood, and our properties. If we are not included, the government’s burdens would add up.”

One of the staunchest advocates of the rights of persons with disabilities, Abner reminds both stakeholders and duty bearers. “Let us not forget the people, the groups of people, just because we don’t know what to do...there are solutions, and lest we forget, our communities have capacities. It’s not always about the money. It’s about how we enable, how we facilitate conditions that would improve the quality of lives of everyone, how we ensure that everyone, including our loved ones, is safe.”





‘WE ARE NOT ACRONYMS’

## DR. MAUREEN AVA MATA

“An acronym has no heart,” explains Dr. Maureen Ava ‘Mau’ Mata of AKAP Philippines on why it should be ‘persons with disabilities’ and not ‘PWDs’. “We have hearts, bodies and soul; we have faculties. We are humans and not objects. Acronyms are for objects.”

Doc Mau believes that the ‘person first’ language must be used to recognize persons with disabilities. “I know it is too wordy to say but as part of creating awareness and sensitivity, it is important to highlight that it is ‘person with disability,’ ‘children with disability.’”

They say that the sweetest way to call a person is to call them by name. “If you know the name of the person, call them by their name. Don’t call them with whatever nickname: putol, bulag, bingi,” the soft-spoken doctor suggests.

However, it takes hard work to break the culture of the use of acronyms, more so, in striving for inclusion. “We really need to empower the persons with disabilities, their families and their communities. To be integrated in the society, we need to be involved in planning, in consultations; not just attendance but be proactively included, in monitoring, in the entire process and not just one project.”



## JOCELYN GARCIA

The civil society and the government have always rallied for inclusion of persons with disabilities. But how does one define what inclusion is?

“We have yet to establish standards on inclusion...there are many misconceptions about inclusion,” Jocelyn ‘Joy’ Garcia of Women with Disabilities Leap to Social and Economic Progress (WOW LEAP), contests. “If you participated in an activity even if you were not able to meaningfully participate, we can claim that it’s already inclusion...but to be included means you are consulted, you participated in important activities of the sector. You are given the chance to meaningfully participate.”

Joy believes that environmental and attitudinal barriers must be eliminated to make inclusion possible, “If inclusion is just lip service, then all our efforts would be futile.”

For her, inclusion enables everyone to make use of the available opportunities to develop, “There is a saying that you exercise your full potential with what’s left of you, but if you’re not included in the society, then you would never have the chance to contribute and show the society your value as a human being.”

Joy emphasizes, “The effectiveness of inclusion relies on everyone’s efforts—government, civil society, and persons with disabilities—to be able to understand and be aware of our larger roles. If we want to make DRR more inclusive, it should not be just persons with disabilities, tayo-tayo lang (‘just us’). Our key players must look into the enablers and barriers to make our efforts more meaningful.”



**BREAK THE BARRIERS**



A portrait of Donna Dela Cruz Laguna, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a grey cardigan over a dark red top and a pearl necklace. She is looking slightly to the left with a gentle smile.

## FINDING MEANING BY LENDING A HAND

### DONNA LAGUNA

“I see myself more as an advocate,” Donna Dela Cruz Laguna relates of her work as Joy Garcia’s personal assistant. For more than a year now, she finds meaning in taking part of Joy’s advocacies. “I have learned a lot, especially in supporting persons with disabilities. Through the activities, I have gained a lot of lessons and developed my respect for persons with disabilities.”

In her journey as a personal assistant, she has realized that there are lots of barriers that hinders the full potentials of persons with disabilities, “many laws are not implemented which deny persons with disabilities of opportunities.”

For one, transportation is one of the biggest barriers that persons with disabilities confront. “The lack of accessibility mechanisms like ramps makes it more difficult to transfer persons with disabilities. Another problem is transportation. These problems add up to the burdens of persons with disabilities especially who work on a minimum wage basis,” she explains.





