



## **Philippines project: Barrangay Bagong Buhay, Ormoc**

# Summary

In April, 2014, five months after the typhoon Yolanda alit in the Philippines, Ibasho teams and HelpAge-COSE members visited five communities affected by the typhoon, including Barangay Bagong Buhay. The visitors helped assess the communities' needs and exchanged ideas with local elders about how Ibasho can help elders to develop their livelihood projects that also benefit younger members of community.

Ibasho team chose Barangay Bagong Buhay as the site for an Ibasho project in October 2014 and organized a launching workshop with a group of local elders in January 2015. Since then, elders in Barangay Bagong Buhay have made tremendous progress, with the help of a local Ibasho coordinator, a minimal investment from Ibasho.org, and a donation from the Japanese elders in Ibasho House in Ofunato, Japan. Their efforts have strengthen the social ties of elders in the community, and enhanced visibility of their effort and its positive impacts on making their community a better place by harnessing the elders' skills and experience to help mend a community traumatized by a natural disaster. The group of elders is slowly changing the perception about the role of elders in the Barangay Bagong Buhay.

## Timeline

January 8 and 9: Japanese elders to Philippines for Ibasho project launch and vision workshop

- Two elders from Ibasho House traveled with the Ibasho team to help establish the Ibasho project in Philippines
- Elders in Philippines decided to work together on three projects—recycling, a vegetable garden, and a mobile Ibasho café—before starting to plan for an Ibasho café.

January 10: Ibasho local coordinator appointed

- Ian Parrucho moved from Cebu to Ormoc to lead the Ibasho project with local elders.

February: Recycling project started: elders collect plastic bottles from all the houses in the barangay bi-weekly

March 13-18: Filipino elders to Japan

- Two Filipino elders and Ian Paruccho visited Ibasho House in Ofunato, Japan
- 2 elders from Philippines and 4 from Ibasho House in Japan participated as invited panelists at the World Bank and at an Ibasho joint session at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan.
- Japanese elders donated \$300USD to Ibasho Philippine project

April 27: Vegetable garden site identified

- Elders negotiated with a landowner to use property free of charge to grow vegetables

May 7: Vegetable garden project launched

- Elders cleared the vegetable garden area and planted seeds

June 1: Water piping set up at garden

## Next steps

Elders are hoping to move forward in the following areas:

- Expand the recycling project to cover a wider geographic area and to recycle more materials
- Create arts and crafts with children using recycled materials
- Improve the vegetable garden's soil
- Sell vegetables to community members
- Organize a picnic for community members, especially for children
- Create a space for school children to grow vegetable
- Start designing a mobile Ibasho café
- Get a site for a future Ibasho café donated by the city of Ormoc



## Ibasha events: 2014-2015

### 2014

Date	Event	Description
April	Ibasha's first visit to Philippines for assessment	"Ibasha teams and HelpAge-COSE members visited 5 communities including Barangay Bagong Buhay that were affected by the Typhoon Yolanda in Philippines. Assessed the community needs and exchange each other's ideas.
October 31 & November 1, 2014	Ibasha's second visit to Philippines: Chosen Barangay Bagong Buhay for the project site	Ibasha members visited Barangay Bagong Buhay and shared their ideas with the community elders. After the conversation, Ibasha team chose this community for the Ibasha Philippines project.

### 2015

Date	Event	Description
January, 8th and 9th	Ibasha's first workshop with community members	Three Ibasha activities were determined: Recycling; vegetable gardening; and promoting nutrition through a store on wheels
January 10, 2015	Appointing a Project Coordinator	A Filipino nurse from Cebu City was selected to become the Ibasha project coordinator. An initial agreement was made on this date and the Ibasha president and the project coordinator were in constant communication within the rest of the month in preparation for the official start of the coordinator's work in Bagong Buhay in February.
February 6, 2015	Reaching out to the leaders of the OPO in Bagong Buhay	The project coordinator met with key leaders of the OPO in Bagong Buhay to formally introduce himself as the Ibasha project coordinator and to setup a date for a meeting with the elderly population of the community. It was found out that the elders had already started the recycling project by collecting plastic container/bottles from community members.
February 9 & 10, 2015	Locating JICA and Local Rotary Club offices	The Project coordinator the JICA and Rotary club offices within Ormoc City and got hold of their contact information.
February 11, 2015	Joined an OPO meeting	The project coordinator joined a monthly meeting help by the OPO on every 2nd Wednesday of the month. The Participants were 80% of the OPO members, which is most of the population of elders within the community. The coordinator introduced Ibasha and its concepts, including the 3 Ibasha projects decided on January's workshops.
February 11, 2015	The search for 2 elders that would travel to Japan for the exchange program.	Within the OPO meeting, the project coordinator starts to look for 2 elders qualified to represent the elders of the community and, more importantly, those who have travel documents/passports.

