

Seminar Workshop in the Philippines
Building Resiliency in the Face of Disasters
(Report)

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A seminar on disasters was hosted by the Philippine Association of Social Workers Inc. (PASWI) between March 2nd and 4th 2016 in the city of Puerto Princesa, Palawan, the Philippines. The seminar was sponsored by the Japanese Coordinating Body for IFSW Membership utilizing grants from the Center for Social Welfare Promotion and National Examination in Japan. The island of Palawan is located in the Southwestern part of the Philippines and is known for pioneering initiatives in environmental protection in the country. Also, its subterranean river is a natural World Heritage site attracting many tourists, mainly Westerners.



Altogether approximately 180 people participated in the seminar, including not only social workers from Palawan and other parts of the Philippines but also barangay leaders (the smallest municipality unit in the Philippines). From the Japanese Coordinating Body, Machiko Ohara of the Japan College of Social work and I attended to make presentations about the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Presentations from the Philippines covered a wide range of topics in disaster assistance such as the introduction of governmental measures in disaster prevention and management, partnership between the government and citizens, psychological and mental support, people with disabilities, children, hygiene, housing issues etc. Presenters were also very diverse including social workers, academics, government employees, UNICEF staff, air force military personnel, and firefighters.

My impression was that all presenters were extremely capable by utilizing icebreaking techniques, making the audience laugh, thus drawing their attention and being quite enthusiastic. The audience responded to this and many added their voices, so one could feel that they really want to learn. As for the content, most presentations were informative and awareness raising rather than focusing on academic research. This way, the seminar managed to fulfill its goal by being a truly bright event full of smiles.

Finally, I would like to express my most sincere respect and deepest gratitude towards the Philippine Association of Social Workers Inc., especially PASWI President Mrs. Eva Ponce de Leon for being able to realize such a fulfilling seminar in such a short period of time for preparations and for their kind considerations in various areas during our stay. Thank you very much!

