



UNITED NATIONS
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UNited

to Leave No One Behind

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Message from the Resident Coordinator

UN Philippines Resident Coordinator Gustavo Gonzalez during the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) mission in San Andres, Province of Catanduanes, in February 2021.

I have heard this Filipino proverb: *"Kung maikli ang kumot, matutong mamaluktot"* ("When the blanket is short, learn to curl up so the blanket covers you"). This reflects Filipinos' adaptability, or their willingness to change in order to suit their conditions.

Their adaptability is part of their resilience, which has been tested in the past year and a half, as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted on every single person--for some of us in the worst possible way, with loved ones lost or with our own health compromised.

In the Philippines, initial United Nations (UN) assessments indicate that the pandemic may have set the country "as much as 10 years back" in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

But we also know that "smooth seas do not make skillful sailors". And the pandemic has highlighted what we need to do.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the UN Country Team in the Philippines has been aligning its capacities, resources, and knowledge with the emerging national priorities.

By the end of last year, we were conducting more than 150 different initiatives to complement national and regional efforts "to leave no one behind".

Through these joint efforts, more than 5 million at-risk individuals were able to access essential health services.

More than 6 million boys and girls were supported with distance learning.

And more than 24 million doses of COVID19 vaccines were delivered by the COVAX facility, with the support of the UN. In doing that, we also shared our concerns on "inequity in access to vaccines", even for the most vulnerable groups across the different regions of the country.

This second issue of **UNited to Leave No One Behind** showcases concrete examples of how the work of my UN colleagues with our partners in the communities during the pandemic has borne fruit: severely malnourished young children in Datu Salibo town, Maguindanao now thriving with the help of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF); Child-Friendly Spaces (CFSs) for children living in evacuation centers in Maguindanao; fisherfolk in typhoon-hit Isla Manaet in the Bicol Region recovering through resilient livelihood; a young mother in Lanao del Sur able to provide for her family through an innovative social protection programme; clean water for families displaced by conflict in Zamboanga; and women weavers in Maguindanao finding gainful work amid Covid-19 by shifting to sewing face masks and protective clothing; among others.

The UN in the Philippines marks UN Day this year by celebrating these partnerships with the communities and by renewing our commitment to leaving no one behind.

Gustavo Gonzalez



Anticipatory Action

“It’s better to prepare than repair”

Manuelito Yabao, a resident of Barangay Jubusan in Northern Samar, was surprised to receive cash assistance from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in anticipation of a typhoon. “*Ngayon ko lang naranasan na mabigyan ng ayuda bago pa man kami masalanta ng bagyo. Sanay kasi kami na makatanggap ng tulong pagkatapos na ng bagyo.*” (“It is my first time to receive assistance even before a typhoon hits. We are used to receiving assistance only after being affected by a typhoon.”)

Manuelito is one of close to 280,000 target beneficiaries of the Anticipatory Action (AA) pilot in the Bicol Region and Eastern Visayas. The most vulnerable families will be provided with life-saving Cash-Based Intervention, with 13,110 vulnerable families set to receive support in terms of Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and shelter. Through an inclusive approach, this is expected to reduce the number of persons displaced to evacuation centers as well as to adapt the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The objective of the pilot is to mitigate, and to a certain extent prevent, the impact of typhoons on people’s homes and livelihoods, while building on government’s

mandatory pre-emptive evacuation procedures that save lives. With this intervention, the most at-risk communities will have better financial resources to prepare before typhoons make their landfall.

In coordination with local government units (LGUs), IOM teams have profiled and registered beneficiaries, conducted social preparation for the use of Shelter Strengthening Kits, and engaged with LGUs and communities to build knowledge of how AA can mitigate risk by increasing local response capacities.

“*Tama nga ang sabi ng MDRRMO namin. Mas mabuti nang maging handa kaysa mag-ayos ng mga gamit na nasira.*” (“Our MDRRMO [Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office] was right. It’s better to prepare than repair.”)

The AA pilot project is funded by the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (UN CERF). Coordinated by OCHA, it is being implemented by IOM, FAO, WFP, UNICEF and UNFPA, together with local partners. This project is the first of its kind for tropical storms, putting the Philippines at the global forefront of humanitarian innovation.

Read more: [“It’s better to prepare than repair”](#)



Manuelito Yabao, one of close to 280,000 target beneficiaries of the Anticipatory Action pilot in the Bicol Region and Eastern Visayas.

Credit: IOM Philippines



Child Nutrition

Saving children from malnutrition



Ready-to-use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) has been helping children like Namraida Drapal with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) in Datu Salibo town, Maguindanao. Credit: UNICEF/Louie Pacardo

In February this year, when Namraida Drapal was 13 months old, she weighed 6 kilograms only despite having a height of 71 centimeters. Community health workers identified her as a child with severe acute malnutrition (SAM).

