

## **2013 Highlights of Accomplishments CY 2013**

### **Occupational Safety and Health Center**

The year 2013 proved to be challenging with numerous disasters that brought emerging risks which must be efficiently responded to alongside the traditional hazards our workers are exposed to. The Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC), together with its tripartite partners, has tripled its efforts to address these challenges through intensifying training, research and technical services, programs and activities.

### **Capability building and Information dissemination**

Through the combined efforts of OSHC and the Occupational Safety and Health Networks (OSHNETs) 15,385 participants from 5,520 companies were trained in the 25 different types of OSH courses. 6,391 of these participants were trained in the 40-hour, mandatory OSH courses - 3,138 participants or 160% of the target for the Basic Occupational Safety and Health Training, and 3,102 participants or 156% of the target for the Construction Safety Training. These include 323 labor laws compliance officers of the DOLE, officials and staff of the Philippine Navy and workers from the bus transport and mining industries as well as workers from small-scale construction companies.

Most of the workers from small construction companies do not have enough resources to train their personnel. Thus, to address the increasing number of construction accidents especially those that happen in small establishments, DOLE issued A.O. 85 s 2013. The OSHC, ECC, Regional Offices through their OSHNETS conducted 33 batches of free Construction Safety Training for 1,375 contractors and subcontractors from 863 small establishments.

To widen the base of qualified and competent trainers in the various areas of OSH, the OSHC conducted four batches of the Training of Trainers for the Philippine Navy and participants from Bohol and Quezon City.

The OSHC also conducted the following training courses:

1. 10 types of specialized courses for 950 participants from 553 companies
2. Nine types of learning sessions for 1,506 participants from 585 companies
3. OSH orientation for 906 students from various universities and colleges
4. OSH Appreciation course for 506 participants from 69 companies
5. Special lectures for 1,643 participants from 617 companies
6. 3,000 informal sector workers including 1,726 Yolanda survivors-turned DOLE Emergency Employment Workers who did the clearing operations in Tacloban.

The OSHC has also developed 3 e-newsletters, eight new brochures, 10 new flyers and four new posters while reprinting existing IEC materials. On the OSH Summit and Congress, the Targets have been exceeded. The new institutional video as well as an OSHC jingle is also being developed.

### **Research**

For 2013, OSHC completed three studies on the work environment of child laborers in the agriculture industry; work related injuries and illnesses of public workers; and the OSH practices, policies, and programs of selected BPOs, hotels and construction companies.

1. Work environment of child laborers in the agriculture industry

The research consists of case studies of child laborers in palay, corn, coconut, sugarcane and abaca farms. It aimed to validate the levels of exposure of child workers to hazards inherent in agricultural processes. The study is part of the initiative of DOLE, in collaboration with the International Labor Organization to update and amend the hazardous work and activities listed in Department Order No.4-1999 on Hazardous Work and Developing Guidelines on Allowable Work for 15-17 years old.

The study revealed that the open areas of the field expose child laborers to all kinds of weather, plants and animals which may have adverse effects on their fragile bodies. In addition, child laborers who handle crops may be exposed to vegetable dusts which may cause respiratory ailments and skin irritation. Most of the sites do not have welfare facilities.

With these findings, it is suggested that employers provide potable water; soap and water for washing out dust accumulate after work; first aid kit with medicine for colds, cough, fever, wounds, bruises, allergies, burns, body pain, animal bites, and fainting and a safe place to eat and rest.

## 2. Work-related injuries and illnesses of public workers

The study on work-related injuries and illnesses of public workers provided information on the socio-demographic profile of GSIS claimants, and identified the types of injuries and illnesses approved for compensation under the Employees' Compensation Program. It has been found that disease of the heart and circulatory system, were the most commonly compensated diseases. Infectious diseases ranked second while disease referable to the genitourinary system ranked third.

Policy issues include the inconsistency of the information for the type of diseases in the database and the diagnosis as well as the non-work-relatedness of some disease such as diabetes mellitus, multiple sclerosis, congenital cardiovascular disease, rheumatoid arthritis, Systemic Lupus Erythematosus, etc.

## 3. OSH profile of workers in the BPO, hotel and construction industries

To develop an updated OSH profile and identify OSH issues in the BPO, hotel and construction industries, the OSHC conducted a study on 18 companies in the abovementioned industries in Quezon City, Cebu City and Davao City. Based on the results, it is recommended that industry partnerships be strengthened to improve compliance to the Occupational Safety and Health Standards and OSH-related issuances; to improve access to technical assistance; develop an inventory of best practices that may be emulated; and to intensify communication strategies.

## **Technical Services**

As part of the program to prevent occupational injuries and illnesses, the OSHC has conducted work environment measurement for 133 companies benefitting 34,027 workers, 739 workers were given occupational health services and 1,846 tests on 914 specimens of personal protective equipment.

The OSHC has also undertaken the accreditation of safety training organizations (STOs), safety consulting organization (SCOs) and OSH consultants. In 2013, 17 STOs and SCOs were accredited along with 38 OSH consultants.

## **Policy Development**

In 2013, the OSHC, in cooperation with the DOLE and tripartite partners, developed the following issuances:

1. D.O. 128: Guidelines Amending the Standards of Scaffolding
2. DO 132: Guidelines on Maritime OSH
3. Kasambahay Safety and Health tips
4. Bill on construction safety and health

## **OSH Networking**

To develop a wider and efficient network for the implementation of the Zero Accident Program, the OSHC focused on strengthening the networks with tripartite partners and other stakeholders. In cooperation with OSHC, the Zampen OSHNet was able to hold its 1st Regional Occupational Safety and Health Summit.

Also under the guidance of DOLE and OSHC, the OSHNets were able to train 1,695 participants in the BOSH and 854 participants in the CST.

The OSHC also attended the following meetings:

1. ASEAN OSHNet Coordinating Board Meeting
2. Meeting with the Maritime Transport Working Group
3. Senior Labor Officials Meeting - Technical Working Group on HIV/AIDS in the workplace
4. ASEAN Multi-stakeholders Workshop on HIV/AIDS