

STRENGTHENING LOCAL RESILIENCE AND BUILDING CAPACITIES IN AREAS AT HIGH RISK OF NATURAL HAZARDS IN BARMM, MINDANAO.



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FOREWORD

According to the World Risk Index 2022, the Philippines ranks eighth in the most at-risk country for disasters. This could be attributed to the fact that the country's geographical location is situated in the path of major weather disturbances from the Pacific Ocean, many of which develop into typhoons. This puts the country in a dangerous spot and with the insufficient capacities of concerned local government units and communities in managing disasters, it becomes even deadlier.

The government attempts to minimize the impact of calamities by crafting policies and coordinating reduction efforts to make certain that they meet the needs of the communities but we're still lacking in the implementation of such an approach.

Despite the coordinated efforts of government agencies to improve national capacities in preparing for, responding to, recovering from and mitigating the effects of disasters, there's still a need to translate these capacities to the local government units and communities.

The project covers five municipalities in Lanao Del Sur and Maguindanao which are: Calanogas, Datu Piang, Datu Salibo, Datu Saudi Ampatuan and Radjah Buayan. These municipalities have a history of extreme flooding and landslides, and because of its frequent occurrences the communities are often left with their livelihoods severely affected, being one of the major causes of food insecurity in these provinces.

As a global humanitarian organization, Action Against Hunger's main objective is to take definitive measures to address hunger. To ensure the efficacy of the project, Action Against Hunger worked closely with the local government units to develop, enhance or update disaster risk reduction and management plans integrating food security and livelihoods planning towards resilient capacities of households, communities and LGUs.

This catalogue is a chronicle of what transpired during the implementation of the resilience project— the difficulties, the wins, and everything in between.

Have a good read!

SURESANATHAN MURUGESU
COUNTRY DIRECTOR



INTRODUCTION

In a country with more than 100 million citizens, the Philippines has faced several crises that has impacted its citizens and communities. Filipinos are used to these crises, ranging from calamities such as seasonal typhoons, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, earthquakes, to human disasters such as armed conflicts and displacements, fires, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. All of these has incapacitated the Philippine government in providing sufficient support to Filipinos across the country and many businesses and sectors were immobilized.

Aside from natural disasters, food insecurity is another prevailing problem which has led to chronic inadequacy of food on the table of Filipino households, especially in Mindanao. Because of decades-long neglect of the region, Mindanao has suffered from much higher levels of poverty than in other parts of the country. For a large portion of these people who rely only on one unstable source of income, access to food is often through credit, which is further constrained by high interest rates when borrowed. These systemic conditions in the region has become tantamount to long-term and serious risk factors for unavailability of food sources for the people

Considering these issues and concerns, Action Against Hunger (AAH) has spearheaded efforts in alleviating the plight of the marginalized Filipinos amidst this context, particularly in the poor areas of Mindanao,



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Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) has been the focus of the Philippine Government in the last decade. This is manifested by several national policies that mandates all government instrumentalities to ensure that adequate interventions are implemented towards this end. Particularly, the Republic Act (RA) 10121 of 2010 or the Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) Act of the Philippines and the Climate Change Adaptation Act mandates the local government units to come up with plans, programs, projects and resources to identify and reduce risks and prepare for the impacts of hazards, risks and disasters. These policies also provide mechanisms, systems and structures to ensure that people and properties are free from danger.

With the recent ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) and establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), we are provided with the opportunity to look at risk reduction and resilience building in the core of programming and planning for the provinces and municipalities in the newly established BARMM region.

LANAO DEL SUR

- CALANOGAS

5 BARANGAYS

MAGUINDANO

- DATU SAUDI AMPATUAN
- DATU PIANG
- DATU SALIBO
- RADJAH BUAYAN

20 BARANGAYS

TARGET BENEFICIARY REACH:
14,800 INDIVIDUALS



PROJECT GOAL:

TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY CAPACITIES TOWARDS RESILIENCE IN MUNICIPALITIES WHICH ARE HIGH RISK AND VULNERABLE TO NATURAL HAZARDS MINDANAO – PHILIPPINES.