Just three weeks later, when Namraida was weighed again, she showed a marked improvement. Her weight had increased to 6.9 kilograms. Although still malnourished, her nutritional status had improved and was reclassified to moderate acute malnutrition (MAM).

Health workers had provided Namraida with ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) from UNICEF. RUTF has been helping children with SAM and MAM in Datu Salibo town, Maguindanao province.

Aside from Namraida's improved physical appearance, her mother Kanayo has also observed that the child has developed a healthy appetite. “It’s no longer difficult to make her eat,” says Kanayo. “Her ration is two packs of RUTF per day, and she eats them all. She likes the taste.”

By providing ready-to-use therapeutic food, UNICEF, in partnership with the UK government, is helping malnourished children in Maguindanao fight illnesses and early death.

Read more: [Saving children from malnutrition](#)



Marine Biodiversity Protection

Protecting the seas through a legacy of solidarity

Dagyaw is the Bisaya/Hiligaynon term for *bayanihan*, the Filipino tradition of working together to achieve a shared goal. Through the technical assistance provided by the DENR-SMARTSeas PH project to the people's organizations it supports, the culture of *dagyaw* continues to flourish and be passed on to the younger generation.

For the members of the Malatgao Aplaya Bagong Lipunan Highway El Salvador Association (MAPBAHIELA), *dagyaw* is something that they want to pass on to their children. *Dagyaw* is not only for the improvement and sustainability of their livelihood, but also a legacy they want to be remembered for.

"Kasama namin yung mga anak namin tuwing nagtatanim ng mangroves o sa coastal clean-up. Naging regular na gawain na namin 'yon. Parang bonding na rin namin bilang isang pamilya kasi gusto naming matutunan ng mga anak namin ang kahalagahan ng *dagyaw*" ("We always take our children when we plant mangroves or do coastal clean-up").

"It has become our regular activity and bonding as a family because we want the kids to know the value of *dagyaw*," said MAPBAHIELA's president Rollie Golez, who saw the gradual deforestation of mangroves in their community when he was still young.

Read more: [Keeping the 'dagyaw' spirit alive among Pinoy fisherfolks](#)



With the help of a Child-Friendly Space, Sophia Abdulgani copes with life in an evacuation center. Credit UNICEF/Louie Pacardo



Child Protection

Tent of hope in Maguindanao

Sophia Abdulgani, 9, has been living in an evacuation center for almost two months, and her life is more difficult than usual, but she has something to look forward to every morning. "I like going to the tent," she says, referring to the Child-Friendly Space (CFS) near the makeshift homes of the evacuees, behind the public market of Datu Saudi Ampatuan town in Maguindanao province.

Established by UNICEF and its implementing partner, Community and Family Services International (CFSI), the CFS caters to children affected by the ongoing conflict between government forces and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF).

"With the other children, I learn, play and sing in the tent," says Sophia, adding that singing is her favorite activity. The CFS, about 4 meters wide and 12 meters long, is covered on all sides with white tarpaulin. Even the floor is covered, so children could run barefoot, sit and crawl inside.

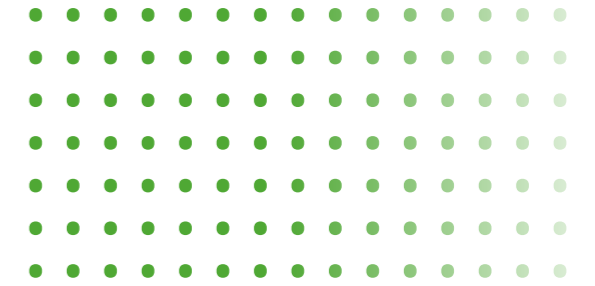
"Through CFSs, we aim to support the resilience and well-being of children and young people through community-organized, structured activities conducted in a safe, child-friendly and stimulating environment," says Sitti Vilma Quin, UNICEF child protection officer. "These activities facilitate restoration of normalcy and certainty in the lives of the children."

Read more: [Tent of hope in Maguindanao](#)



Members of the MAPBAHIELA showing off the certification of their biodiversity-friendly enterprise from the Bureau of Internal Revenue. The fisherfolk association in Narra are also co-managing the marine protected areas in Lolo Bay, east coast of Palawan. Credit: DENR-SMARTSeas PH

Livelihood



Recovery through livelihood

Judy Besin, a resident of Manaet Island, in Bacacay, Albay Province, recalls the night of November 1, 2000, when Super Typhoon Rolly ripped through their coastal community.

"Nung tumama si Rolly, lumikas po kami. Nakatira po kami sa tabingdagat. Noong bumalik po kami, lahat po ng pag-aari namin ay nasira na, pero naka-survive po yung nag-iisa naming baboy!" ("When Rolly hit, we were evacuated. Our family lives next to the shore. When we came back, everything we owned was destroyed, but our sole pig survived!")

