

Update on Daram

This is an update about life in the area of Daram, as seen through the eyes of the children and families who live there. Daram is made up of various communities and the situation and the activities described are representative of the area as a whole.

The information in this document was provided by children and adults during a year end program reflection and assessment facilitated by Plan staff.

As an island town, Daram is one of the poorest areas in West Samar. The absence of a circumferential road aggravates the problem as people cannot transport their goods. As children, we are most affected because we walk far to go to school, to fetch water or go to the health centre. Accessibility to basic services is also poor. There is a growing concern now about destruction of the environment especially as farmers and fishers engage in destructive fishing and farming methods such as dynamite fishing and the use of chemicals in the farm. With Plan's help, we were able to implement some projects which we have identified in last year's plan. Below are some examples of what has taken place the past year.

SCHOOL ASSISTANCE TO KEEP CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

As many families find it hard to keep their children in school, Plan supported them by providing assistance ranging from school uniforms, school supplies, schools fees, transportation and lodging cost.

Jovan, one of the beneficiaries now 13 years old who went back to school as a grade 2 student, said: ***"I was challenged to go back because I realised that if I don't go to school and finish my studies, I will not be able to read and write well. Plan's assistance gave me a chance to overcome poverty. I observe that people with good jobs are those who finished their studies and those who did not go to school are ignored when they apply for work...."***

12 year old Jennifer said: ***"Through Plan's scholarship program, I am able to continue my studies. Some day, I want to become a teacher and help my parents..."***



Children and youth during the mapping to identify children beneficiaries of the school assistance project



A teacher sharing out her students with their school work

Children took part in identifying the beneficiaries of the project, mapping the neediest of families. They were assisted by a team of adults and Plan staff and identified children who are at risk of dropping out from school. Last year, Plan assisted at least 600 elementary students and around 200 high school students. ***"We study hard because education is our road to success!"*** commented the 23 scholars during an assessment. The program was a great help because last year, there was an increase in the enrollment at both elementary and high school levels.

In addition, teachers' training also increased the teachers' competency in employing new creative teaching methods, further increasing motivation of their students.