Date	Event	Description
February 13, 2015	Meeting with the City Mayor	The project Coordinator meets with the city Mayor as a sort of courtesy call to make known the mayor the presence of Ibasho and its operations in the City.
February 14, 2015	The 2 elders that would have the opportunity to travel to Japan are selected.	The Project coordinator has decided on who to travel to Japan and submitted copies of their passports to the Ibasho President.
February 17, 2015	Visas are needed to travel to Japan	It was initially thought that Filipinos did not need visas to enter Japan. On this date, the it was brought to the project coordinator's attention that visas a required from Filipinos and that the project coordinator and the 2 selected elders have to apply for visas before the travel date on March 13.
February 17, 2015	Searching for Travel Agencies within Ormoc City	The Project Coordinator searches for travel agencies that could provide information about, or help in, processing visa applications for Japan.
February 20, 2015	Long distance call from Ormoc City to the Japanese Embassy in Cebu City.	The project coordinator was recently advised by the Ibasho president that the Japanese consulate in Cebu was recently contacted and that the embassy is willing to help in making the application process easier. The coordinator needed to conatct the embassy for the list of requirements. The project coordinator lists sown the requirements while speaking to a consul over a payphone.
February 20, 2015	Weekly Meeting #1	The project coordinator and the participants mainly discuss the improvement of the Recycling project.
February 24-25, 2015	Presence of the Ibasho filmmaker in Ormoc City.	The Ibasho project coordinator had prepared for the filmmaker's arrival by arranging transportation and scheduling interview sessions with some elders. The filmmaker took some footage of Bagong Buhay's area and interviewed some elders.
February 26, 2015	Visa application at the Japanese Embassy in Cebu City	The project coordinator and the 2 elders, who would be travelling to Japan, travel to Cebu City for a day to submit their requirements to the Japanese Embassy for their visa application. The weekly meeting scheduled for this date was postponed to give way to this activity.
March 2, 2015	Confirmation on visa application status.	The project coordinator makes another long distance call to the Japanese Embassy in Cebu City to confirm the status of their visa application. The Embassy confirmed that the visas have been approved and are ready for pickup.
March 5, 2015	Weekly Meeting #2	The weekly meetings were continued on March 5, discussing the progress on the recycling project and deciding on Filipino dishes that their 2 representatives can cook for the elders of the Ibasho House in Ofunato City.
March 11, 2015	Travelling to Cebu prior to the Japan trip.	The Project coordinator and the 2 elders go to Cebu City in preparation for their departure to Japan on March 13.
March 11, 2015	Picking up the visas	The 3 travelers pick their visas up at the embassy.

Date	Event	Description
March 13, 2015	Departure from the Philippines to Japan	The 3 travelers leave Cebu for Manila, then Fukuoka, up to the final destination at Sendai. They arrive later that evening, after a 12-hour trip, and were greeted by the Ibasho president.
March 14, 2015	Bus trip to Ofunato City and visiting the Ibasho House	The Filipinos are accompanied by the Ibasho president and her team on bust trip to Ofunato, where the Ibasho house is located. Upon arrival at the Ibasho house, they receive a warm greeting from the Japanese elders and enjoy certain activities that the Japanese elders had planned for the day.
March 15, 2015	2nd and last day in Ofunato	The Filipinos enjoy a visit to the vegetable garden of the Ibasho house elders. Then the Filipino elders cook 2 Filipino dishes for lunch. After all the other activities set for the day, the Ibasho president's team and the Filipinos all leave Ofunato and go back to Sendai.
March 17, 2015	Being part of a HelpAge presentation at the WCDRR	The 2 Filipino elders, accompanied by their project coordinator, take part in a presentation by HelpAge Int. at the Sendai International Center for the WCDRR.
March 18, 2015	WCDRR Public Forum by ibasho, and The World Bank/GFDRR	The Filipino and Japanese elders join together at a WCDRR Public Forum regarding "Elders Leading The Way to Inclusive Community Resilience" at the Tohoku University in Sendai.
March 19, 2015	Departure from Sendai to Cebu City, Philippines.	The Filipinos Take their 1st flight out of Sendai to Fukuoka, then from Fukuoka to Manila, Then Manila to Cebu City. They arrive in Cebu later that evening after a 12-hour flight.
March 25, 2015	Joining the OPO Monthly Meeting	The OPO monthly meeting usually takes place on every 2nd Wednesday of the month. For March, the OPO members decided to postpone their meeting to wait until the 2 ladies come back from Japan. A few days after safely arriving back in the Philippines, the 2 ladies and the Ibasho project coordinator share their experience from the Japan trip with most of the elders in Bagong Buhay during the Senior Citizens Association's monthly meeting for March.
March 31, 2015	Weekly Meeting #3	The postponed weekly meetings were continued on this date. The discussion was more on gathering information needed for applying for a grant for further support on the exchange program. Discussion on looking for a piece of land for the gardening project took place. The elders are to look for a landowner who is willing let the elders borrow an area for the gardening project, just like the Ibasho House garden in Ofunato.
April 04, 2015	Visit to a site for possible application of the Gardening Project	Elders led the Ibasho project coordinator to this area within Bagong Buhay. The elders were hoping that this could be where the gardening project would be applied. Unfortunately, it was later clarified that the owner has recently closed a deal with a buyer for the land. The search for an area to have the gardening project continues.