DO NOT JUST HELP, EMPOWER

## AL BALDERAMA

Time and again, stakeholders call on local government units to be at the forefront of important issues such as disability inclusion. But it's never easy to take the lead, especially for disaster-stricken areas. "LGUs carry a huge responsibility in upholding inclusion," Al Balderama of LGU-Balangiga, Eastern Samar relates. "From implementation to advocacy, LGUs play a significant role in ensuring that no one is left behind in the communities."

Asked what inclusion means to him, "For me, inclusion means involving, integrating all sectors in the community including persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable sectors like senior citizens, women and others." As a key person in the LGU, he realized that LGUs must not limit themselves in just helping persons with disabilities. "Leaving no one behind means more than just helping, but empowering and capacitating the sector."



## JUDITH ALDE

Judith Alde, the newly appointed Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officer (MDRRMO) of Balangiga, Eastern Samar, believes that inclusion can only be realized if the programs local government units are geared to addressing the needs of everyone, including the most vulnerable sectors. “They should not be left out in the programs of LGUs,” she suggests.

When she accepted the role as the MDRRMO, she took it as a challenge to improve the DRR mechanisms that would ensure the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable sectors. “As an MDRRMO, I have to focus on the needs of these people. We want to involve them especially in terms of prevention and mitigation.”

After Yolanda, civil society organizations have saturated the whole of Eastern Visayas to contribute in increasing the capacities of duty-bearers in disaster risk reduction and management; thus, her collaboration with CSOs in Eastern Samar has served as an eye-opener for her. “Through my work with them, I realized that we need to focus. We need to initiate more programs that would enjoin persons with disabilities,” she enthuses.



LGUS MUST FOCUS



## CORAZON CLARIN

So much has been said about meaningful participation, but how does one know that one's participation is indeed meaningful? For Corazon Clarin of the Cebu Disability Inclusive DRR Network, it means more than just mere attendance to activities. "We should be involved—first to be consulted about our issues so that we could decide on our own, we could air out what our feelings, emotions, and views are."

By providing meaningful participation, it bridges the gap towards inclusion. "It means erasing discrimination. All kinds of discrimination," Cora, the president of one of the pioneering networks of disability inclusive DRR in the Philippines, relates.

She deems conferences such as the National Conference on DiDRR as an opportunity for persons with disabilities to exercise their meaningful participation. "The conference gave us a voice to air out our concerns, to decide what should really be prioritized," she says, "We are able to gather adequate information to relay our issues and concerns to the government and to lay down the changes that we want to happen."



MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION  
BRIDGES  
MEANINGFUL CHANGE



## APRIL ROSE ESCARLOS

As persons with disabilities cuts across sectors, there are groups of people often not recognized and left out in the development process. April Rose Escarlos feels that the society has yet to hear their voices out. “As part of the hard of hearing community, I have the feeling that I am excluded especially in the programs of the government,” she relates. “We feel that we are not totally empowered because the society leaves us out, especially when it comes to communication.”

