



Decent Work for All

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Truck driver Ronaldo Payda believes breastfeeding rights are a man's business too. (Photo by ILO)

Why breastfeeding is a truck driver's issue?

By Glaiza Calayo, Programme Assistant, ILO Nutrition Security and Maternity Protection

Truck driver Ronaldo Payda believes breastfeeding rights are a man's business too. He took up the cause after he and his wife saw the effects on their new baby. An ILO project is trying to build on such advocacy work, to help more working women keep their babies healthy.

Ronaldo Payda is not the average breastfeeding advocate. A former truck driver with 20 years on the road, he now leads a local transport association in Iloilo City, the Philippines. He found his new vocation when he moved on from being a truck driver and a husband, to become a father.

Despite the best of care from his wife, Michelle, in their first years his first two children Bea Mae and Paul Marx were constantly in and out of hospital, with bouts of diarrhea and asthma. The cost was enormous, both in terms of parental anxiety and hospital bills. "I feel like a stockholder in the hospital because my children were always there," Ronaldo said. "I spend so much money just to make sure they are healthy." But despite all the money, Ronaldo didn't know why his children's health was poor.

Then, in 2010, Ronaldo was invited to an ILO workshop on advocating breastfeeding. There he learned that the infant milk formula he and Michelle had spent so much money on didn't really make their children healthy. Rather breast milk was the best food for babies.

So when his next baby, Alyssa Marie, was born in 2012, Ronaldo encouraged his wife Michelle to breastfeed the little girl exclusively. He even helped with the household chores so she could have more time to breastfeed. The difference delighted them. Alyssa Marie was much healthier than her siblings and the only time she visited the hospital was for routine immunizations. The entire family benefited in other ways too. "The big change that I observed with my family are, first, the child and the mother has a closer relationship," Ronaldo said. "Second...we can divert our budget from spending on the formula to the needs like the allowances of our children to school and for their new clothes".

Ronaldo didn't keep his experience to himself. As the leader of a transport association he began to tell other drivers and their families about the economic

and health advantages of breastfeeding, countering the advertising claims of milk formula companies.

Ronaldo's advocacy of breastfeeding is unusual because feeding children has always been considered women's business in the Philippines. Inadequate awareness of the importance of breastfeeding among both men and women has resulted in prevalent malnutrition in children under five. According to the Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Philippines, only 47 per cent of babies in the Philippines are breastfed, and in some areas the rate is an alarmingly-low 27 per cent. As a result, one in five Filipino children are underweight and three in 10 are under height for their age.

With Ronaldo's support, Michelle has decided to breastfeed Alyssa Marie until she is two years old. But the Paydas are the lucky because Michelle works at home, running a small shop. Most working women in the Philippines have to stop breastfeeding at the end of their maternity leave, when they go back to work.

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Community-Based Enterprise Development (C-BED) for Haiyan affected areas

Over 50 representatives from the local government, national government agencies, non-government organizations, international organizations and United Nations agencies will attend a workshop on the Community-Based Enterprise Development (C-BED) Methodology and Training Tools.

The workshop aims to provide government agencies and international organizations involved in livelihood initiatives with an opportunity to learn more about C-BED. The workshop will include a dialogue on new approaches and opportunities to apply C-BED tools in Haiyan affected areas, specifically in Leyte.

C-BED is a low-cost, easy to implement training programme that uses hands-on, activity based lessons, while promoting dialogue and partnership among the participants. Conducted without the need for external trainers or resources, C-BED training is led by a facilitator selected from within the community to guide participants in the step-by-step process through learning

activities. By identifying existing knowledge and capacities as the starting point, participants build skills on basic principles of business development such as costing and marketing.

As part of the ILO's response to help Haiyan affected areas, two C-BED pilot workshops have already been conducted in Tacloban. The C-BED pilot workshops were held in February and March 2014, in partnership with the Department of Labor and Employment Region VIII. A total of 50 displaced vendors, small-scale business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs joined the pilot workshops.

A follow-up meeting with interested partner institutions will be held on 25 April to discuss opportunities to apply training tools in order to reach out to Haiyan affected areas.

The training methodology is seen to have a great potential to assist and empower participants through the sharing of experiences and aspirations with others from their community.

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Even though Philippine law allows employees 40 minutes a day for expressing milk or breastfeeding, implementation has been inefficient. "No woman should have to choose between earning a living and breastfeeding," says Susanita Tesiorna, President of Alliance of Workers in the Informal Economy/Sector in the Philippines.

So, building on the earlier programme that trained Ronaldo, and to address the challenges still faced by working mothers, the ILO, with other UN agencies, launched the Nutrition Security and Maternity Protection through Exclusive and Continued Breastfeeding Promotion in the Workplace Project, (the NSMP Project), in 2013.

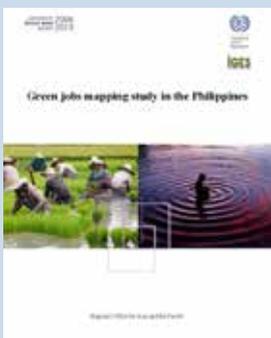
Funded by the European Union, the NSMP Project has supported the setting up of lactation stations, trained hundreds of breastfeeding educators (both men and women), and encouraged employers in the cities of Naga, Iloilo and Zamboaga, to give

workers adequate time and appropriate places to breastfeed.

"Real world evidence shows that breastfeeding in the workplace not only promotes better health for mothers and their babies but also leads to increased productivity, increased loyalty, and reduced absenteeism," said Lawrence Jeff Johnson, ILO Country Director for the Philippines". "It's crucial to support working mothers and their families by setting up lactation stations and allowing lactation breaks, during work periods".

The NSMP project is now pushing for the establishment of more lactation stations in public places and better legal enforcement on breastfeeding. Ronaldo Payda believes that a change in public attitudes is also needed, and he wants to continue his advocacy work among his friends and fellow transport workers. "Breastfeeding is not only about women," he said. "It is important that the husband should know his roles on the importance of breastfeeding to the family development."

Must reads



Green jobs mapping study in the Philippines

This desk research report is the initial step in mapping existing green jobs in the Philippine labour market, based on available published data from government as well as non-government sources.

<http://www.ilo.org/manila>

1-2 April 2014

22-23 April 2014

Calendar

ILO-IOM Regional conference on making breakthrough in the implementation of Ethical and Professional Recruitment
Manila, Philippines

Community-Based Enterprise Development (C-BED) for Haiyan affected areas
Tacloban, Philippines

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