

Excellencies, distinguished participants:

I am as disappointed as you that Robin Lim, CNN hero of 2011, founder of Bumi Sehat Foundation, and my fellow trustee at Philippines Wanita Dan Harapan, which is Indonesian for Women and Hope, champion of the NGO community for this forum, is not here to deliver her message in person. When I rang her asking frantically for her Call to Action, she told me just speak from the heart. Well, it's easier from my iPad, and both my iPad and my heart tell me to make this appeal. And it is: please help, support, ally, partner with all the small grassroots organizations working to make a difference in people's lives. Organizations such as ours need all the help we can get: be it research, education, policies, resources, information dissemination, capacity-building, enforcement of protocols such as delayed clamping and cutting of the cord, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months--both which have been mandated by an enlightened Philippine DOH--changes in the architecture of the birth room, and in some cases just ACCESS.

As Robin is always saying, "Love is a nutrient." You may well ask, what does love have to do with the weighty and elevated discourse that has taken place these past few days in this impressive venue? Oh you disaster midwives and birth keepers, you operate in such an oxytocin-laden environment, your brains are addled.

All we know is that love, just like the music of The Madrigal Singers we heard earlier, heals. And it's been proven time and again at the Bumi Wadah Community Health and Maternity Clinic--which Robin calls our birthing manger, because there is ALWAYS room, 24/7, free of charge--operating out of a barangay in Dulag, Leyte, established in the aftermath of typhoon Yolanda. Until May of 2014, in a 2x 2.5 square meter tent in a damaged schoolhouse, we were catching almost a hundred babies a month, without running water. From that tent, we moved into a rebuilt RHU, and a year later, into a nearby house that has just been accredited by the DOH, the first and only in Region 8, and the second in the country. From November 2013 to December 2014, human services delivery totaled 106,104 people. Of that number, some 64,000 were pregnant mothers, children and their families, whom we fed.

That, if I may say so myself, is real impact. You should hear about our health outcomes, but mercifully for you, there isn't time.

So please, august men and women, leaders, excellencies, distinguished participants of Global Forum 2015, support and enable us, your NGOs. We are all working towards the same goals, exercising our human rights to quality healthcare, to sustainability, to such basics as clean water, clean air, food, shelter, education, peace--there is no reason we cannot share the vision and we cannot share the love.

Thank you.

For Bumi Wadah Clinics
Christina F. Ferreros
Board of Trustees, Philippines WADAH
27 August 2015