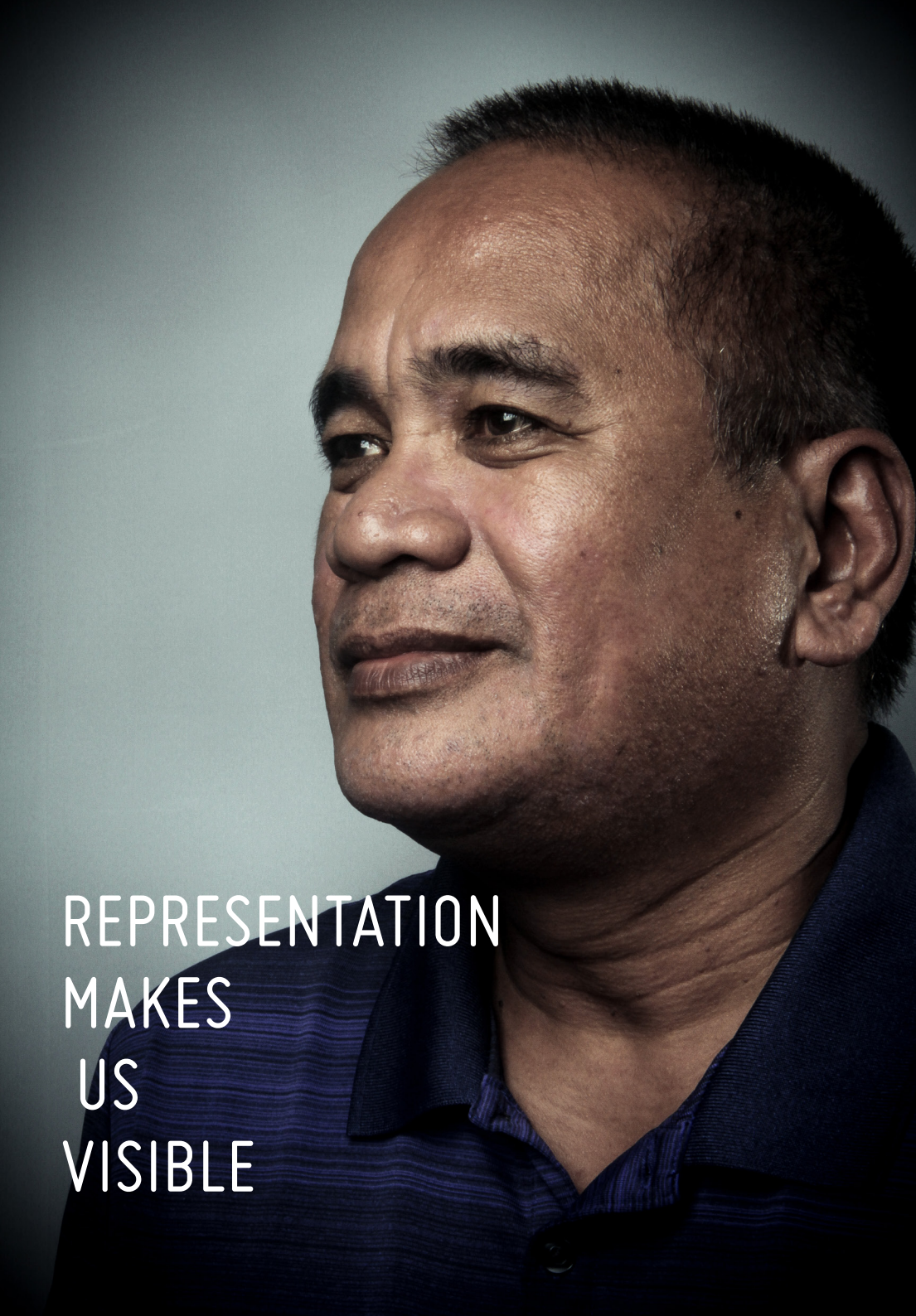
April, a leader of the Hard of Hearing Group Philippines, feels such deafening silence from the society has taken a toll on their self-esteem and participation. “It lessens my self-esteem, and it hinders me to actively participate and become a productive citizen of our society,” she says.

She believes that to be truly inclusive, duty-bearers and stakeholders must address their accessibility needs. “For people who experience hard of hearing, we should be given adequate auxiliary services like captioning, because some of us do not know how to communicate through sign language, and not all deaf wants captioning, as well. We need to be categorized based on our needs,” she proposes, emphasizing that leaving no one behind means providing means for groups of persons with disabilities to be productive.



HEAR US OUT



A close-up, profile portrait of Arthur Letim, a middle-aged man with dark hair, looking slightly to the left. He is wearing a dark blue polo shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

REPRESENTATION  
MAKES  
US  
VISIBLE

## ARTHUR LETIM

Arthur Letim: Above All, Equity

Arthur 'Art' Letim of the Resources for the Blind Institute deems that consultation plays a significant role in understanding the needs of persons with disabilities. "Through consultations, we can articulate our needs because we can understand our concerns better," he adds; however, it only becomes more meaningful if it improves the quality of lives of persons with disabilities.

"It's should not always be 'one size fits all.' It must be equitable for persons with disabilities," Art furthers. To make this happen, he proposes that national and local government actions must align together. "It would be better if programs would be cascaded down to the LGU to address the needs of persons with disabilities, especially during disaster situations."