SECTOR

OBJECTIVES

SUB SECTOR

TARGET BENEFICIARY REACH



Risk
Management
Policy and
Practice

To improve local government and communities' mitigating disaster impact through trainings, and planning processes capacity in preparing for and

1. Building Community Awareness/Mobilization
2. Capacity Building and Training
3. Policy and Planning

**960 HHs; 4800
Individuals**



Agriculture
and
Food
Security

To improve Agri- and aquaculture production systems and food security

1. Improving Agricultural Production/Food Security
2. Fisheries and Aquaculture

**1250
households
(6,250 individuals)**



Economic
Recovery
and
Market
Systems













To improve local communities' access to market and financial services

1. Financial Services

**750 households
(3,750 individuals)**

The Project is aligned to the provisions of RA 10121 and the Department of the Interior and Local Government's Operation Listo for Municipalities, and the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG), at includes the mandated structure, systems, skills and capacities that the LGUs and Barangays should have, and to the aspirations of the LGUs towards resiliency of their constituents amidst changing environmental context.

The following has been identified to be the major intervention areas for the project:

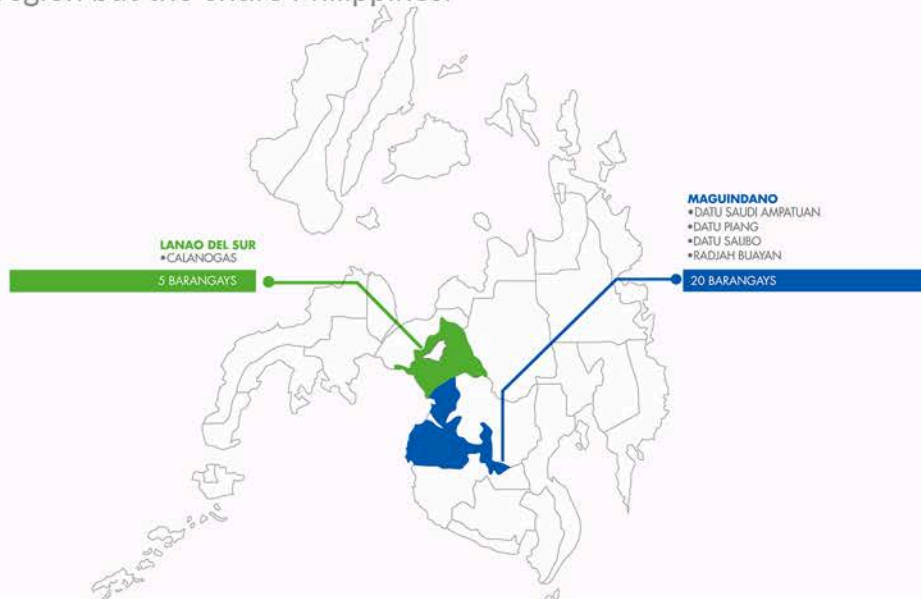
| IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY | KEY ACTIVITIES | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| | DRR | FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS |
| Capacity Building |  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Based DRRM Orientation and Training |  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Farmer Field Schools (Demo Farms) |
| Policy Development and Advocacy |  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment (PCVA) |  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Trainings on enhancing agricultural production (Agro-ecological System Analysis (AESAs) and Farm Planning, Natural Farming System, Land Preparation, Requirements and Factors Affecting Vegetable Production, Seeds and Seedlings, Crop Management and other Field Practices, Insect Pests and Their Natural Enemies, Internal Control System, and Harvesting) |
| Partnership and collaboration |  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management and Contingency and DRRM Plans |  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. TOT on Resilient Livelihood Strategies |
| Program Working Groups |  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Simulation and Drills |  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Community Resilience Project in Fisheries and Aquaculture (aqua-silvo-fishery; setting up of gabion boxes or bamboo spurs to mitigate flooding; rainwater harvesting and water reserves; waste management; floating cultivation of seed beds for Cabbage, Mustard, Upland Kangkong/water spinach, Yardlong beans, and Tomatoes; safe community storage facilities; fish processing and drying facilities; water pump for irrigation; weaving / handicraft facilities) |
| Community-Based Inputs |  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. System based Capacities (Early warning protocols, incident command system, evacuation and camp management, and Geographic Information System (GIS) and Mapping capacities) |  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Community Savings |
| |  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Disaster Risk Reduction Management and Contingency Plans |  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Linkage to financial and crop protection services |



LANAO DEL SUR AND MAGUINDANAO

A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Home to major mountain ranges, spectacular rainforests, abundant mineral resources, rich natural resources, and ultimately beautiful people, Mindanao is tagged as the “Land of Promise”. Yet, with the poor management of disasters coming in and out of this archipelago, especially the provinces of Lanao Del Sur and Maguindanao, we cannot deny that some people also call it, a living paradox—beautiful but frequently devastated. This is truly disheartening as these provinces show great potential to become a viable agricultural economy that will benefit not only the Mindanao region but the entire Philippines.



