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From Extreme Poverty To A Good Life



Aysha Begum always lived in poverty, as a child, a wife and a mother. Disabled, she never earned enough to live on as a day laborer. Rofiz, her husband is also disabled and often too weak to work. With their 3 decimal homestead too small to provide for them, Aysha and Rofiz struggled to survive and their three children, one son and two daughters, never went to school.

Their misery was compounded when their son married a girl from another village and left the family home. When the elder daughter reached an age to wed, the only husband they could find was another poor man.

It was not long after the marriage that the girl returned home because the couple had no money at all and needed Aysha and Rofiz to keep them.

At this point, in 2010, Aysha was asked to join an RDRS project providing support to ultra-poor people. With 29 others in the Dawnala Group, Aysha attended the meetings and, when they reached the stage of setting up an income-generating activity, opted for goat-rearing.

She began with an “asset package” of 2 goats, a shed and some feed; within a few months she had 4 kids on her hands. Two were handed over to the another beneficiary and 2 were sold at the market for 2,400Tk.

With that money, she bought 10 ducks for 2,000Tk, rearing ducklings which she sold for 8,000Tk to buy 4 geese for 2,400Tk. Today, Aysha has 8 goats, 64 geese, 70 pigeons, 16 chickens and 300 ducklings.

The total value of her livestock is about 86,000Tk; her duck eggs alone bring in 1,200Tk a month.

Despite their disabilities, Aysha and Rofiz and their daughters and sons-in-law run a successful business and manage a very productive homestead garden. Soon, they hope, they will be able to buy some land and ensure their grandchildren will have a better start in life. ■

Christian-Muslim Disaster Preparedness and Response Meeting

Since the Tsunami in 2004, Indonesia has seen an increase in community-based and international non-governmental organisations engaging in disaster preparedness and response activities. Indonesia is a country where natural disasters occur frequently. Furthermore, in recent years, there has been a rise in tensions and violence between some Christian and Muslim communities.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Center for Disaster Risk Management & Community Development Studies (CDRM&CDS), HKBP Nommensen University, together with The Humanitarian Forum (THF), desire to build bridges between Christian and Muslim humanitarian organisations working in Disaster Preparedness and Response in the Medan area, North Sumatra.

This meeting in Medan was a follow-up meeting to the workshop co-hosted by LWF and THF Working Together: Christian-Muslim Humanitarian Partnerships in October 2013 in Amman, Jor-



dan. Jointly hosted by CDRM&CDS and the Humanitarian Forum Indonesia (HFI), this meeting sought to bring together Christian and Muslim humanitarian organizations working in the Medan Area, to get to know each other better and to identify areas of common interest and possible collaboration. This was a first step in the direction of improving the collective humanitarian response in the Medan area, and to build trust between Christian and Muslim communities and organizations who share a common goal of empowering local communities affected by disaster and to uphold the rights and dignity of people

in need.

The meeting participants were interested in learning more about disaster preparedness and response, and gave positive feedback about the meeting, indicating that the content was



good and relevant. The speakers laid a good foundation for the practical discussions: government perspectives from the Department of Dis-

aster Management, academic and Christian perspectives and a case study of inter-faith disaster response to the Rokatenda volcano eruption. Participants were engaged in the working group discussion about dis-

aster preparedness and response in the Sinabung area, where the volcano that has been erupting since September 2013 is still active. ■

Senior Staff from AZEECON member countries receive capacity development training

By Leak Ratna, Communications Coordinator, LWD

Senior staff members who perform community development work and facilitate training activities from AZEECON member countries received a week long TOT training on “Facilitating Food Security and Livelihood Programs in the Context of Climate Change”, held from 16 to 23 June in Phnom Penh.

The training course, which was organized by LWD in partnership with International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) under the AZEECON EETV program, aimed to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the participants on the basic concepts on climate change, climate change responses and the use of participatory tools to design community adaptation programs for food security and livelihoods.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Sam Inn, LWD Executive Director, drew the attentions of the participants to the world’s changing climate, the causes and the negative impact of climate change.

“Climate change is caused by human being and human society. The more human society develops, the more they cause climate change to the world. As the results, the poorest countries and the poorest people are seriously affected by the climate change. This is unfair to the poorest countries that did not do much to cause climate change, but are more seriously affected,” Dr. Inn said.