‘WE ARE THEIR PARENTS,  
INVOLVE US’

National Conference on Disability Inclusion

## FEBE LYBAI MATTHEWS

“Duty-bearers and stakeholders must also understand the needs of parents,” says Febe Matthews, a member of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC)-Persons with Disabilities Sectoral Council, and a parent of a child with disability, in pushing for inclusion.

“Because parents bear the responsibility of taking care of children with disabilities, we must also be invited in activities to tackle our concerns. For example, during disasters, families of children with disabilities need to have their own centers,” she adds. Stressing the importance of empowering parents, she says, “Parents also need to participate in awareness-raising, awareness campaigns, training and conferences.”

Febe sees her role in the NAPC Sectoral Council as a strategy in the journey of children with disabilities towards inclusion. “As a NAPC representative, it is our role to elevate the needs of our children to the government,” she says, “but it entails hand-holding and unity to achieve our goal of inclusion.”



## NORLY CORDERO

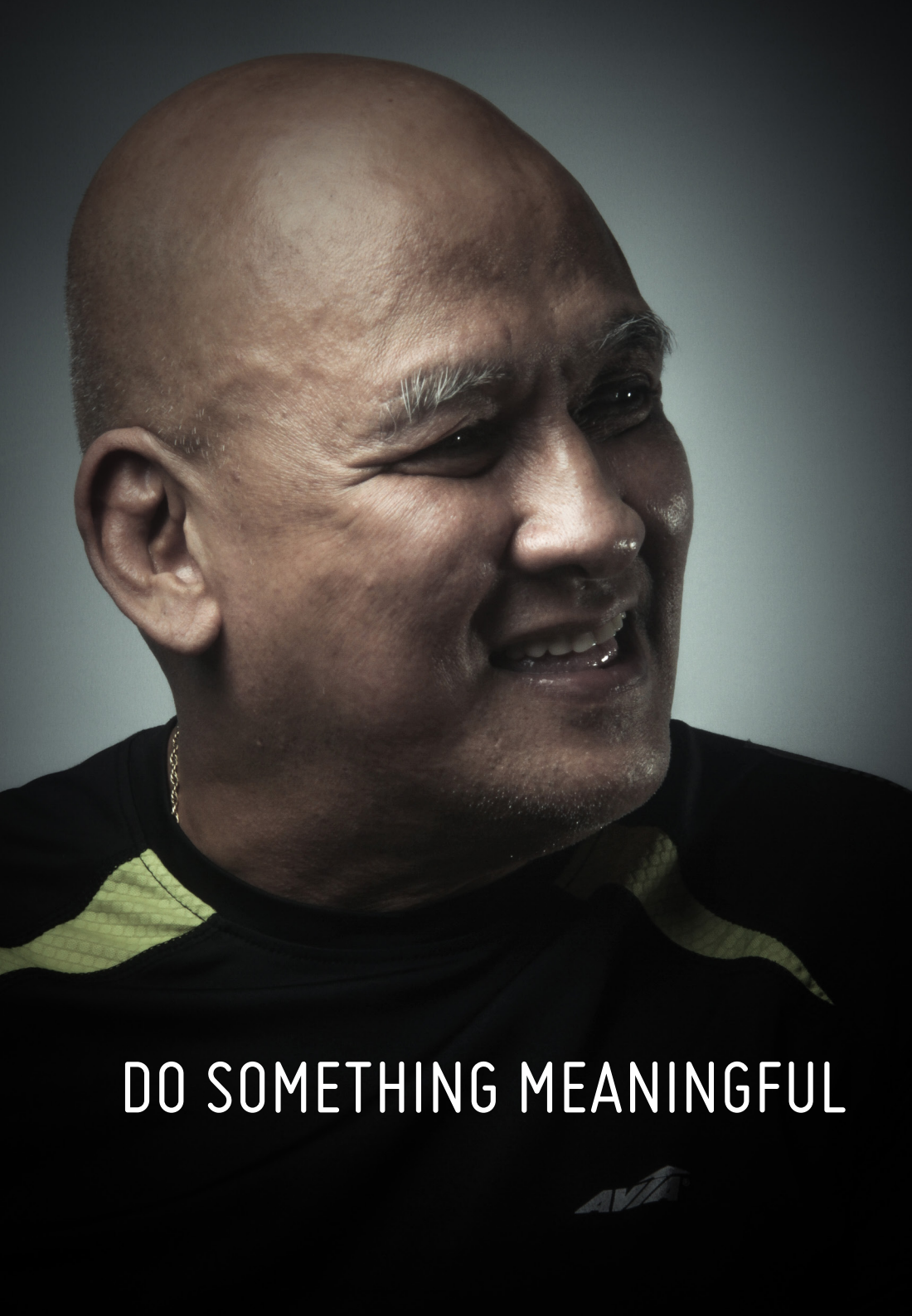
For Norly Cordero, one of the founders of Special and Differently-abled Persons of Lawaan (SDAPOL), her community's experience in Yolanda has ignited her fervor to learn and participate in disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) activities. "Our experience in Yolanda made us realize that we need to take part in various activities related to DRR, that we need to be prepared, to be aware. Persons with disabilities must raise our awareness on DRR," she tells, recalling that during the height of Yolanda, persons with disability were not prepared and did not know what to do.

