

CANADA FUND PROJECT BRIEF

1. Project Title : Integrated Development Project for B'laan, Maguindanaon Muslim, and Setter Community
2. Location : Maguindanao
3. Project Sector : Basic health care
Strengthening civil society
Agricultural inputs
Agricultural extension
Agricultural financial services
4. Budget : Php 1,072,500.00
5. Implementing Organization : Maguindanao Development Foundation, Inc.

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6. Duration : October 31, 2007 - November 30, 2008
7. Project Description :

The project shall respond to the basic issue and problem of poverty brought about by low agricultural productivity which is, in turn, caused by various factors like lack of opportunities for maximization of land resources, absence or lack of better infrastructures, agricultural production and post-harvest support facilities, and others.

Thus, the project aims to provide the needed components and opportunities to improve agricultural productivity and eventually contribute in improving the socio-economic condition and the quality of life of people. In a nutshell, it will enhance the capabilities and capacities of the residents, both public officials and civilians, to manage and equitably enjoy their human and natural resources through applying the principles of good governance.

8. Beneficiaries : 60 households
9. Expected Results :

- More farmers have learned new knowledge and skills on upland farming technologies.
- Cultivation has expanded and the number and type of plants and crops have increased and have become more varied and diversified.
- One community association is organized, formed, and registered with appropriate agency.
- CA provided and equipped with necessary education and training on institutional and organization development, financial management, projects/ programs management, and others.
- CA has strategic and operation plans detailing how to manage and sustain the project.
- Barangay leaders have acquired additional knowledge and skills, especially in the area of governance.

- Barangay has come up with ordinances for environmental protection, land use plan, and other similar local laws.

10. Midterm Results :

The following are the accomplished activities per objective in the first quarter:

Objective # 1. To provide opportunities to 60 farming households for transfer of knowledge and skills on various agricultural technologies, particularly those related to farming and crops production in the upland and hilly terrain.

The preparatory activities for the conduct of agricultural technologies training were conducted. Among the first training activities that were undertaken was the Training on Asexual Propagation and Sustainable Agriculture Technologies in January to February 2008

Community discussions and assessment on the present farm situation and conduct of farm planning were also conducted. In January 2008, actual ocular inspection of individual farms in preparation for expansion and diversification of production was started.

Meanwhile, the nursery for fruit and forest tree seedlings were established largely through the efforts of the youth. From November 2007 to February 2008, more than 1,000 mango seedlings and 5,000 seedlings of mahogany, talisay, and others were propagated.

Objective # 2. To organize and form one community association that can become responsible in taking up and sustaining the initial investments and gains of the project.

The proponent organized a project implementing team (PIT) composed of five members (two women and three men) in November 2007. This team conducted two consultation meetings in the community which were attended by barangay officials, purok (village cells) leaders, and community members in the same month. This resulted to the formation of a core group a month later. The core group is the governing body for the project at the community level. On 29-31 January 2008, a local association of residents in the barangay was organized after a Pre-Membership and Education Seminar was conducted. 2007

Objective # 3. To provide opportunities for the barangay leaders, both from the public and private sectors, to be educated and acquire appropriate skills on effective participatory governance for environmental protection, establishment of local industries, and development services.

On 7-8 February 2008, the PIT conducted a training on Barangay Government administration that was attended by 59 barangay officials, purok leaders and volunteers. The participants, not used to this kind of training, needed longer time to internalize the issues discussed. For most of them, the training was an eye-opener on good governance.

Objective # 4. To provide basic and primary health care services to beneficiaries in coordination and collaboration with the barangay and municipal local government units.

In January 2008, the PIT identified and trained two health volunteers for the management of a village pharmacy that the project intends to establish in the barangay. The site for the pharmacy and the herbal garden was already established and will be developed once the construction of a multi-purpose center is completed.

On 14 February 2008, 55 residents attended the training on Primary Health Care. Most of the participants were women who were also observed to be more active and interested in the topics discussed. The MDFI succeeded in encouraging the Barangay Council to explore possibilities to develop a potable water system in the village so that the residents will be more able to practice the knowledge they learned from the health training.

Unanticipated benefits:

The active participation and cooperation of the women and the youth sectors (including even children) in the project are quite exceptional. They were always there participating in almost all project activities, volunteering and spontaneously lending hands in activities that required physical efforts and labor. This has resulted in creating an atmosphere of camaraderie and closeness among community members, and increased awareness on the sectors' social responsibilities. In fact, it even resulted in the decision to construct a multi-purpose community training center, an output that is not part of, or included to, this project. With the community's cooperative spirit, the project perceives no discrepancy in the implementation plan. All activities as planned were accomplished according to the schedule during and within the reporting period.

While the Canada Fund has already provided its initial financial contributions of P536,250.00, the community has provided the land space for the seedlings nursery and herbal garden, contributed labor and materials for certain construction like fencing of the nursery, botika sa barangay, and the multi-purpose center. The proponent, on the other hand, has contributed some seeds propagated in the nursery, extra expenses on travel and transportation, and in coordinating for resource persons from the Municipality of Norala.

Difficulties encountered and actions taken:

The project implementation was a bit affected by negative attitudes of some people who lost trust on development projects and on forming community organizations because of bad experiences. They expressed a wait-and-see attitude towards the project, rather than actively cooperate and participate in its implementation.

But the situation was overcome and community participation was strengthened with continuous information dissemination, community discussions and coordination with municipal officials.

Beneficiaries:

- Number of beneficiaries targeted to be assisted through this project?

Direct:	Female: 60	Male: 60
Indirect:	Female: 100	Male: 100

- Actual number of beneficiaries assisted through this project?

Direct:	Female: 25	Male: 52
Indirect:	Female: 50	Male: 50

Impact on Women

The women have participated very well in the project. They are the most active participants and cooperators in the conduct of various activities related to project implementation. In fact, the Core Group that was organized as a precursor of the community association was headed by a woman in the person of Mrs. Mangabay Kalilayan who is committed and determined to lead in the organization and formation of a viable association or people's organization (PO) in the barangay. Due to her strong sense of community leadership she was able to encourage and convince the women in the barangay to actively participate in the project. The women participation in the Core Group and eventually in the association has made them always involved in decision making relative to project implementation.

Impact on the environment

As of the reporting period, the project has no direct impact yet on the environment. Environment-related components and activities are still on their preparatory stages such as the preparation and growing of tree

seedlings in the nursery, identification of forest and agro-forest area, and technologies training on appropriate, environment-protective farming systems and agricultural production activities.

The direct project impact on environment will certainly be achieved with the expansion of forest area by planting more forest trees and other flora, soil conservation through application of appropriate farming technologies in the uplands, and in developing more production forests (fruit trees, commercial and industrial permanent plants, etc.) in the buffer zones.

Lessons learned:

The period of project implementation is still partial (about 4 months) and, therefore, the reflection on lessons learned applicable to other projects may not have sunk in thoroughly. But the most significant realization in this project implementation is the effective role of immersion, continuous discussions and information dissemination, and education on the project in generating the active participation and cooperation of the people. This has led to smoother implementation and facilitated conduct of project activities and effective accomplishment of project objectives.

Finance

The proponent had already utilized Php 234,889 or 44% of the first tranche of grant amounting to Php 536,250.00. On the other hand, its combined counterpart contribution reached Php 115,181.50 or 18% of the annual commitment amounting to Php 626,000.00. The grant and counterpart utilization appear to be appropriate and consistent to the purpose for which these are allocated.