

Women empowerment through volunteerism

Jovy Picardal, 41, a resident of Barangay Mataas na Kahoy, General Mamerto Natividad, Nueva Ecija is one of the strong ladies who persistently prove that the days of women inferiority are long gone. With her drive, dedication, and commitment, along with her fellow active community volunteers, Picardal made it possible for her barangay to bag the third place in the Municipal Inter-Barangay Forum – Participatory Resource Allocation (MIBF-PRA).

Aside from being a parent leader of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, Picardal is a volunteer of the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan – Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS) and a bookkeeper of Barangay Sub-Project Management Committee (BSPMC). “Pinagbuti ko ang pagiging volunteer na iginawad sa akin. Isa rin ako sa nakaalalay sa aming treasurer ng barangay sa kadahilanang siya ay may maraming trabaho (I did my best as a volunteer. I was also one of those who assisted our barangay treasurer because he’s too busy with other matters),” she said with pride and enthusiasm.

She worked non-stop to make her community a conducive and sustainable place for the future generation. Remarkably, she achieved way more than what she asked for when her community’s collective effort was acknowledged by the KALAHI.

Last November 2015, her barangay was selected among the 64 barangays in Region 3 to receive the Community Development Technical Assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Picardal and her fellow volunteers were the happiest in their community when their proposed construction of a school building for their community high school was selected and funded by the department.

Now, the sub-project in Barangay Mataas na Kahoy is complete and the volunteers and organizers are waiting for the release of their third tranche fund. With the support of the Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) led by Punong Barangay Gemeniano Narciso, the project was implemented with minimal and manageable challenges. Picardal added, "Ang problema ng barangay ay isa-isa naming hinanap at binigyan ng solusyon. (We determined and addressed the problem in our barangay)."

According to Picardal, when the KALAH I was introduced to their barangay in 2015, the entire community became mobilized as the program triggered their sense of volunteerism. To determine which problems needed to be addressed, they conducted a Participatory Situational Analysis (PSA). "Dito ko nalaman kung paano ang proseso ng programang ito at dito ko nakita na may maganda silang hangarin para umunlad ang barangay (Here, I found out about more about the program and realized that it is intended to help our barangay progress)," Picardal said. After the PSA, the members of the community were delegated to their respective positions. Here, Picardal was tasked to be the volunteer in the Project Preparation Team (PPT) and Community Monitoring Team (CMT).

As a volunteer, Picardal developed the confidence and skills to communicate with the officials of KALAH I-CIDSS. "Dahil dito, lalo naming pinagbuti ng pagvovolunteer na kahit mahirap, pinagpatuloy ko ang pagiging volunteer. Dito ko naranasan na masaya ang may naitutulong sa mga kabarangay at maraming natutunang kaalaman para sa pagpropose ng isang proyekto (Because of this, we exerted further effort in our volunteer work despite all the hardships. I am happy that I can help my fellow community members while learning the needed skills in project proposal)," she added.

Fulfilling the role as a community volunteer also made Picardal realize that although she was not able to graduate high school, she can still play a significant role in her community. KALAH I taught her how to manage important project

documents, as well.

“Ang lahat ng ito ay aking ginampanan bilang volunteer para maisakatuparan at makamit ang magandang record ng aming barangay sa Programang KALAHÍ CIDSS NCDDP. Hanggang matapos ang aming proyekto, ako [ay] isang volunteer pa rin para sa ikauunlad, ikagaganda, at ikasasaya ng aming barangay. Maraming salamat sa KALAHÍ-CIDSS-NCDDP at mga kawani nito (I accomplished all of these as a volunteer for our barangay to achieve and attain a good record in the KALAHÍ-CIDSS-NCDDP program. Until the end of our project, I will be a volunteer for the progress, beautification, and happiness of our barangay. Thanks to the KALAHÍ-CIDSS-NCDDP and to its employees),” Picardal said. ### (Ma. Denieele M Lomboy/Manilyn B. Cruz)