Let's have a closer look at these two provinces.

Nestled in North Central Mindanao, Lanao Del Sur prides itself on the abundance of its natural resources. Unfortunately, the province has been one of the poorest provinces in the Philippines, with a

incidence of 71%, which is seen to be the result of the local insurgency and civil unrest, thereby leading to the breakdown of peace and order.

Maguindanao, on the other hand, has always been prone to intense flooding as it is adjacent to the Mindanao River basin. This river basin is the country's second-largest river system. Severe flooding usually occurs during the monsoon season, and it takes a couple of weeks before flooding subsides. This hazard destroys agricultural lands and crops. To make things worse, most barangays lack the knowledge and capacity to effectively formulate local disaster preparedness measures.

As mentioned, another factor that hinders the potential development in the provinces of Lanao Del Sur and Maguindanao, is the presence of armed conflict. This situation causes regular displacement of people. Whenever people evacuate, they are forced to leave their crops and livelihood behind and rely on the relief packages distributed by the national government. Then, when it is safe to return, they go back to their communities finding that their livelihoods are destroyed or stolen.

These provinces are part of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which was the result of several years of peace talks between the government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Joining the BARMM poses some advantages to Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao, as it is intended to establish peace after decades of war and unrest, paving the way for a flourishing economy and trade, established through the unique cultural lens of Bangsamoro, and guided by its Bangsamoro Organic Law.

ON PARTNERING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

As a global humanitarian organization, the primary goal of Action Against Hunger is to take decisive action to address hunger. Noting that the problem of hunger is complex and deeply rooted, Action Against Hunger considers contexts and conditions in providing viable solutions to the poorest communities around the world. Solutions proposed by Action Against Hunger are long-term and encompassing, and in their own words: proactive mindset and engagement, instead of a passive acceptance of problems by its community members. Thus, the global

“We save the lives of children and their families. We are there for them before and after disaster strikes. We enable people to provide for themselves, see their children grow up strong, and for whole communities to prosper. We constantly search for more effective solutions, while sharing our knowledge and expertise with the world. We push for long-term change.”

The partnership built between Action Against Hunger, the local municipalities of Calanogas in Lanao Del Sur, Datu Piang, Datu Salibo, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Radjah Buayan in Maguindanao, and the barangays has led to the creation of programs and services that solve the root cause of poverty and food insecurity.

Action Against Hunger approaches the problem on the grassroots level, coordinating with Local Government Units (LGU) and barangays to ensure that the impact of the projects is felt by community members. Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao is often a victim of natural disasters like floods and landslides, human

rido, poverty, and right at this moment, community quarantine brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. All these problems converge to further exacerbate the poor living conditions in the provinces.

The presence of Action Against Hunger shows promise in empowering the vulnerable communities, through their Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) programs, particularly for the latter, the Community Savings Group (CSG) and Household Decision Making (HHDM).



DISASTER RISK REDUCTION MANAGEMENT

When it was established in 2010, the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) was mandated to implement Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction Management (CBDRRM) interventions, with the goal of conceptualizing and implementing capability-building measures for communities, including Contingency Plans (CPs). Thus, LGUs have their own mitigating measures being implemented when confronted with hazards, natural disasters, and other emergency situations.

However, these are highly responsive and focus on the basic survival of communities and their members. What is necessary and crucial is to empower communities by establishing policies, mechanisms, and systems that review and assess the hazards, risks, capacities, and vulnerabilities. There should be interventions that promote community resilience and empower each community member to be participatory and proactive.

Action Against Hunger's experience includes capacity building of local government and communities in disaster risk reduction and contingency planning, hazard risk, vulnerability, capacity assessments, and early warning systems establishment. Action Against Hunger's local experience also stresses sectoral inclusion and participatory processes in the implementation of its DDR and CCA concepts.

Risk Management Policy and Practice

Sub-sector 1: Building Community Awareness/ Mobilization

Barangay DRR-CCA Orientation. The communities revealed that most of them are oblivious to the occurrence of disasters, hence not aware of the concepts and principles of DRR and the effects of climate change. The orientation gave them a clearer understanding of the potential risks and threats that they might face during a disaster and how to prepare for it.

