

CANADA FUND PROJECT BRIEF

1. Project Title : Community Based Rehabilitation for Hearing Impaired
2. Location : Zambales
3. Project Sector : Basic life skills for youth and adults
Employment policy and administrative
Social/welfare services
4. Budget : Php 1,618,800.00
5. Implementing Organization : International Children's Advocate, Inc.
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6. Duration : April 1, 2005 - October 31, 2006
7. Project Description :

The project attempts to rehabilitate and facilitate the integration of 50 to 70 hearing impaired persons (His) from Olongapo and Zambales in the mainstream of society. This will be done through the following:

- Provision of basic life skills to HIs;
- First level case management and crisis counseling for sexually abused HIs;
- Job placement of HIs through networking with potential employers and support institutions;
- Building and strengthening support groups for HIs; and
- Building the capacity of ICA to provide more effective and sustainable services to HIs.

8. Beneficiaries : 99 hearing impaired, 15 sexually abused HIS,
9. Expected Results :

- 50 hearing impaired persons from Olongapo and Zambales (either walk-in or referred clients) acquired basic life skills
- At least 70% of target HIs are employed in gainful and decent jobs
- At least 90 % of sexually abused HIs handled by ICA are able to express themselves
- At least 90% of sexually abused HIs handled by ICA are provided with crisis counseling before they are referred to other institutions for psychosocial or legal intervention
- At least 90% of sexually abused HIs handled by ICA are given opportunities to undergo psychosocial intervention through referral
- At least 120 families are able to better relate with their hearing impaired children, understand family values, brain development and child discipline
- In-house capabilities to deal with or serve persons with disabilities built among support institutions (e.g., DSWD, police station, barangay councils, day care centers, TESDA/groups providing livelihood skills trainings)
- Community volunteers committed to support HIs identified
- Improved capacity of ICA to manage the program and provide more empowering and sustainable services to HIs
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10. Midterm Results :

For the first five months of project implementation, the ICA should have already been doing the following activities:

- Preparatory Activities – recruitment and assessment of participants
- Capacity-Building for the HIs – teaching basic literacy and communication skills
- Rehabilitation of Sexually Abused HIs – includes case management and crisis counseling, networking with institutions providing psychosocial intervention and legal assistance, referral to other institutions for psycho-social intervention
- Job Placement for the HIs – includes seminar on pre-employment, networking and negotiation with prospective employers and other institutions
- Building Support Group for the HIs – includes capacity-building for parents and relatives of the HIs, community leaders, social workers, police and other support groups and the formation of multi-sectoral task force for the HIs
- Organizational Strengthening of the ICA – includes several trainings on project management, planning, monitoring and evaluation, child protection, communicating with the HIs, review and improvement of modules and documentation of learnings and improvements in approaches/modules
- Outreach to Bataan

The activities above are ongoing until the project with Canada Fund ends. Based on the project report submitted and on the visit with Mike Dunn (CF Project Team Leader – CIDA-HQ) and Gina Mendoza (Finance Officer, CIDA Manila), ICA's activities are right on schedule. The following are the highlights:

Preparatory Activities

The first two to three months of the project focused on the recruitment and assessment of participants including medical check-ups. It was also during this time that ICA was trained on HI management by institutions/individuals specializing in this field.

Capacity Building for HIs

One of the Canada Fund's Project Advisory Committee's (PAC) suggestions was that the ICA explore possibilities of treating deafness by linking them with Ms. Julie Esguerra, Founder and Executive Director of the Philippine Institute for the Deaf (PID). In their meeting last March 1, 2005, Ms. Esguerra made a cursory needs assessment of the ICA and recommended the following specialized trainings:

- Components of the Oral Method
- Speech Development and Correction
- Home-School Partnership and Seminar for Parents

It was in this meeting that the ICA witnessed the effectiveness of the above-mentioned method. The training, as Ms. Esguerra suggested, was done at the PID where training facilities (speech therapy room) are already in place. This also gave the proponent the opportunity to observe how the PID conducts its literacy classes.

With the skills acquired and methods learned from the PID, the ICA is trying to equip at least 50 hearing impaired children with basic life skills that include literacy and communication skills and personality development. At present, 62 HIs are enrolled for education and speech therapy. Students in the elementary level can already communicate through sign language and can utter simple English words while students in kindergarten can read through sign language and write simple words. All students can already pronounce their names and their parents' names as well.

The students were mostly timid at the start because of their condition. For some, seeing people other than their parents is frightening. After a few months of speech therapy, there has been a big improvement in their self-confidence as shown by their eagerness and willingness to express themselves.

Before the project started, the ICA had difficulty in convincing some of the parents to enroll their children in the center. But after several attempts and constant visits by the ICA staff, the parents were finally convinced that their children will have better chances in life if they underwent training.

In a class, children normally show different levels of comprehension and learning. In order for slow learning kids to catch up, the ICA separates them from the more advanced kids. Different methods of teaching are then used to meet the children's level of learning and comprehension.

Rehabilitation of Sexually-Abused HIs

The ICA has children clients who were sexually abused and needed psychosocial care. Thus, before this project officially started, the secretariat and the ICA held a meeting with the Child Protection Unit of the Philippine General Hospital (PGH-CPU) last March 1, 2005. During the meeting, the PGH-CPU conducted a rapid training needs assessment of the ICA and recommended the following trainings:

- Interview Skills Training
- Case Management of Sexually Abused Children
- Crisis Counseling and Day-to-Day Handling of Sexually-Abused Children
- Teaching Children to Disclose (preventive measure)

It was in this meeting that the ICA and the PGH-CPU agreed to exchange resources to be able to enhance respective efforts. The PGH-CPU provided the Casa Gal manual free of charge in exchange for training on basic sign language to be given by the ICA. This was done during the first two months of project implementation.