This made Norly realize the importance of educating persons with disabilities when it comes to disaster preparedness. As a teacher herself, she wants to serve as a channel to encourage persons with disabilities to learn. "I am happy that I am given the chance to be a blessing in facilitating DRR among persons with disabilities and people from the community," she relates. "If we really want to achieve inclusion, we must involve and enjoin all sectors in DRR activities, everyone and not just persons with disabilities."



EXPERIENCE IS  
THE BEST TEACHER





DO SOMETHING MEANINGFUL

## BUTCH ROBREDO

“There are so many persons with disabilities, especially among the blind sector, who are under educated and under privileged,” tells Philippine Blind Union leader Butch Robredo. “The misconceptions that persons with disabilities are burdens and helpless still remain today,” he adds, recounting that in the past four years of his involvement with the sector, he has witnessed the heartrending plight of the sector. This has prompted him to do something to uplift the quality of lives of persons with disabilities.

“I made livelihood, education, and awareness and sensitivity as my three priority areas,” Butch says, and highlights the need to work with various sectors such as the civil society, private citizens, SPED educators, and local government units (LGUs). His experience in working with concerned stakeholders and duty-bearer in Naga City has brought positive changes to persons with disabilities in the city; thus, he wants to duplicate the union’s initiatives to other parts of the country. “While we have limited resources, we are trying to duplicate our initiatives outside the city to help, and I hope will be able to do more for the blind community” he says.

Butch challenges the community to also do something. “I hope the time comes when persons with disabilities would also help the community out. I want them to duplicate what we are doing right now.”



## CAROLYN DAGANI

Carolyn Dagani, the president of Philippine Federation of the Deaf believes that working together for inclusion entails working together with everyone in an equal footing. "It is important that we work together, that there should be trust, there should be communication, depending on what sensitivity that the specific disability needs, so we give accommodation and access to each," she says, referring to the recognition of everyone's rights. "We share our feelings, our hearts, and our thoughts, until they get to know us, and recognize that we are here."

For Carol, while the society recognizes the deaf community, many stakeholders and duty-bearer still fall short in understanding linguistic rights. "The deaf are everywhere. We have intersectionalities. We come in different races, religion, gender. They should know that the deaf have equal rights like everybody else. They tend to forget the most important of our rights, our linguistic rights," she explains.

This is when accountability plays a significant role. "This should be done with accountability. It's not just our responsibility, but also everyone else including the government," Carol reiterates that the rights of persons with disabilities are anchored on international treaties and guarantees such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) which the government is a signatory. "This serves as our basis in making the government accountable."

For years now, the deaf community has become active in advocating human rights. "Before, the Deaf do not speak; but now, we are no longer silent," Carol recounts, and encourages everyone to lend their voices. "We need to help each other. It's not just us... you should also do your share."