The Action conducted orientations on the DDR and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) concepts integrated into the Community Hazards and Risks Assessment Workshop which raised the awareness of the target communities about concepts and principles of disaster risk reduction. The Action gathered municipal level and barangay level government sector representatives from the local chief executives, disaster risk reduction and management, agriculture, social services, interior, barangay councils and barangay security members; and community leaders from the farmers, fisherfolk, women and other interested individuals to participate in a series of planning sessions. Local hazards data, risks and vulnerability information were updated and made available, maps were drawn to locate disaster prone areas, and plans were developed to prepare, mitigate and respond to the negative effects of disasters.

Community Hazards and Risks Assessment. Results show that the riverine floods were caused by the rising water level of the Rio Grande de Mindanao. It also revealed the vulnerable sectors during disasters which include pregnant and lactating women, small children, people with disability, and the elderly. With these insights, Action Against Hunger was able to craft strategies for raising awareness and building capacities of the communities on DDR and CCA concepts.

The local risk and vulnerability information produced during the assessment workshop informed the conduct of the training of trainers on DRR systems, particularly, the Geophysical Information System (GIS), Incident Command System (ICS), Early Warning System (EWS), and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Systems which developed local leaders who can act as resource persons in the installation of the said systems in their own communities. These local updated data were made available in the roll-out of barangay system-based training resulting in more people understanding and incorporating their risk and vulnerabilities into their preparedness and mitigation strategies. Among the four municipalities of Maguindanao, the top hazard identified was agreeably flooding caused by the rising water level of the Rio Grande de Mindanao during the rainy season and brought about by meteorological disturbances like typhoons. Vulnerable sectors find it difficult to evacuate during disasters with insufficient knowledge of the early warning systems and protocols, camp coordination and camp management protocols and other risk and vulnerability.

BDRRM Planning. The 25 covered barangays were able to develop their own Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plans (BDRRMP) with the assistance of the Action Against Hunger and other mandated government line agencies. The plans were built upon the results of the community hazards and risks assessments workshops where local risks and vulnerability information were updated and enhanced. These multi-hazard plans were aligned to the Department of the Interior and Local Government's Operation Listo Program (DILG - Listo) and Office of Civil Defense (OCD). The BDRRMCs incorporated their plans into their Annual Investment Plans for budget allocation.

Barangay Contingency Planning (BCP). After the preparation and finalization of the BDRRM Plans, the members of the planning team of each of the barangays drafted their multi hazard or hazard specific

contingency plans. The community risks information was updated to be consistent with the BDRRMP, including the hazard maps, specifying the sitios and households located in the low-risk, medium-risk, and high-risk areas. The mapping exercise provided the basis in updating their barangay or community needs and gaps.

An inventory of the response equipment was also conducted during the workshop. Using the tools provided by the Department of the Interior and Local Government's (DILG) Operation Listo template, the barangay councils identified equipment and activity they should prioritize with their respective budgets. The plans were reviewed and approved by the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), BARRM.

The plans were then presented to the BDRRM council of each barangay together with the sectoral representatives from the community. It was tested during the community-wide field simulation exercises after its approval.

Simulation Drill. The BDRRMCs run off situations of flooding for the low-lying areas and landslides for the mountainous and hilly areas based on the identified priority hazard. This examined the capacities of the communities in responding to the potential and actual threats. Additionally, it highlighted gaps and areas for improvement in the protocols, systems, budget, and plans that were not identified during the planning sessions.



Sub-sector 2: Capacity Building and Training

ToT for System Based Training. Local community focals were trained on four significant systems to strengthen the institutional capacities of the Municipal Local Government Unit (MLGU), Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) and the local community on disaster risk reduction and management. These systems include the Incident Command System (ICS), Early Warning System (EWS), Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and General Information System (GIS).

The Incident Command System (ICS) training was conducted together with the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) BARM. This gave the community leaders a better understanding of the structure, roles, and operative triggers in the activation of the barangay ICS. The protocol and system reinforced the coordination and functional mechanisms of the contingency plans particularly of the roles and functions of the various actors in implementing the contingency plans.