Date	Event	Description
April 9, 2015	Starting the Ibasho Philippines facebook page	The Ibasho project coordinator starts a facebook page that would have information on, and pictures of, the progress of Ibasho Philippines.
April 9, 2015	Meeting Cancelled	The elders and the Ibasho coordinator were supposed to have a meeting that night but the elders have forgotten due to upcoming Barangay-wide activities in observance of their Barangay fiesta.
April 13, 2015	Weekly Meeting #4	Another weekly meeting took place where the elders and the Ibasho project coordinator discussed the progress of the recycling project and the search for an area to start the gardening project. Also, the coordinator introduced a plan to register their group as a non-profit organization and advised the elders that roles and assignments will be decided for the members within the next weekly meeting.
April 18, 2015	Senior Citizens' Night	The event that the elders have been busy about for the past 2 weeks. The official Fiesta date is on April 22. Certain events and activities are done each day within the fiesta week of the barangay, including this night.
April 22, 2015	Fiesta day for Barangay Bagong Buhay.	The entire barangay does a fiesta celebration in honor of their patron saint, San Vicente Ferrer
April 24, 2015	Weekly Meeting #5	The group discussed their options regarding potential landowners who can let them borrow an area for the gardening project. It was agreed that one particular landowner will be sought after as soon as possible. Also, the group elected officers and assigned roles for the members that would sustain/oversee operation for the Ibasho projects in Bagong Buhay.
April 27, 2015	Approval from a landowner	One of the elders contacted the Ibasho project coordinator and informed him of the good news that a certain landowner has agreed to allowing the group to make use of his unused lot for the gardening project for the time being.
April 28, 2015	Surveying the new garden area	The Ibasho coordinator, accompanied by two elders, surveyed the lot and took pictures.
April 29, 2015	Weekly Meeting #6	The group discussed their plan to gather other elders who are interested in volunteering to do some work in clearing up the area for their gardening project. It was decided that the clearing activity will be done on May 2, 2015.
May 2, 2015	Clearing the Garden area	A number of the elders of Bagong Buhay came together and started clearing out the area to make it ready for gardening
May 3, 2015	Clearing the Garden area, 2nd day	The elders continued to clear the area and have already started planting some vegetables. Okra and String beans are planted.

Date	Event	Description
May 7, 2015	Planting seeds	The elders plant more vegetables at the garden. Bitter gourd and bell peppers are added.
May 7, 2015	Weekly Meeting #7	Another meeting discusses the plans for further improvement to the garden and the need for watering cans. It was decided that a nursery for seeds and young plants should be put up. One of the elders start the planning and initial construction of the nursery immediately on the following day.
May 8, 2015	Acquiring Watering Cans	As discussed during the previous night's meeting, the project coordinator acquired two watering cans for use at the garden.
May 8, 2015	Getting a list of children without parent within the community	After being instructed by the Ibasho president to gather information about children without parents in the Barangay, the project coordinator reached out to the Barangay Health Center for information. The coordinator was given a list of such children including their ages.
May 8, 2015	Construction of the garden's nursery begins	One of the elders start construction of the nursery, using available resources within reach.
May 12, 2015	Garden visit/gardening activity	A visit to the garden by the project coordinator showed that Spring onions were recently planted and Chinese Cabbage were recently grown in a seed box. The coordinator also witnessed the elders' gardening activity and using the watering cans.
May 13, 2015	Weekly Meeting #8	The group discuss what to expect within the next 3 months. They also discuss the possibility of having a water source at the garden without having to use the landowner's water supply.
May 21, 2015	Garden visit	Another visit to the garden by the project coordinator shows good progress on the construction of the nursery and the remarkable growth of the plants.
May 21, 2015	Weekly Meeting #9	The group discuss a scheduling for 2 groups of elders taking turns daily in taking care of the garden. Because of the summer heat, plant growth has been very slow and constant care and frequent watering is recommended. The group also decided that water piping should be established from one of the elders' house (only 2 houses away from the garden area) to the garden. The elders also needed fertilizer and additional materials for the nursery as the available ones are not enough. The elders agree on preparing for the list of materials needed for the water source and nursery, including the fertilizer, along with costing estimates.
May 28, 2015	Helping in the Recycling project	The Project coordinator gathered the empty plastic bottles from the house he is living in and brought it Barangay Bagong Buhay to contribute to the recycling project.

Date	Event	Description
May 28, 2015	Weekly Meeting #10	The elders gave a list of materials, with estimated costs, to the project coordinator. The coordinator has planned to acquire the materials on the following day.
May 29, 2015	Garden visit/gardening activity	Another garden visit by the project coordinator showed that the roofing construction for the nursery has begun. Sponge gourd has been recently planted, along with a bamboo framing where the vegetable's vines can soon crawl on. The Chinese Cabbage was attacked by insects.
May 29, 2015	Acquiring materials for water supply piping and additional materials for the nursery.	The Project coordinator acquires the materials listed by the elders and brings all of them to the garden, ready for assembly on June 1.
June 1, 2015	Assembly of water piping.	2 male elders and the project coordinator work together in the assembly and connection of the water piping, from the house of one of the elders to the garden. With a distance of about 60 meters, they are able to bring water supply to the garden through a faucet on the garden's end of the piping.

# Ibasha Philippines activities

## April 2014

Ibasha teams and HelpAge-COSE members visited 5 communities including Barangay Bagong Buhay that were affected by the Typhoon Yolanda in Philippines. Assessed the community needs and exchange each other's ideas.



## October-November 2014

Ibasha members visited Barangay Bagong Buhay and exchange ideas with community elders. Ibasha team had chosen the community as the Ibasha project site.





## January 2015

Ibasha team and HelpAge-COSE members visited the Barangay Bagong Buhay with two elders from Ibasha project in Ofunato, Japan. Conducted the first workshop to create the Ibasha project in Ormoc, Philippines. With the facilitation of Ibasha team, elders have decided to collaboratively develop three projects: Recycling, Vegetable garden, and Nutrition project for children in the first two years as their Ibasha project. Ian Parrucho was appointed as the Ibasha local coordinator to assist the elders in Barangay Bagong Buhay.



