



MAKING PREPAREDNESS A WAY OF LIFE

Katarina reading her notes during inclusive community disaster risk reduction and management training



An official from Katarina's community is looking at the rice field devastated by the typhoon. The vast rice fields were gone and now became part of the river.



Katarina's community submerged in water during the Typhoon Josie. This family is leaving the village toward the evacuation center.



"I KNOW THAT HAZARDS ARE INEVITABLE, BUT I CAN EQUIP MYSELF AND MY FAMILY WITH KNOWLEDGE, SO WE'LL NOT BE CRIPPLED BY ITS IMPACT,"

said 47-year-old Katarina (not her real name) when sharing her thoughts with other participants during the inclusive community-based disaster risk reduction training conducted by Plan International.

Katarina is active in her community and has been performing various roles in it, as a member of the Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee (BDRRMC), a Barangay Justice System member, and a community volunteer. As a married woman with four children, it was challenging for her to keep all of her roles and responsibilities in balance, managing care for her family, various economic activities, community involvement and volunteer work. "It was difficult to do different tasks," she said, "but it was also satisfying at the same time. When I received appreciation for what I did, and they are thankful for me, it's rewarding. Though community work is time-consuming, I'm ensuring that I prioritize my responsibility at home. Otherwise, it will be distressing," she said.



She was always enthusiastic about attending of trainings and seminars conducted by Plan International. She felt grateful when the barangay council invited her to participate in the Inclusive Community Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (ICDRM) project. She said,

"I FEEL HAPPY WHEN ATTENDING TRAINING CONDUCTED BY PLAN INTERNATIONAL. IT DOES NOT ONLY ALLOW ME TO LEARN AND GROW, BUT IT ALSO PROVIDES ME THE STRENGTH TO HELP MY NEIGHBORS AND OUR BARANGAY."

"THE KNOWLEDGE I GAINED DURING THE TRAINING IS ALSO BEING CASCADED TO THE COUNCIL MEMBERS. SO THEY WILL BE INFORMED TOO, ESPECIALLY WHEN THERE ARE TYPHOONS."

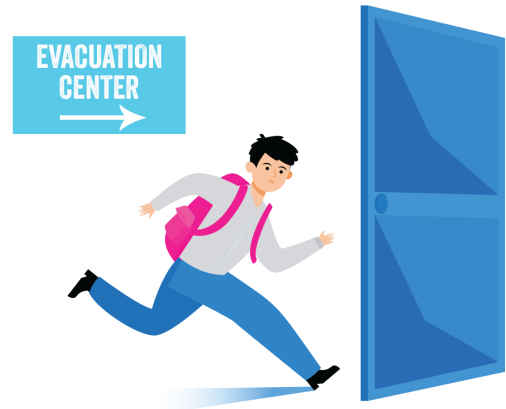
In the last six months, Katarina has participated in different community activities and received training on (1) gender transformative and inclusive community disaster risk management (DRM), (2) gender mainstreaming in DRM, and (3) training of trainers on inclusive community-based disaster risk reduction and management. This training gave her the knowledge and skills essential to keeping her family safe.



"THESE PIECES OF TRAINING ARE USEFUL FOR ME AS A MEMBER OF BARANGAY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (BERT) IN OUR VILLAGE. IT HELPED ME UNDERSTAND HOW TO BE PREPARED DURING TIMES OF DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES. SO NOW I FEEL MORE CONFIDENT AND SAFE"

Through the ICDRM project funded by Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, Plan International, in partnership with the local government from the provincial to municipal and barangay level— has raised families' awareness about disaster risk reduction. Working closing with stakeholders such as the

Municipal and Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils, the project strengthened the capacity of those who are most vulnerable in the community. People who usually were not involved in community development activities due to isolation and seclusion, such as persons with special needs, pregnant women, the elderly, and children, are more aware of how they should respond effectively and safely when there is an emergency.



The positive change in the community was evident when Typhoon Josie struck the province of Occidental Mindoro last July and affected several neighborhoods, including the barangay where Katarina lives. There has been a significant change in the way people respond to emergencies. Katarina said that

"NOW, THE RESIDENTS OF OUR VILLAGE KNOW WHERE AND WHEN TO GO. THEY GO TO THE EVACUATION CENTER. THEY ALSO UNDERSTAND WHAT TO BRING WITH THEM. SO MUCH DIFFERENT; IN THE PAST, YOU NEED TO GET THEM FROM THEIR HOUSE."

To build an understanding of climate change and its impact on people's lives, Plan International, through its various programs, is continuously educating the community, particularly vulnerable groups, to be more knowledgeable, prepared and alert. The culture of preparedness is being taught to every family so that proper planning and timely execution can protect lives and preserve livelihoods. Reaching out to isolated areas and gaining active participation is vital to implementing future activities and projects.

Since preparedness is the key to saving lives during an emergency, changing the mindset of everyone — families, children, youth, persons with special needs, and other vulnerable groups — is essential. Plan International will make it possible to change attitudes and behaviors in future endeavors, so that practicing preparedness for emergencies is a way of life.