

Is your organization ready for a quick recovery?

Being situated in one of the most disaster-prone areas in the Asia Pacific, Philippine micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are encouraged to put their business continuity plans (BCP) in place to minimize the impact of disasters.

Nile Dame Daño, regional coordinator of the Asia Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management (A-PAD), raised in an interview that most MSMEs in the country do not have their own business continuity plans in place.

As a result, when natural or man-made disasters occur, businesses fail to operate longer, which translates to economic losses and delays in their community's revival.

A-PAD, a transnational disaster aid alliance that entered the Philippines in March this year, is reaching out to MSMEs to formulate their business continuity plans in coordination with government agencies and private organizations.

Speaking to the MSMEs in Bohol last Dec. 9, Rhiza Nery, Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) business continuity program manager, emphasized that without "disaster-resilient" MSMEs during and after a calamity, it would be more difficult for a community to recover since the delivery of basic goods and services stay crippled longer.

Business continuity is the capability of the organization to continue the delivery of products and services at acceptable predefined levels following disruptive incidents, PDRF said. A BCP plan, on the other hand, is the documented procedure that guides an organization in preparing for and responding to disasters.

BANTAYAN

We may not achieve zero casualty (during calamities), but we hope that we can lessen the impact through BCP, Daño said.

Daño's team in the Visayas rolled out the first batch of BCP in September in Bantayan Island in northern Cebu in coordination with the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) Bantayan Island chapter. This was then replicated in Ormoc in November in cooperation with the Ormoc Chamber, and in Bohol last week.

In order to create a BCP road map, Nery said, MSMEs need to understand first the dangers or hazards in the business. Second is the need to identify the business' critical products and services.

This should be followed by developing strategies to mitigate the impact of the disaster, and that's when one comes up with the BCP.

It's important to measure the effectiveness of the BCP by conducting drills in business establishments and organizations, among other concrete measures. Nery also emphasized the need for regular reviews of the BCP.

US\$250B LOST

By next year, A-PAD and their partner organizations, which include PDRF and the Citizens' Disaster Response Center, will conduct more BCP workshops in different parts of the country, especially in the Visayas, said Daño.

Data presented by A-PAD Philippines National Project Staff Kim Leduna, quoting the World Bank, said financial losses due to disasters in developing countries were estimated at \$250 billion to \$300 billion in the past 10 years.