SPEAKING OUT TO BE HEARD



## JESDELTON ROMO

Jesdelton 'Jet' Romo of the Philippine Federation of the Deaf Youth Section has a firsthand experience of the earthquake in Bohol that claimed many lives and damaged properties and livelihoods. He was there when the earthquake hit, and he was not able to prepare or do anything because of the lack of inclusive early warning systems. "I hope (our stakeholders and duty-bearers) would understand how it feels to be in the shoes of persons with disabilities," he further narrates, "We do not know what to do during disasters because we are not able to access warning signals."

Because inclusion has yet to be understood by many, there are contrasting views that revolve around the term. "Other people perceive that persons with disabilities can be treated in the same way... either we are at the receiving end or they're using us." For him, inclusion involves working together. "We accept each other's differences and our commonalties; we have to work together to have a better world." To be able to do this, the youth plays an essential role.

"It is important to pass the advocacy to the deaf youth, who will continue our work. We're training the youth leaders today to take care of tomorrow so eventually they can be empowered, be included; so that we can be sure of our tomorrow."

The youth leader points out that collective effort, coupled with sensitivity, can make inclusion a reality. "We have to work together -- respect each other, respect the culture, the language, the values, we collaborate, and work together—this is inclusion."



PASSING THE TORCH TO  
FUTURE LEADERS





## POTENTIAL COMPONENTS OF NATION-BUILDING

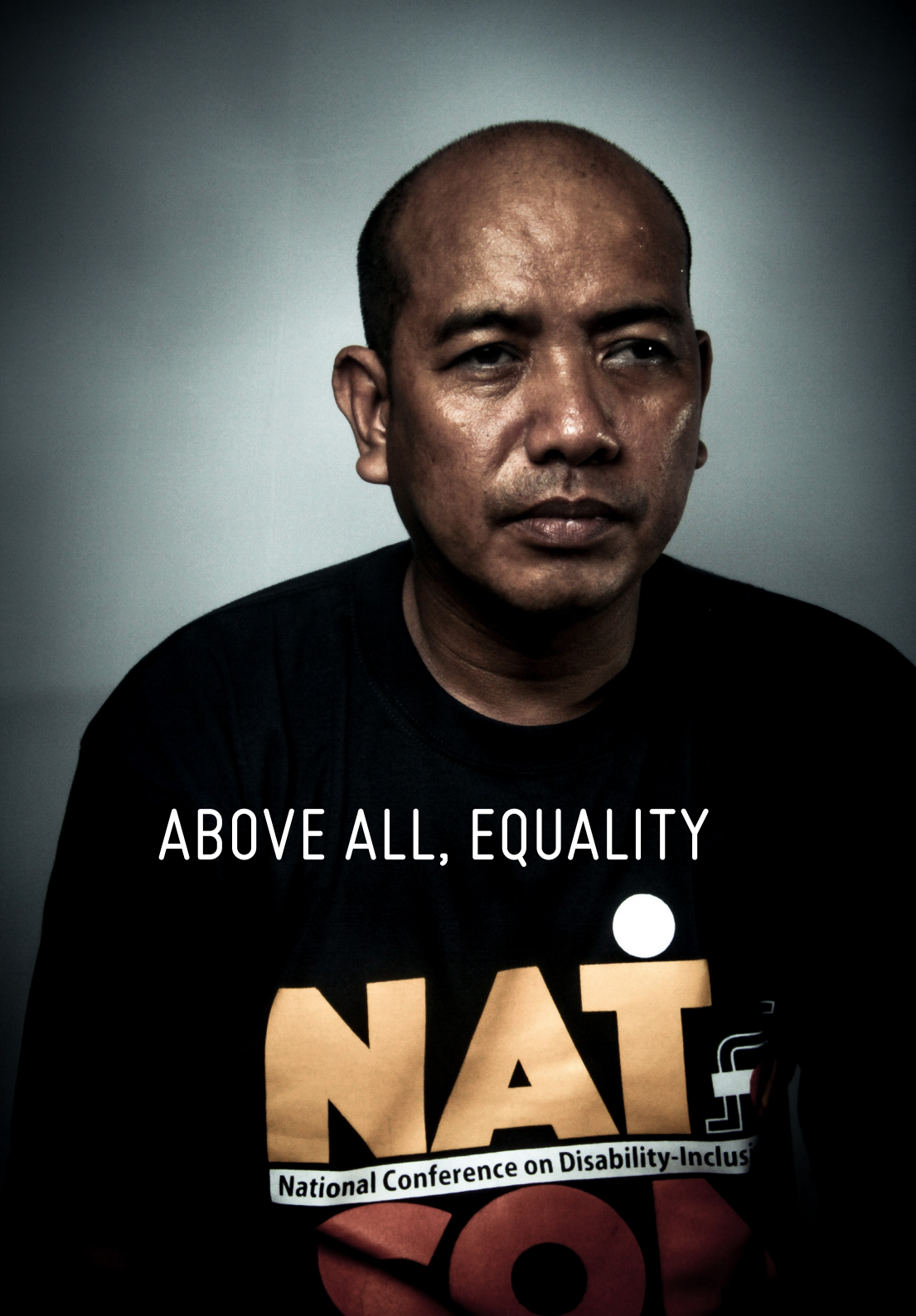
### TED KAHIL

“For me, inclusion means raising the awareness of the public, of the government, and local and international non-government organizations. It means recognizing the rights of persons with disabilities,” award-winning leader, Ted Kahil shares. “It means serious and meaningful participation and recognition of persons with disabilities in all aspects of decision-making, including in crafting policies and plans such as on disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM).”

Ted has encouraged both stakeholders and duty-bearers to create an enabling environment that would allow persons with disabilities to exercise their full potentials. Speaking to the delegates of the National Conference on Disability Inclusive DRRM, he appeals, “We all believe that best policies are those that evolved from the people themselves. Looking at this concept we appeal before the government, should you develop programs and policies please don’t leave us. Always consult us.”