“We as a least develop country, we need to enhance resilience by providing capacity building to the community so that they can cope with and adapt to climate change, and help them mitigate the risk of climate change,” he said. “We need to learn more about innovative approaches how to deal with climate change, share and reflect, and customize these knowledge and skills to our respective context.”

The training course, the first in a series of three courses designed for AZEECON members, included a two-day field practicum to highland, lowland and the riverine areas in Kampong Speu and Kampong Chhnang provinces where participants can practice the tools they learned from the course. On the last day, participants were assigned to develop action plans by country, respectively, in order to identify their



Participants conduct field practicum at Taing Bampong village, Ta Sal commune in Aoral district of Kampong Speu province.



Mr. Mohammad Abdur Rahman

initiatives in applying the lessons they have learned.

Mr. Sann Lwin, Emergency Response and DRR Officer for LWF Myanmar, said the training topic was very interesting and important to the participants because it was the



Mr. Sann Lwin, Emergency Response and DRR Officer for LWF Myanmar

topic of the world’s concerns.

“We will disseminate what we learned from the training and look to modify our existing programs, mainly for climate change adaptation towards food security and livelihood programs,” he said, adding that he would also share his learning with 59 agencies working on disaster risk reduction and food security in Myanmar.

Another participant Mr. Mohammad Abdur Rahman, Project Design and Reporting Senior Coordinator for RDRS Bangladesh, also expressed a similar impression to training topic and modules.

Mr. Rahman said that the course was very interesting, educative, informative and insightful. “We have learned so many things from the course. The most important part of this learning is how to involve the community in the whole process of

developing the climate change related adaptation plan,” he said.

In his action plan, Mr. Rahman said he would share what his team learned with his organization’s senior management and senior staff. He also had a plan to develop the curriculums for two different courses, one for RDRS staff and the other for the community.

There were 12 participants attending the TOT training course. They were from LWD Cambodia, LWF Myanmar, LWS India Trust, LWF Nepal, CDRM&CDS Indonesia and RDRS Bangladesh.

Six months after each course, a 3-day capacity enhancement cum technical backstopping activity will be organized. This will be for sharing and learning from the experience of the participants. Additional two more topics will also be facilitated to further enhance the learning. ■

Community Based Disaster Risk Management Activities in Delta



U Kyaw Naing Oo, 44, uses speaker to alert cyclone

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In May 2008, a large part of the Delta region in South-west Myanmar was hit by the Cyclone Nargis which killed 85,000 people.

The Lutheran World Federation Myanmar was one of the first organizations that could deliver on the spot helping to vulnerable population and since 2009, LWF has trained a number of villagers in disaster risk reduction.

One example is the small community of Paw Taw Mu village, Bogalay Township. The disaster group told that the cyclone prone season is the start and the end of the rainy season.

For this reason, the group is making sure that the village's road is repaired before each rainy season so that the children can get to

and from school.

The members also plant wind break trees at the same time to attempt to obstruct the course of the water and the wind. Cyclone Nargis caused a great deal of damage in this area.

A total of 53 out of 59 houses were destroyed, it meant that the residents were forced to build their village again from the beginning.

“Now we've already made preparations for the next cyclone because we've been trained how to deal with disasters,” says U Kyaw Naing Oo, 44.

“We have a loudspeaker to announce weather forecast news to villagers during the cyclone prone season,” he continues.

Kyaw Naing Oo had his

house washed away by Nargis in 2008 and he is pretty aware of the importance of checking the effects of natural disasters for the safety of his village.

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THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION
Myanmar Program

About AZEECON

AZEECON is an informal, member-led regional network of field programs and Associate Programs of Lutheran World Federation/Dept of World Service active in promoting disaster risk reduction in seven countries.

AZEECON's primary role is primarily capacity-building - facilitating practical, peer-to-peer learning in the broad field of LRRD (Linking Relief, Rehabilitation & Development) responding to mem-

bers' needs and priorities. AZEECON offers a convenient and cost-effective platform for member organisations and staff to gain knowledge, exchange ideas and interact regionally.

Over the past 5 years, over 500 staff have participated in the range of capacity-building activities conducted in topics such as Trafficking, Food Security, Climate Change, HAP, SPHERE Standards, Youth, Advocacy, RBA etc.

Country Members



ASIAN ZONE EMERGENCY AND ENVIRONMENT COOPERATION NETWORK

