

Batangas Province launches Project LAWA and BINHI to combat El Niño's impact

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The Provincial Government of Batangas, in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) CALABARZON Region, has launched Project LAWA (Local Adaptation to Water Access) and BINHI (Breaking Insufficiency through Nutritious Harvest for the Impoverished) to address food and water security concerns in the face of El Niño threats.

This initiative falls under the “Risk Resiliency Program – Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation through Cash for Training/Work (RRP-CCAM CFTW)”. It aims to provide a long-term solution for the five targeted towns: Lian, Rosario, San Juan, Santo Tomas City, and Tingloy.

The program kicked off in Lian, implemented by the Provincial Government Environment and Natural Resources Office (PGENRO) from April 1 to 20, 2024. A total of 435 beneficiaries, consisting of farmers and fishermen from various people’s organizations, participated.

The project comprised three key phases:

- **Training (3 days):** Participants received comprehensive training on the DSWD project, disaster preparedness, climate change adaptation strategies, and mitigation techniques.
- **Work (15 days):** Beneficiaries actively contributed to community resilience by engaging in activities such as water harvesting system rehabilitation, canal and water channel cleaning, and tree planting.
- **Project Turnover and Assessment (2 days):** The project culminated in evaluating program effectiveness, identifying necessary maintenance procedures, and a ceremonial handover to the local government unit (LGU) and beneficiaries.

On April 30, 2024, a payout of ₱4,089,000.00 was distributed, with each beneficiary receiving ₱9,400.00 as compensation for their twenty days of work. This program not only strengthens community preparedness but also empowers participants financially.

The Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office, Office of the Provincial Agriculturist, and Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office actively supported PGENRO in implementing the initiative. Additionally, collaboration occurred at the municipal level, with the participation of the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO), Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO), and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) of Lian.

Project LAWA and BINHI is scheduled to continue in the remaining targeted towns until August 2, 2024. This collaborative effort between the provincial government, DSWD, and local communities demonstrates a proactive approach to building resilience against climate challenges.