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Environmentally sustainable construction in Philippines' social housing sector

The employment model in sustainable construction, developed through the Green Jobs in Asia project, established a strategy for the creation of green jobs in the Philippines. The training of workers and potential entrepreneurs in low-income communities, on the production and installation of environmentally-friendly construction materials, was a major component of this strategy.

Following a feasibility study, two green building products were identified as particularly relevant: (i) modified Concrete Hollow Blocks (mCHB) using recyclable materials including PET plastic for reinforcement; and (ii) soil erosion nets made of coconut fibre (coco coir nets) for the protection of riverbanks. The application of these products was promoted throughout the supply chain.



Philippines' national frameworks

Environmentally sustainable construction in the social housing sector reflects current national policy priorities:

- The National Labour and Employment Plan (2011-2016) identifies social housing as a sector for decent work employment generation.
- The Philippines Development Plan for 2011-2016 includes decent and affordable housing as a means for inclusive growth.
- The National Climate Change Action Plan lists climate adaptive housing and climate-proofing of infrastructure as integral outputs.
- The Housing and Urban Development Co-ordinating Council (HUDCC) accredits appropriate materials and technology for construction of housing facilities. HUDCC also comprises the National Housing Authority (NHA), which is the sole national agency mandated to engage in housing production for low income families.
- The Philippines Green Building Council recently launched "Building for Ecologically Responsive Design through Excellence" (BERDE), a voluntary rating system for sustainable/green buildings, which will guide member industries in their construction.

The building sector: some facts to consider

The building sector is responsible for a significant share of global energy use (approx. 40%), resource consumption (more than 30%) and waste generation (30% of solid waste). This is particularly the case in cities where population densities are high. Relatively low-cost modifications by the building sector offer great potential to reduce resource use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Training on the application of green building products and practices

The training component included a three-tiered approach and achieved a 40% female participation.

It began with lower skilled, on-the-job, community-based training for the production of modified concrete hollow blocks and coco coir nets for those living within social housing communities.

The second tier involved multi-skilling of workers through curricular development in green masonry techniques and practices. This was conducted in partnership with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and HOLCIM Ltd.

Finally, the third tier included training for private developers, architects and staff of the National Housing Authority (NHA) through the development of a “green socialized housing guide”. The guide, developed in partnership by the Philippines Green Building Council, includes environmental and decent work standards and guidelines. It was endorsed by the NHA to promote green social housing. The third tier also included training on occupational safety and health (OSH) for private developers and the NHA staff.



Promoting green community based enterprise development

Building on these training activities, the employment model promoted the development of community based mCHB and Coco-net enterprises. To enable the creation of such enterprises, the project provided entrepreneurial and financial training, business development support services and assistance for accessing certification by the National Confederation of Cooperatives (NATCCO). The project also helped establish workers’ guilds and associations amongst community workers, through assistance in organisational development and social dialogue, and by creating partnerships with trade unions. To raise awareness on labour standards, the newly created green enterprises and workers guilds received training on issues like minimum wage, right to representation, social dialogue etc.



The Green Jobs in Asia Project

The employment creation model, presented in this brief, is a direct outcome of the ILO’s Green Jobs in Asia Project (2010-2012). The project was supported through the Australian Government-ILO Partnership Agreement (2010-2015) to deepen the understanding and commitment to the promotion of gender sensitive green job opportunities in five countries (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines). It realised demonstrative sectoral green job interventions in four countries, notably in the social housing sector in the Philippines.

For more information:
www.ilo.org/green-jobs-programme

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