Judy and her husband, a fisherfolk, had been raising hogs as an alternative source of income amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The yield from fishing had not been good because of the typhoons and they

needed to find other means to feed their three very young children. They could only afford to buy one pig and they had been looking forward to selling it for around Php12,000 (USD 236) once it was old enough.

In March 2021 UNDP began providing livelihood assistance to about 460 beneficiaries from seven selected municipalities. Judy and her family received cash assistance which they used to make their hog-raising business more sustainable.

She exclaims, *"Malaking tulong po! Kasi nagsimula kami sa pagbababoy—yung bagong bangka namin ay nabili naming mula sa binenta naming baboy."* ("This will help us immensely! We started as hog-raisers—we bought our new fishing boat using the earnings from the pig we sold.")

Read more: [Recovery through resilient livelihoods: The fisherfolks of Bacacay](#)

Photo: Judy Besin of Isla Manaet
Credit: UNDP Philippines

Boosting farmers' productivity in BARMM

Members of four community-based organizations (CBOs) in Datu Montawal and Sultan Mastura in the Province of Maguindanao got a much-needed boost to their livelihoods as FAO, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (MAFAR-BARMM), distributed this September several units of rice threshing machines for their use.

Pendatun Patarasa, Assistant to the Minister for Special Concerns of MAFAR-BARMM, said that the machinery are meant to support the beneficiary CBOs by allowing them to earn additional income by increasing the efficiency of their production as well as to help improve the quality and safety of the rice crop to be processed.

He further encouraged the CBOs to manage and maintain the machinery given to them so that these may last long and benefit even more farmers in the communities.

The machinery are part of the interventions under the "Support for Agriculture and Agribusiness Enterprises in Mindanao for Sustainable Development" project, which is being supported by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The initiative aims to contribute to the development of agriculture and agribusiness in the provinces of North Cotabato and Maguindanao as well as its surrounding areas as a way to reduce poverty and ultimately result in inclusive growth.

The strategy is to build the capacity of farmers and fisherfolk to effectively integrate into the agriculture value chain through the adoption of improved technologies and enhanced market linkages. This

Photo: A rice threshing machine acquired through the FAO-MAFAR project being delivered to one of the communities.
Credit: FAO Philippines



Social Protection

Facing up to COVID-19

Twenty-nine-year-old Naima Apinton lives in the small village of Daguan in Kapatagan, Lanao del Sur with her husband Ansanodin and five young children. Ansanodin makes a living as a pedicab driver, typically earning just 250 to 300 pesos (5 to 6 US dollars) a day. Thus, for Naima, keeping her family fed and clothed had been a daily challenge.

In 2020, when COVID-19 began to disrupt the lives of the people in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Naima worried about how the pandemic would affect her ability to provide for her family.

In June 2020, the UN Joint Programme on Shock-Responsive Social Protection (JPSRSP) gave out emergency cash grants to 1,000 families in Lanao del Sur who had 0- to 2-year-children and who were excluded from the government's social protection programmes. The joint programme aimed to provide critical support during the crucial first 1,000 days of a child's life. Naima's family was among those that received the emergency cash assistance.



Naima Apinton with her children. Credit: UNICEF Philippines



With the money she received, Naima started selling banana fritters and other street food. With her income, she was able to help Ansanodin to provide for their children's daily needs.

Naima has been able to sustain her small vending business. With her earnings, putting food on the table is no longer a matter of "squeezing sweat and shedding tears" says Naima. She is also able to bring her children regularly to the municipal clinic.

"I am thankful to the Ministry of Social Services and Development and to the UN for extending help to people like me."

Read more: [Naima and how she provides for her family amid COVID-19](#)

Photo: Naima Apinton with her husband, Ansanodin (extreme right) and four children. Credit: UNICEF Philippines





WASH

Ensuring clean water for persons displaced by conflict

Eight years after the Zamboanga crisis, most of the families who were forced to flee during the conflict have been able to return home. However, 720 families or approximately 3,600 people remain displaced to this day.

Over the years and with the help of donors and partners, UNHCR has conducted protection monitoring activities and provided core relief items to these displaced families. Most recently, a WASH facility, consisting of communal latrines and a water pump, was turned over to the Masepla transitory site to help the community maintain good health and sanitation practices amid the pandemic. Quick impact projects such as these complement the assistance provided by the city government and other humanitarian agencies to ensure that internally displaced people are included in government support programs and interventions.

UNHCR has worked with partners for capacity-building initiatives, profiling of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and consultation activities to empower both local duty-bearers and members of the community to attain durable solutions to this situation of protracted displacement.