## January 10

Appointing a Ibasha local coordinator: Mr. Ian Bernad Parrucho (Resident of Cebu)

## January

Barangay Bagong Buhay members started the Recycling project

## February, 2015

### February 6

Ibasha coordinator's first meeting with elders in Barangay Bagong Buhay: Ian Parrucho, Ibasha local coordinator was introduce to the elders in the Barangay Bagong Buhay. He has explained about Ibasha, and the vision for the community.



## February 9 and 10th

Locating JICA and Rotary Club in Ormoc, Philippines: For the potential collaboration opportunity, local coordinator was asked to locate these two organizations. He has met JICA representative to learn about the disaster relief effort in Ormoc.

## February 11st

Local coordinator participated in the meeting held by the OPO (Old Persons Organization):

Introducing Ibasho concept to the community elders, and discussed how to implement this concept into Barangay Bagong Buhay. A representative from the neighboring barangay approached the local coordinator if Ibasho may want to work with them. He has explained that the focus now is on the Barangay Bagong Buhay, yet, his community members can always join and learn from the activities in Barangay Bagong Buhay.

Elders were asked how they could collaborate with other members of barangay, school, local government, and businesses to make the Ibasho environment



## February 11th

Meeting with the City Mayor of Ormoc

Local Ibasho coordinator met with the city Mayor as a sort of courtesy call to make known the mayor the presence of Ibasho and its operations in the City.

## February 14th

2 elders from Barangay Bagong Buhay were to be selected to Travel to Japan for the UN WCDRR and a visit to the Ibasho House in Ofunato. We needed 2 active elders that exemplified leadership qualities to represent the elders of their community. We selected Mrs. Annie Lambo and Mrs. Rosalina Sagales. They were to travel with Ian Parrucho, their project coordinator, on the 13th of March of 2015. Ian calls them Nanay Annie (Left) and Nanay Lina (Right). "Nanay" is a Filipino term for mother.

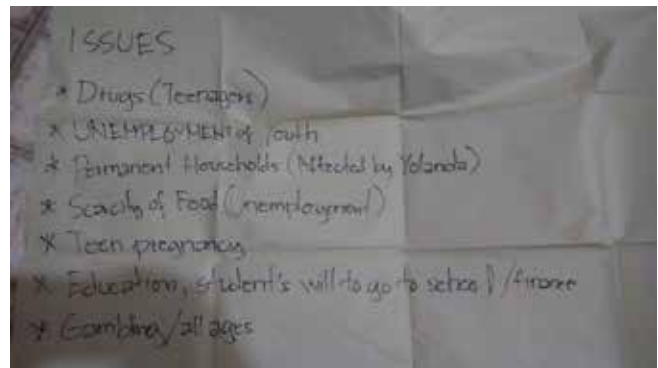


## February 20th

Weekly meeting with Elders:

Elders discussed the progress of the recycling project and discuss ways of improving it. They have also identified the current issues in their barangay. Those issues were: drug, teenage pregnancy, unemployment,

scarcity of foods, gambling, schooling (students motivation to go to school).



#### February 24-25th

Filming for the “elders leading resilience” for the WCDRR (funded by the World Bank)

#### March 2015

##### March 05th

Weekly meeting

Brainstorming on the vegetable recipe to be cooked at the Ibasho house by the 2 Filipino elders in Japan, and proposal to come up with a token for the Japanese elders. They have decided to make two dishes to cook for Japanese and elders and prepare a handmade mat as a gift.



##### March 1-7

Preparation for the WCDRR conference in Sendai  
Coordination with Emi for preparations and tasks before the trip were made via an exchange of several emails.



##### March 11

The visa to attend the WCDRR was approved by the Japan Embassy in Philippines.

##### March 13- 19th

Delegates from the Barangay Bagong Buhay travel to Japan to attend the WCDRR conference in Sendai, Japan



DATE	ACTIVITIES
MARCH 13 <sup>th</sup>	The 3 travelers leave Cebu for Manila, then Fukuoka, up to the final destination at Sendai. They arrive later that evening, after a 12-hour trip, and were greeted by the Ibasho president
MARCH 14 <sup>th</sup>	The Filipinos are accompanied by the Ibasho president and her team on bust trip to Ofunato, where the Ibasho house is located. Upon arrival at the Ibasho house, they receive a warm greeting from the Japanese elders and enjoy certain activities that the Japanese elders had planned for the day.
MARCH 15 <sup>th</sup>	The Filipinos enjoy a visit to the vegetable garden of the Ibasho house elders. Then the Filipino elders cook 2 Filipino dishes for lunch. After all the other activities set for the day, the Ibasho president's team and the Filipinos all leave Ofunato and go back to Sendai.
MARCH 17 <sup>th</sup>	The 2 Filipino elders, accompanied by their project coordinator, take part in a presentation by HelpAge Int. at the Sendai International Center for the WCDRR.
MARCH 18 <sup>th</sup>	The Filipino and Japanese elders join together at a WCDRR Public Forum regarding "Elders Leading The Way to Inclusive Community Resilience" at the Tohoku University in Sendai.
MARCH 19 <sup>th</sup>	The Filipinos Take their 1st flight out of Sendai to Fukuoka, then from Fukuoka to Manila, Then Manila to Cebu City. They arrive in Cebu later that evening after a 12-hour flight.



**March 15th, 2015**

Japanese Ibasho elders donated 300USD to help Ibasho Philippine project.

## **Reflection: Filipino elders (Annie Lambo and Rosalina Sagales)**

Our Trip to Japan was a very unforgettable experience in our lives.