The Geographic Information System (GIS) training was participated by the Municipal Information Technology (IT) personnel and DRRM Officers of the five covered municipalities. The training provided skills in using QGIS in enhancing their maps, gathering community data using the Kobo App and development of an information database. Online mentoring sessions to the local GIS trained personnel were provided to support the actual gathering of data and setting up of the information systems. A presentation of the GIS to the potential users of the information in the system, particularly the members of the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council was done to ensure the utility of the system and the information in future planning and operations and widen the stakeholders that would populate or update the information in the system.

The Ministry of Social Services and Development (MSSD) became Action Against Hunger's partner in building awareness and enhancing the capacity of the local government and community leaders in organizing and managing an evacuation camp, integrating the current health protocols, considering that current practices undermine the health and security of the evacuees without the proper protocols and guidelines especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The training provided better understanding on the importance of a Camp Coordination and Camp Management CCCM system integration in their BDRRM Plans.

The Early Warning System (EWS) training facilitated by Chief Meteorological Officer of Cotabato Synoptic Station provided another important component of the disaster preparedness and mitigation strategy of the communities. The training introduced the different local tools, platforms, and equipment that can be used in gathering, recording, and communicating information relevant to the early detection and monitoring of hazards that may affect their locality.

Barangay Systems Based and Skills Based Training.

The Action conducted community rollouts of the DRRM systems with the help of the local trainers who attended the ToTs. A total of 2,941 individuals from the 25 covered barangays were subsequently trained.

There were 721 barangay emergency response team members who were trained on basic skills to increase their capacity as first responders during disasters, complementing the systems and the operative mechanisms of the plans developed in the other component of the action. Consultations with the communities and Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Offices (MDDRMOs) identified basic life support, first aid, swift water search and rescue and mountain search and rescue as the priority skills to be enhanced considering the hazards in the areas. A second and third roll-out was conducted to share basic life-saving skills to the general community. After the roll-outs, an additional 1,039 community members were trained on first aid and basic life support.

Distribution of Response Equipment. Five municipalities and 25 barangays received modest emergency response equipment in support of their training and operationalization of their DRR plans. The set inclusions are spine board, floatation ring, life vests, raincoat jackets, searchlights, megaphones, boots, stretchers, ropes, axes, protective helmets, and reflectorized vests that match the skills provided by the action to the emergency response teams.

Retrofitting of Evacuation Center. An assessment of the structures was conducted by the Municipal Engineers to check the integrity and utility of the EC and its WASH facilities before the retrofitting and repair. The four evacuation centers are compliant with the SPHERE standards on individual space requirements of 3.5 square meters of living space per person excluding cooking space, bathing area, and sanitation facilities.

Sub-sector 3: Policy and Planning

MDRRM and Contingency Planning. The five covered municipalities developed their Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plans and Contingency Plans with the help of the Action in partnership with the Office of Civil Defense, BARMM. The four municipalities of Maguindanao Province listed flooding as their top hazard while the municipality of Calanogas, Lanao Del Sur identified landslides as their top hazard. This planning and capacity building intervention by the Action became instrumental in the municipalities' achievement of the Seal of Good Local Governance Award. This also became an opportunity for the partners to reassess the plans and make the interventions more attuned to the needs of the communities.

Climate Outlook Fora. Twelve sessions of a blended online and offline fora were conducted in partnership with the Philippine Astronomic, Geophysics, and Astronomical Services Authority

climate information, forecasts, characteristics, and impacts of hazards disseminated through the Climate Fora, allowed the families to recognize and manage the potential threats.

PLANS CREATED

25 BDRM PLANS

25 CONTINGENCY PLANS

5 MUNICIPAL DRRM PLANS

5 MUNICIPAL CONTINGENCY PLANS

4,701 individuals trained on DRR-CCA concepts, principles, assessment, planning and systems and skills based DRR capacities including Incident Command System (ICS), Geographic Information System (GIS), Early Warning System (EWS), Camp Coordination and Camp Management System (CCCM), Swift Water Search and Rescue (SWASAR), Basic Life Support, Basic First Aid, and Mountain Search and Rescue (MOSAR).

721 Barangay Response Team members trained on Basic First Aid, Basic Life Support, Swift Water Rescue, and Mountain Search and Rescue.

4 Municipal Evacuation Centers retrofitted that can cater up to 143 households or 737 individuals in a combined floor area measuring 2551 square meters.

12 outlook fora conducted in collaboration with the PAGASA Cotabato Office.