He envisions a society where persons with disabilities are not seen as people who have limitations. “We have capacities, we are potential components of nation-building,” the 2013 Apolinario Mabini Disabled Filipino of the Year concludes.



A portrait of Jose 'Joseph' Ranola, a man with a shaved head and a serious expression, looking slightly to the right. He is wearing a black t-shirt with a graphic that includes the word 'NAT' in large orange letters and a banner below it that reads 'National Conference on Disability-Inclus'.

## ABOVE ALL, EQUALITY

**NAT**  
National Conference on Disability-Inclus

### JOSE GO RANOLA

Jose 'Joseph' Ranola of the Philippine Blind Union believes that their representation to special bodies both at the national and local government makes them visible. It allows them to raise their concerns and take part in the processes of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. That way, "the needs of the persons with disabilities will be included in the planning, in special bodies, especially in the disaster risk reduction council," he explains.

He believes that persons with disabilities should be keen in participating in the bodies such as the DRRM council, "It is our mandate, our duty, and responsibility. It is our duty to represent the sector in special bodies, such as the DRRM council."



## MS. CATHERINE JOY VILLAREAL

“When you are an interpreter, you are also a tutor, counselor, and godmother during weddings, baptisms, and even during funerals. You’re present in every aspect of their lives,” a teary-eyed Catherine Joy Villareal quips as she describes her journey with the deaf community.

To Joi, her journey is a bumpy ride, full of adventures that brought her out of the box. She likens her role to a theater actor who bares her heart and soul to let someone be heard, “you did not only act it out; you also pour your heart to it.”

Her more than twenty years of interpreting has taught her life lessons that honed her not only as a professional but as an advocate herself. “It was not easy to be the shadow; but with the deaf people, we are shadows,” she explains, “we take the backseat to make sure that they are heard,” she says, referring to the ethical considerations of neutrality while serving as a voice to the deaf community.