We left Ormoc on a ferry/fast craft to Cebu on March 11, 2015, got our VISA for Japan which were all ready for pickup at the Japanese Embassy in Cebu, then we stayed overnight at a pension house until March 12, 2015. We started the flight for Japan on a 3am flight from Cebu to Manila on March 13, 2015. From Manila, we had a connecting flight to Fukuoka then another connecting flight to Sendai. It took us about 12 hours of total travel time, not to mention that it was an all-expense-paid trip by the good people of Ibasho, bless them! The trip at our age was exhausting, actually, but we enjoyed it so much that we would gladly do it again if given another chance (of course, we would rather have the chance given to others). And we thank Ian Parrucho, Project coordinator of Ibasho Philippines, for being so kind, understanding, and of much help to us all the way to Japan and back. He made all the travel arrangements with Emi.

After arriving in Sendai Airport at around 7:00 pm, we were warmly met by the ever kind-hearted Emi Kiyota, oh how we miss her now. She had visited our place here in the Philippines, Barangay Bagong Buhay of Ormoc City, several times before. Seeing her in Japan was a different feeling for us. We were taken to our hotel for the night by car and the one who drove us was no less than Mr. Suzuki, a professional camera man. The welcome was worth remembering forever. Early on the following morning, we took a bus to bound for Ofunato City. On that 1st day in Japan, we felt the coldness going through our bones, very very cold. Being Filipinos who are used to tropical weather, it was absolutely cold for us.

On our way to Ofunato City, I was impressed and envious, it was traffic-free all the way. More so, seeing roads that lead toward a cluster of houses or just toward one single house. I had a tearful eye, realizing that no home was left out from being accessible through asphalt roads. How seemingly cared for are the Japanese people by their government.

At around 11:00 am, we felt right at home and that just like we belong. We saw Mr. Kimuro and Mr. Gunpei again, who were in the Philippines on January of 2015. Their welcome was so heartwarming that deep within us we thought - "How can we ever thank them?" We shed tears of Joy. The welcome was made even warmer with the winter coats they provided and eventually given to us. We would have been freezing if it weren't for the thoughtfulness of the Japanese elders. Shortly after our arrival, we presented our gift for the Japanese elders on behalf of the Senior Citizens of Barangay Bagong Buhay. Our gift was a green mat with woven flower images with the inscription - "To the Japanese Elders of Ibasho Cafe, Ofunato, Japan. From the Senior Citizens of Barangay Bagong Buhay, Ormoc City, Philippines. We also brought them Dried Mangoes from Cebu, much they enjoyed much to our delight. Before we had lunch, we were given the experience of making our own lunch. We were taught to make sushi. We are so thankful that the Japanese elders shared their expertise. It was so fun, we enjoyed it very much. We only had to spread the sticky rice onto the seaweed wrap then top it with steamed vegetables and rolled them tightly and it was done. We then had lunch and ate the sushi we made. We tasted the Japanese food and it was good. Honestly, it is a shame that we never learned to use the chopsticks so we had to ask for spoons and used the chopsticks as forks. The Japanese elders smiled, and we felt they understood our agony with their nods. We had the feeling that they seem to say, "just be yourselves."

Our shared impression is that, at an Ibasho Cafe one can feel the sense of sharing what one has: talents,

resources or treasure, and time, with the joy of doing it. One might have aged but still capable of doing something worthy. It's a place where older people can talk about each one's joys and sadness, and with just the presence of one another makes one happy. There is the feeling of making oneself useful to others. We can still babysit for 1 or 2 hours, prepare simple snacks and serve coffee, make potted flowers or vegetables. All these would feel so wonderful. Or maybe we can just be silent for an hour, read books or take a nap. An elder can feel just right at home.

More so, In an informal manner at the Ibasho Cafe, planning for activities to reach out and be of help to the more needy can be done. Talking, exchanging ideas or having a simple conversation can help make our minds active. To us, it is a dream come true to have a place such as the Ibasho Cafe in our community.

Aside from the sushi, the Japanese elders taught us how to make flowers out of recycled paper and how to do origami. Oh, they have so many skills. Looking at them do it seems easy but it requires technique. We only hoped we could do it back home.

We stayed overnight at the Ofunato Onsen Hotel. Our room had a magnificent view of the sunrise, as well as view of the tsunami stricken area where the water rose up to 24 meters and cost lives in 2011. When we saw such a view, we remembered our own ordeal of 2 disasters, a flashflood in 1991 and Super typhoon Yolanda in 2013. Amidst enjoying the view, the pain and bitterness came back to us. In Ofunato city, the reconstruction of buildings, homes, and other structures are amazing and are still going on until now. Our realization is that disaster can happen anytime, the question is how prepared are we when they do?

Before we left the Ibasho Cafe, we had our share of cooking Filipino food for lunch. We treated the Japanese elders to "Pinakbit" and "Sinigang". They said the food was good, we hope that was true. In the afternoon, we said our goodbyes to the Ibasho Cafe and the elders. It was quite heartbreaking, with the feeling that we may or may not see each other again, who knows?

On the 16th of March, we were back in Sendai and were free to roam around the city and visit shopping centers. Early morning on the next day, after breakfast, we were fetched by HelpAge International for their presentation at the UN WCDRR, with Emi's consent, to share our experience with Yolanda for just 3 minutes each for the both of us. In the afternoon, the ever kind Mr. Suzuki drove us all the way to the outskirts of Sendai, to a ski resort to see and feel snow for the first time. It was truly an experience of a lifetime for us, lying down on the snow and touching it with our own bare hands.