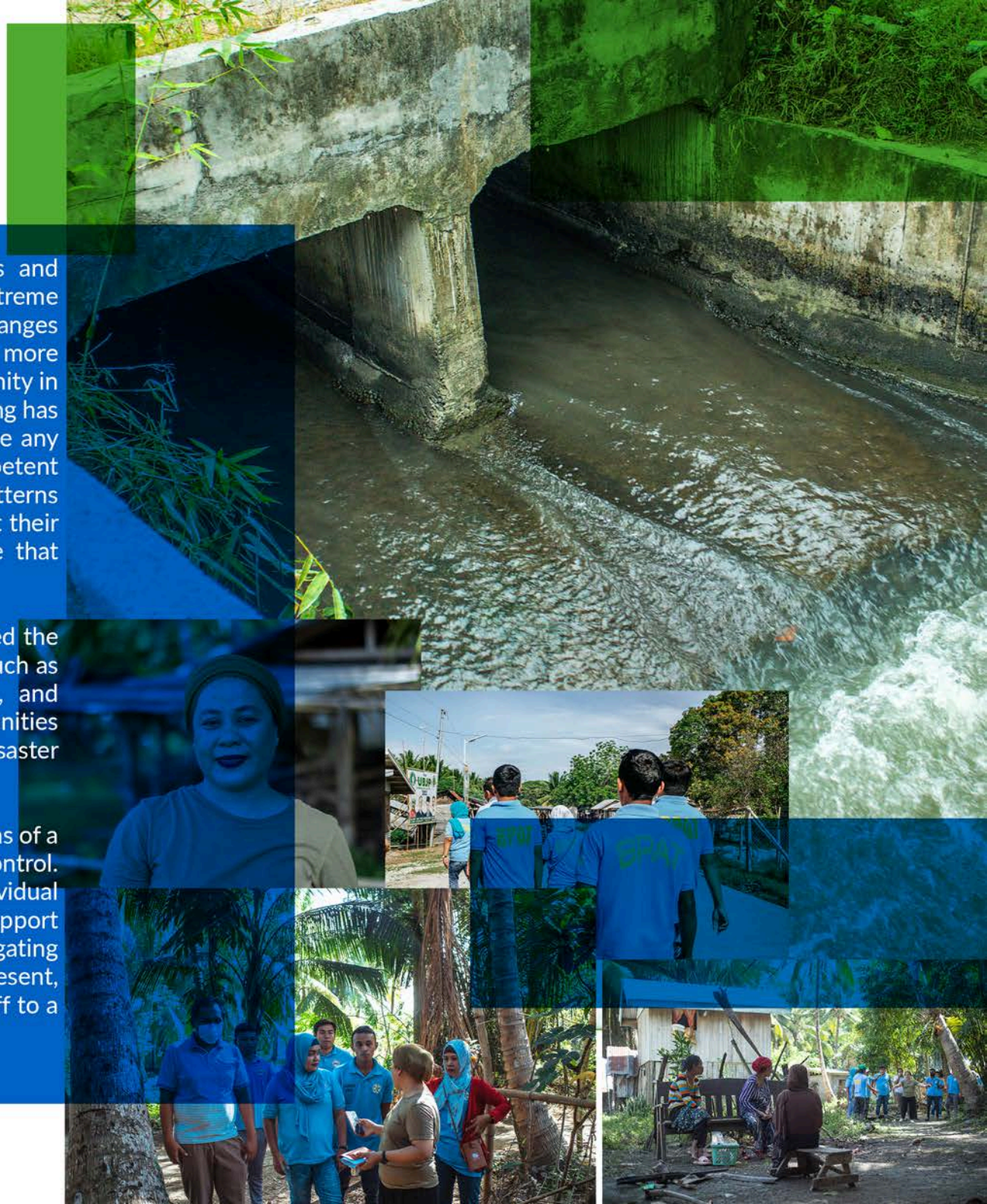
5 municipalities and 25 BLGUs accessing climate information from the fora

This resulted in...

A much improved and systematic approach of the LGUs and communities to typhoons, flooding, landslides, and extreme drought. Within the 2-year project, we greatly saw positive changes in people's mindsets. They've become substantially more self-assured, and with the cumulative efforts of their community in formulating plans, as well as the education the series of training has provided them with, they are certain that they will overcome any calamity. One concrete example is farmers being competent enough to track and acquire information about weather patterns from the weather fora. With this, they were able to augment their decision-making on what side hustle they could improvise that would give them income for any given circumstances.

Apart from the planning, