

## **Save the Children scarcity mitigation program**

San Jose Antique: In San Remigio town hundreds of poor school children stand to benefit from the Save the Children, an NGO and Kraft foods partnership through a three-year project called "Making Food Go Further, Mitigating Hunger and Ensuring Residence and Stronger Households" (FRESH) in the Philippines. The beginning of the project at Brgy Trinidad, San Remigio covering at least 10 elementary school from Districts 1 and 2 is a sign by the two implementing bodies to help poor Filipino children attain good health and nutrition, food security and education.

The second largest food company Kraft foods in the world is set to invest a total of US \$1.1 million into the project while Save the Children lends its strong practice in developing and managing child focused program picked from 28 years of service in the Philippines. The town of San Remigio has chosen as one of the three first pilot project areas because 70% of the area are mountains than cultivable lands aside from its being a fourth class municipality. Compared to the most towns of Antique, these benefits from the reward of the sea, it is landlocked and the area devoted to food production is only 44 sq. kms or a little over 10%. The San Remigio's Elementary Cohort Survival rate is only 45.51%, one of the lowest in the province and further trimmed down to only 43.67% because another 2.99% drops out of school before graduation. This means that of the 100 students who registered in Grade 1, only 43 completes graduates from elementary school and 38 moves on to first year high school. Further, the underweight children in San Remigio who aged 6 to 10 range from 18.68% to 37.99%.

Director for Program Implementation and Management of Save the Children Joseph Michael Singh said, "Hunger is the worst form of poverty and poverty continues to force these children out of school." More frequently, these children drop out of school because they help their parents in the farm so they can have food on the table. They do not have the means to continue school.

As the project will give instant hunger relief to children and families through a community, school based meal supply. It will also put into practice activities that will help get better the health and nutritional resiliency of children as well as provide essential skills to older family members to maintain food safety. Singh said, "The core of this project is to enhance the skills of families and communities to improve their access to healthy and nutritious food." We are starting programs that will help boost the purchasing power of families to access food, support food production and livelihood as well as improve methodologies in farming or agriculture. All these redound to supporting food safety. The areas sideways from San Remigio comprise Lake Cebu in South Cotabato and Parañaque City in Metro Manila. From these three areas, the project would anticipate to reach out to some 50,000 most susceptible children and families in the next three years to decrease hunger and undernourishment in the country.