Then our moments of fright came on the 18th of March as we were guest speakers for the WCDRR public forum by the World Bank-GFDRR. The ordeal was really made simple by the organizers, particularly Emi Kiyota and Margaret Arnold, for us elders to relax and think of it as just a conversation. The kind Mayor of Ofunato was there to personally support Ibasho. We can only hope that we did our best.

Saying our final goodbye on the 19th of March was heartbreaking again. Our hearts were so full, and we could not be thankful enough. No words could express our gratitude to Emi, Ibasho, and the World Bank for extending to us the invitation to be present at the WCDRR. It was such an honor. We are also very thankful for allowing us to visit and experience the Ibasho Cafe, Japanese hospitality, and how the cafe operates. To the elders of the Ibasho Ibasho Cafe, to Ikumi, Mr. Gunpei, Mr. Kimuro, Mr. Suzuki, Hiro, and everybody else we were unable to mention, we thank them so very much. Our experience with them will never be forgotten.

## Reflections: Ian Paruccho (Ibasho local coordinator)

As the project coordinator of Ibasho in the Philippines, I already had an idea as to how the recent Japan Trip would impact the course of the Project in the Philippines, even before the trip had taken place.

Since I introduced myself to the elders of Barangay Bagong Buhay in February of this year as the Ibasho Coordinator, the efforts to have all the elders develop a full understanding of what the organization aims to achieve has been never ending. Apart from some people having a different idea on the type of help that Ibasho is willing to extend, most have been rather skeptical on Ibasho's purpose and legitimacy. After the January 2015 visit, they did not even expect that anyone from Ibasho would return to coordinate the start of the micro-projects that were discussed (recycling, vegetable gardening, Ibasho on wheels). With this, I had hoped and expected that the Japan trip would be an eye-opener for many, a solid message from Ibasho saying, "We are here, we want to help but not the usual kind of help most would expect..." Those who may have questioned Ibasho's willingness to endure and fight for the value of the elders in Bagong Buhay have now surely believed it's solid presence. This has been evidenced by an increase in enthusiasm from the elders in moving on with the micro-projects and Ibasho has now started to gain recognition from the local government considering that they were not even interested in finding out what Ibasho is before the Japan trip took place.

Testimonies from the two elders who traveled to Japan have been very helpful in spreading the cause throughout the elders, specifically to the members of the Senior Citizens Association. The most important change that has taken place after the Japan trip is that Ibasho now has a voice that the elders are now willing to take seriously and listen to, which would gain the biggest advantage of having the elders cooperate with each other and with Ibasho throughout our projects.

The picture above shows an ideal example of one of the activities that I would personally like to experience here in Bagong Buhay, which is the interaction between elders and the younger generation. At 1st glance one can say that it is merely a display of elders teaching children how to prepare food. But looking at the picture at a deeper perspective can show you a way of keeping alive important values and traditions by passing them on to younger generations in the form of such activities. The application of such a concept would be very beneficial in the Philippines considering that our Filipino values and traditions are slowly



fading away, if not already gone.

The picture above shows me the ideal environment within an Ibasho Cafe. Seeing elders helping out and enjoying at the same time while contributing to the community is living up to the principles of Ibasho. They come together as one big happy family, and each one feels a sense of belongingness. The elders in the Philippines may not have realized it yet, but a similar scenario can be seen from their progress in the recycling project that they have already begun. I hope to share this example with the elders of Bagong Buhay, as a way of encouraging them to continue their efforts and what they have started.

The picture above shows the exchange of knowledge between the Japanese elders and Filipino elders regarding vegetable gardening. It also shows the Japanese elders' resilience and continuing to plant and care for their plants despite the harsh conditions of winter. The knowledge that the 2 elders have gained here will be applied in having our very own vegetable garden in Bagong Buhay soon. If certain obstacles are met in realizing the gardening project, the Japanese elders' resilience can be applied as an example to encourage the Filipino elders to go through such obstacles.

### **March 25**

OPO monthly meeting/Ibasho weekly meeting:

Presentation about the Japan trip with the slideshow as a way of telling the success story of Ibasho and the Elders of Ofunato and providing an idea of the extent of support that Ibasho is willing to provide to the elders of Bagong Buhay.

Comment from Ibasho coordinator:

The Japan trip is truly impactful for Ibasho's goals. The elders are more enthusiastic on their Ibasho projects more than ever and any skepticism regarding our organization and its aims have now been lessened, if not completely erased, based on my observation. The plan to have more exchange programs in the future would certainly be very beneficial and impactful to the organization's goals and the success of Ibasho in the Philippines.

### **March 31**

Ibasho weekly meeting: Discussing and gathering information needed for the grants application for the exchange program.

The cost for the followings:

- Vegetable gardening project: Soil and fertilizers (the cost per back and how many bags): 15,000 to 20,000 PHP in total, roughly equivalent to 350 to 450 USD. The elders arrived to these amounts considering that the land they hope to use is the size of 200 square meters. With this size, they estimate that 10 bags of enriched soil and 50 bags of organic fertilizer would be used.
- Materials to create a mobile Ibasho cafe (the cost to create a pushing carts—i am assuming that local elders will help build the cart): This will cost around 5,000 to 8,000 PHP, roughly equivalent to 112.5 to 180 USD.
- Cost to build an Ibasho cafe (construction cost — materials and labors?): the elders came up with an estimate basing on the construction of the Barangay Hall (Community Center). The Barangay hall covers an area of 100 square meters. If an Ibasho House were to be built with the same size as the barangay hall, and considering today's prices on construction materials, the elders estimate a cost of 800,000 to 1,000,000 PHP (18,000 to 22,500 USD) that would cover materials and labor cost.