Asked about the challenges that interpreters confront, she tells, “you lose yourself. Because you are not recognized, people call us PA sometimes even though we are not.” Most people see interpreters like her as a device, not an auxiliary service provider. “They look at us as if we are devices: if the blind has the cane, the wheelchair user has the wheelchair, the deaf has the interpreter.” Such view make interpreters invisible in the midst of the efforts to make persons with disabilities visible. “The deaf are heard, but the interpreter community is not heard sometimes,” she says.

Joi believes that the interpreter community must also be given a voice. “For inclusion to happen, we should also be given representation in meetings and seminars.” Apart from representation, she sees that improving systems such as widening the television insets as well as provision of social security, and government subsidy as beneficial to the interpreter community as it would lessen their multiple burdens of sustaining their daily needs. According to her, most interpreters live a dual life and it takes a toll to their health and well-being,” she relates, “the government could perhaps support us so that the deaf would no longer pay the fees, and interpreters would no longer look for other sources of income.”



AN UNHEARD VOICE  
FROM THE BACKSEAT









# THE CEBU DECLARATION ON DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

The delegates of the National Conference on Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (#DiDRRNatCon) composed of national government agencies (NGAs), local government units (LGUs), disabled peoples' organizations (DPOs), persons with disabilities, civil society organizations (CSOs), non-government organizations, international non-government organizations, representatives from the academe and professional organizations, service providers, and private sector, after having participated, discussed and affirmed the issues and concerns of persons with disabilities on disaster risk reduction and management on October 12-13 at Cebu City, Philippines hereby agree that:

**Persons with disabilities** are men, women, boys, girls, older persons (senior citizens), indigenous people, LGBTQIA, internally-displaced people, and people living at geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas "who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (UNCRPD);"

**Disasters and climate change** pose threats to lives, health, properties and livelihoods of persons with disabilities;

**Barriers including discrimination and poverty** aggravate the vulnerabilities and risks of persons with disabilities that hinder their access to basic social services and opportunities for self-reliance and participation.

**Persons with disabilities and their families, carers and personal assistants** must be empowered to meaningfully participate, decide on, benefit from and contribute in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (CCAM);

**The need to improve the existing mechanisms** on disaster preparedness, prevention and mitigation, emergency response, and recovery and rehabilitation addresses the long-standing gaps on inclusion of persons with disabilities with their intersecting vulnerabilities;

**The realization of disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management (DiDRRM)** entails a meaningful, productive and rights-based collaboration and partnership among international, national and local duty-bearers and stakeholders, and persons with disabilities as stipulated in international and local frameworks on DRRM and CCAM such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Law, the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities, Accessibility Law, among others.





**The government must strengthen its implementation and mechanisms** on human rights, DRRM and CCAM as signatory to various treaties and conventions on human rights, including the UNCPRD to ensure that persons with disabilities access and enjoy fundamental rights;

**The efforts of service providers, humanitarian actors, disabled people's organizations and civil society organizations** that provide capacity-building, advocacy and specific and need-based services to communities of persons with disabilities must complement and support existing initiatives towards inclusion.

**The National Conference on Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction** shall serve as impetus towards the institutionalization of DiDRRM at the national and local levels, agreeing at concrete courses of actions that link and intersect the four thematic areas of DRRM.

Based on the results of this conference and the regional consultations with duty-bearers and rights-holders, THE DELEGATES OF THIS CONFERENCE COMMIT TO STRIVE FOR THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF DIDRR THROUGH:

**1. Upholding the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities in all phases of DRRM and CCAM.**

**2. Developing mechanisms toward the implementation of affirmative actions for the full and active participation of persons with disabilities.**

**3. Strengthening of governmental and non-governmental mechanisms to support initiatives of and for persons with disabilities**

**4. Increasing the capacities of persons with disabilities, their families, carers, personal assistants, communities, and duty-bearers on disability inclusion, DRRM, and CCAM, which include provision of disability support (auxiliary) services**

**5. Improving data management on Gender, Age, and Disability with focus on collection, disaggregation, aggregation, and standardization for risk information and assessment**

Agreed and affirmed by the delegates of the National Conference on Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction and Management this 13th day of October, 2017 at the Golden Prince Hotel & Suites, Cebu City, Philippines.



# *Acknowledgements*

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