Women Empowerment

When women lead

In a barangay called Campo IV, located in the Province of Zamboanga del Sur, a cooperative of rice farmers and agrarian reform beneficiaries is gaining a lot of attention because of its success. In just a few years, the cooperative, called CABEFAMCO, has increased the barangay's rice production volume by 30 per cent and the total value of milled rice traded, by 73 per cent. But what really makes CABEFAMCO a stand-out is the fact that women dominate in this coop: Its leader, three members of its Board of Directors, and 39 per cent of its members are women.

Rosevilla Salceda was elected chairperson and manager of CABEFAMCO in 2017. She had been a member since 1992, and had seen the 29-year-old coop go through a string of losses and even stagnancy. In 2016, however, CABEFAMCO turned itself around when it became part of the IFAD-funded project called Convergence on Value Chain Enhancement for Rural Growth and Empowerment Project (CONVERGE), being implemented by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to upscale the quality and quantity of rice production through effective value chain management.

Rosevilla runs a *carinderia* (food cart) to provide for her family, but while this is demanding, she remains committed to managing the coop. "Women can join groups that are fit for them, so that they can realize their potentials. Other people think women are weak, but that's not true. Women are capable."

Read more: [When women took over: The Growth of a Zambo Rice Coop with Women in Leadership and Key Roles](#)



Photos from top:

A resident of the Masepla Transitory Site uses the water pump provided by UNHCR, together with local project partner IRDT and the Local Government of Zamboanga City. Credit: UNHCR Philippines

Rosevilla Salceda (second from the right) and other women officers of CIV-CABEFAMCO. Credit Katrin Arcala/Project ConVERGE

Empowered Women of BARMM

Twenkie Dalgan is the Chairperson of Bulalo Sitio Inol Producer Cooperative in Maguindanao. Twenkie and her community members are weavers of *inol/inaul*, a traditional, colorful, intricately designed Maguindanaon clothing piece. Twenkie has been a member since 2006, when the cooperative started, and recalls that their earnings from weaving were enough to support her family. Orders were piled up before the pandemic, but because of quarantine restrictions, they could not get access to raw materials, which were only available in the city.

"A lot of our resources were inaccessible, so we had to halt operations. As a result, our members have been inactive. When I asked around for help, one of them suggested that we try making face masks. We are weavers and very few of us had basic sewing skills, so we started practicing with whatever cloths were available. With little DIY (Do It Yourself) skills, we were able to pull off a few hundred rough pieces a week," Twenkie noted.

In July 2021, UNDP and the Embassy of Japan in the Philippines donated sewing equipment and raw materials to more than 20 sewing groups in BARMM to use during their training in manufacturing PPEs. Now, Twenkie and her group are equipped with additional sewing machines, new skills and confidence.

Read more: [Empowering women in BARMM to advance through the pandemic](#)



Women as bringers of peace



Myrna is a peace advocate, community sectoral leader and an active member of the Social Welfare Committee of Barangay Lagunde, Pikit, North Cotabato.

Credit: IOM Philippines



Twenkie (left most) with fellow seamstresses of the Bulalo Sitio Inol Producer Cooperative in Maguindanao, test run the newly donated sewing machines from UNDP and Embassy of Japan in the Philippines. Credit: UNDP Philippines

Myrna, 59, is a mother of four, a peace advocate, community sectoral leader and an active member of the Social Welfare Committee of Barangay Lagunde, Pikit, North Cotabato. Living in Lagunde, one of the identified conflict hotspots for more than 40 years, she has witnessed firsthand how conflict and violence tear communities apart.

Myrna vividly remembers her experience during the 1980 declaration of all-out war in Mindanao:

"Naalala ko yung araw na iyon, nakita ko ang aking mga kapit-bahay na nagmamadaling lumikas. Buntis ako noon sa una naming anak." ("I can still remember that day. We were all in a hurry to flee our homes, and I was still pregnant with my first child.")

Together with UNFPA and UN Women, IOM, through the support of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, is implementing the "Promoting Conflict Prevention, Social Cohesion and Community Resilience in

BARMM in the Time of COVID-19" joint project which aims to mitigate the immediate challenges of building and sustaining peace amid the COVID-19 pandemic and during the crucial stages of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's (BARMM) transition period by fostering and enabling women and the youth to act as local agents of peace.

IOM has thus far conducted regular community safeguarding activities and trained 253 community leaders – 156 of whom are women – in 15 target areas in Maguindanao and the Special Geographic Areas on community policing, conflict sensitivity and peace promotion, and disaster risk reduction and management. In these trainings, community leaders like Myrna are given the opportunity to collaborate with other leaders from local government and community-based organizations.



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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



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UNHCR
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unicef
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unicri
United Nations
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UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



OCHA
United Nations Office
for the Coordination of
Humanitarian Affairs



UNODC
United Nations Office on
Drugs and Crime



UNOPS



UN
WOMEN
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Gender Equality and the
Empowerment of Women



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