## April, 2015

### April 2nd

Identifying the organizations that have been providing assistance to the Barangay Bagong Buhay

International organizations that are providing support in the Barangay Bagong Buhay.

-The organizations that provided support for the Barangay, especially after Yolanda, were "Save the Children (the roofing for the covered court was from their help), HelpAge/COSE (provided food and medicine), TZUCHI (a Taiwanese organization that provided food and financial assistance), and a German organization (still the name of this organization escapes the elders but they say the organization came and helped clear out debris and road blocks such as sawing out fallen trees).

### April 4th

Visit to a site for possible gardening project

Elders led the Ibasho project coordinator to this area within Bagong Buhay. The elders were hoping that this could be where the gardening project would be applied. Unfortunately, it was later clarified that the owner has recently closed a deal with a buyer for the land. The search for an area to have the gardening project continues.

### April 9th

Starting the Ibasho Philippines Facebook page

The Ibasho project coordinator starts a facebook page that would have information on, and pictures of, the progress of Ibasho Philippines.

### April 13th

Ibasho weekly meeting: Update on the progress of the recycling project, starting the gardening project, and introduction to plan of having Ibasho Cafe body of officers. They have decided to collect recyclable metal like tin cans, iron, and other scrap metal to expand their recycling operation.

### April 20th

Starting up to form a not for profit organization for the Ibasho:

Elders are agreed to form a not for profit organization to operate the Ibasho project. They will be preparing for the election process to make the selection of officers in a fair manner.

Basic requirements for registering a non-stock corporation

- The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) lists the following as basic requirements for registering a non-stock corporation:
- Name verification slip
- Articles of Incorporation and By-laws
- Affidavit of an incorporator or director undertaking to change corporate name
- List of members, certified by the Corporate Secretary
- List of contributors and amount contributed, certified by the treasurer
- I got the information above from this link: <http://homegrown.ph/how-to-set-up-your-own-non-profit-corporation/>

### April 24th

Ibasho weekly meeting

Update on the progress of the recycling project, starting the gardening project, organizing Ibasho Cafe body of officers.

Gardening project site was confirmed. Elders have secured the property by negotiating with the landowner, and let the Ibasho project use his land for no cost.

- Chairman: Estrella "Nanay Esther" Anunciado
- Assistant Chairman: Irene "Nanay Babie" Balbao
- Secretary: Rosalina "Nanay Lina" Sagales
- Treasurer: Annie "Nanay Annie" Lambo
- Project Director for Recycling: Domingo "Tatay Domeng" Lazo
- Project Director for Gardening: Vicente "Tatay Vic" Po
- Project Director for Ibasho on wheels: Josefina "Nanay Pina" Cadiben
- Board members were also assigned but the list has yet to be finalized

#### **April 28th**

Suveying the garden site:

The Ibasho coordinator, accompanied by two elders, surveyed the lot and took pictures. Nanay Pina and Nanay Dedeng, have been given consent by a certain land owner to borrow a portion of an empty lot for the gardening project. Elders, Nanay Pina and Nanay Dedeng, take the Ibasho Project Coordinator, Ian, to the gardening site to view the area. Requires work for clearing, but the elders are up to the task. Nanay Pina has planned to gather more elders for the next meeting to discuss the plan of cleaning up the area for planting and doing what they can for the time being, without any funding yet.



#### **April 29th**

Ibasho weekly meeting:

Update on the progress of the gardening project and planning on cleaning/clearing of the garden area. Everyone at the meeting seems to be excited to take part in the clearing set for Saturday morning

Comment from Ian: It is indeed great considering that we would start the gardening project in a similar way as what was done on Ofunato. The elders in Japan are also only borrowing the piece of land that they are using for their vegetable gardening. This is mainly why we have encouraged your group to find a piece of land for the group to borrow, not to purchase. Also, this meeting's main purpose is to plan the clearing of the garden area, which is Nanay Pina's initiative.



#### **April 29th**

##### **Ibasho weekly meeting:**

The group discussed their plan to gather other elders who are interested in volunteering to do some work in clearing up the area for their gardening project. It was decided that the clearing activity would be done on May 2, 2015.



#### **April 30th**

Revisiting the misunderstanding between the school representatives and Ibasho during a meeting that they had on January 10, 2015 and clarifying the goals of Ibasho as opposed to what was initially understood by the school representatives. Establishing a connection or sound relationship with the school principal for future involvement of the school in Ibasho projects/activities.

Mr. Jardin: What happened was that a HelpAge representative came to us and even reached out to an engineer from the department of education, asking the engineer to come up with a floor plan and costing proposal for a school structure because Ibasho will be funding such a project. This was the expectation given to us by HelpAge before the meeting started. The engineer supposedly had another project within Ormoc but had to abandon it to make way to this supposedly new project. He came up with the planning and costing proposal as soon as he could and was ready to present it at the meeting, only to find out that this was not what Ibasho had wanted. When your president started to deny the proposal, we looked to HelpAge but their side was silent and they could not even look at us at the time. I have a friend from HelpAge, who was really close to, who now seems to avoid me and is somehow ashamed to talk to me ever since the incident. We realize that somehow HelpAge was not able to accurately communicate to us what Ibasho wanted to communicate through HelpAge.