Training on Teaching the Children to Disclose was conducted by the Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse (CPTCSA) last July 5-7, 2005 which had 30 participants. The 3-day seminar talked about child sexual abuse, the characteristics of a child who has been abused sexually, effects of the abuse on the child, types of denial, norms, fears of disclosure, how to disclose and methodologies which help the child open up.

Aside from teaching abused children to disclose through sign language, the ICA will also be doing some case management, crisis counseling, as well as referring them to appropriate institutions for further psychosocial intervention. As of now, the proponent is handling five rape cases. One case is already at the Fiscal's Office, the other is already handled by the People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance Center (PREDA) while the three cases were dropped because the mothers were not supportive and believe the abuser rather than the victim. Sexually abused children are now staying at the center. They will be pulled out from their parents' custody once the case starts.

Job Placement

Another PAC suggestion was that the trainings should be geared towards job placement/employment. In compliance with this suggestion, the ICA is negotiating with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and other institutions for the provision of a window for livelihood training for the HIs. Alongside, the ICA is also trying to forge a Memorandum of Agreement with potential employers to provide at least 70 HIs with opportunities to participate in economic activities through job placements.

Last July 30-31, 40 HIs attended the Seminar on Labor Rights. The seminar taught the HIs labor standards and benefits (hours of work, compensable work, minimum wage, meal and rest periods, overtime compensation), the rights of both employers and employees and occupational health hazards. The seminar also appraised the HIs about the different requirements they need to comply with and the papers they need to submit as part of the job recruitment process.

The Livelihood Training was done after the Seminar on Labor Rights was conducted. In this training, the HIs learned how to make mango jam, macaroons and ketchup.

Two of the 49 participants were hired by the ICA to operate its sari-sari store; six earned through mango jam production, while four were being employed by Jollibee (a famous fast food chain) and are in the process of accomplishing their list of requirements. Some of the employers or business owners that the ICA has talked to though are still a bit hesitant to hire hearing impaired persons. But this has not discouraged the ICA from enhancing the competitiveness of the HIs. The ICA knew that the employers and business owners need to be also educated for them to be able to appreciate the capabilities of the HIs.

Building Support Group for HIs

The mainstreaming of the HIs does not only depend on enhancing and/or improving their life skills. Their environment, which includes the immediate family and neighbors, also need to be trained on how to correctly deal with them. This is the reason why the ICA is also teaching the parents and relatives special communication skills (sign language or oral method).

In five months, the ICA has trained 201 parents, which is more than their target of 120. As early as now, parents have seen the impact the training has in their lives in terms of being able to communicate with their children. Now, they know what their children feel, want and say. These new skills enable them respond to the HIs needs better. The parents have appreciated the changes so much that they expressed their intention to learn further.

Meanwhile, since hearing impaired persons have difficulty in accessing the services/support of institutions (e.g. community leaders, DSWD, police stations, etc.) due to communication barriers and inadequate understanding by others about their plight, the ICA is building a strong support group for HIs by equipping barangay leaders, social workers, day care workers, the police, community leaders and other concerned groups with skills in sign language and case management. In July 19-21, the ICA conducted a seminar on the Magna Carta for persons with disabilities which was attended by 58 participants.

A public high school teacher, who participated in this seminar, did a similar activity in their school in coordination with the ICA last September 21. The seminar which was dubbed "Close Encounters with Persons with Disabilities (Hearing Impaired)" was attended by police officers, teachers and HI students.

Organizational Strengthening

Apart from enhancing the capacity of the HIs and rehabilitating the sexually abused among them, this project also aims to strengthen the capacity of the ICA to provide sustainable and empowering services to HIs by equipping the staff and volunteers with skills in project management, planning, monitoring and evaluation, handling sexually abused HIs and teaching them to communicate through the oral method. The project tapped the expertise of institutions/individuals specializing in this field, as suggested by the PAC. These were the PGH-CPU, the CPTSCA and the PID. The trainings from all of these institutions/individuals were done in the first two months of project implementation. Learnings from these are now being used to improve the ICA's existing modules and approaches in mainstreaming hearing impaired persons.

Outreach to Bataan

In compliance with another PAC suggestion, which is for ICA to extend services to HIs in other areas, the group did an outreach program in Bataan on October 3-5, 2005. The ICA staff and volunteers made an inventory of HIs in the province and encouraged those found to avail themselves of assistance. A total of 49 HIs signed up and expressed willingness to be referred to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). They were also encouraged to visit the ICA center so they would have an idea about the programs and activities of ICA on, for and with the HIs.

Target Beneficiaries

Number of beneficiaries originally planned to assist through this project:

Direct: 70 HIs (no specific number of males and females)

Indirect: 120 parents and relatives of HIs; 60 support groups (which includes social workers, community leaders/volunteers, police, TESDA, etc.)

Number of beneficiaries actually assisted through this project:

Direct: 62 HIs	Female: 33	Male: 29
Indirect: 396	Female: 303	Male: 93

Impact on Women

In many uneducated environment, the presence of a person with disability is considered a burden. This is doubly true in environment with HIs who also cannot speak. Much more if the HI is a girl who may need special care during her growing years especially in the puberty and menstrual cycle periods. This project, which trains the HIs to communicate and express themselves in a manner understood by non-HIs, is somehow ensuring that the girl HIs learned about proper grooming, cleanliness and care of themselves. Their acquired ability to care for themselves will enhance their acceptability even in uneducated environment, including, hopefully, the employment milieu.

Finances

Based on the financial report, ICA has already spent Php655,175.00 of the released Php809,400.00 as first tranche. This is about 81% of the first tranche.