#### **May 2015**

##### **May 2nd and 3rd**

Clearing garden area: A number of the elders of Bagong Buhay came together and started clearing out the area to make it ready for gardening

A big day for the elders as they start clearing the gardening site. Not only was this day important for the gardening project, it was also very significant in terms of applying the principles of IBASHO. The concepts of IBASHO came to life as the elders came together, worked with each other, enjoyed each others' company and the activity while setting an example and showing leadership in the community, and with each of them feeling a sense of belonging in the group. A wonderful day for the elders...a wonderful day for IBASHO.

##### **Composts**

The elders have gathered all the weeds, leaves, and other organic debris that were cleared out of the area to have a form of composting. The composts will later be used as fertilizer. This is a great way of having organic fertilizers without having to spend on commercial ones.



**May 3th**

Planting seeds

The following day after the elders started clearing up the gardening area, they have already started planting on some parts. They have planted Okra and String Beans.



**May 7th**

Ibasha weekly meeting: Planning for the gardening project for the next 3 months: what to plant; what to use the plants for; when to harvest; materials needed. Follow-up on the Recycling Project: what are being collected; actual profit and profit distribution; follow-up on recycling rice sacks. Another meeting discusses the plans for further improvement to the garden and the need for watering cans. It was decided that a nursery for seeds and young plants should be put up. One of the elders start the planning and initial construction of the nursery immediately on the following day.



### May 8th

Construction of gardens' nursery begins: One of the elders start construction of the nursery, using available resources within reach.

progress on the construction of the nursery is clear. To the right, you can see Nipa leaves prepared as they would soon become the roofing material for the nursery structure. The elders did not have to spend on these materials and only made use of available nearby resources.



### May 13th

Ibasho weekly meeting: The group discuss what to expect within the next 3 months. They also discuss the possibility of having a water source at the garden without having to use the landowner's water supply.



### May 21st

Ibasho weekly meeting: The group discuss a scheduling for 2 groups of elders taking turns daily in taking care of the garden. Because of the summer heat, plant growth has been very slow and constant care and frequent watering is recommended. The group also decided that water piping should be established from one of the elders' house (only 2 houses away from the garden area) to the garden. The elders also needed fertilizer and additional materials for the nursery as the available ones are not enough. The elders agree on preparing for the list of materials needed for the water source and nursery, including the fertilizer, along with costing estimates.



### May 28th

Ibasho weekly meeting

The elders gave a list of materials, with estimated costs, to the project coordinator. The coordinator has planned to acquire the materials on the following day. Following up on costing for the water source. Getting input on the elders' experience on their groupings for daily gardening so far. Discussion on the possibility of having Ibasho collaborate with the local city government in building Ibasho house due to recent information provided by Nanay Pina.



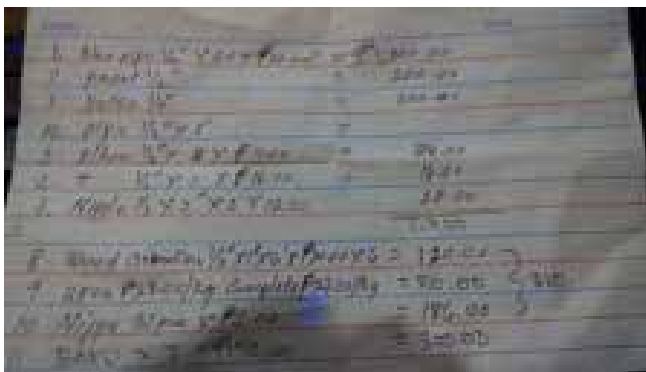
### Email from Ibasho coordinator, Ian Parrucho on May 29th

I just came home from a meeting with the elders. I am glad to report that we now have a costing proposal for water piping from Nanay Lina's house to the garden. The elders came up with this plan so that we do not have to be dependent on the Landowner's water supply. The Water supply will then be courtesy of Nanay Lina and family. All the plastic piping and other materials will total to 1,700.00 PHP. Also they included the need to purchase additional materials to complete the construction of the nursery, which is an additional 310.00 USD. They also expressed the need to use fertilizers; Urea and the kind with the complete set, needing a kilo only for each kind. Only 50.00 PHP would be needed for the fertilizers. They also agreed on the need of plastic barrels to store water with, so that it would be easier and faster for water to be ready to be transferred to the watering cans and pails. 2 water barrels would be needed and they say that 2 would cost a total of 300.00 PHP. With these costing proposals, an estimated total of 2,360.00 PHP would be needed. This is roughly around 53.00 USD. All these are estimates, but we hope that the actual does not go over the estimate. I hope to start acquiring most of the needed materials tomorrow. I will be joining the elders in their gardening early morning by tomorrow and use the rest of the day to acquire the materials. The water supply is our topmost priority considering the heat and lessening the burden on the elders. We discussed other things during the meeting as well but I wanted to let you know of the proposal early on, since I am planning to already start using the budget to buy the materials tomorrow. I'm so excited about this, and the elders are as well.

#### May 29th

Garden update: Another garden visit by the project coordinator showed that the roofing construction for the nursery has begun. Sponge gourd has been recently planted, along with a bamboo framing where the vegetable's vines can soon crawl on. The Chinese Cabbage was attacked by insects.

The Project coordinator acquires the materials listed by the elders and brings all of them to the garden, ready for assembly on June 1.



June 2015

June 1st

Assembly of water piping: 2 male elders and the project coordinator work together in the assembly and connection of the water piping, from the house of one of the elders to the garden. With a distance of about 60 meters, they are able to bring water supply to the garden through a faucet on the garden's end of the piping.

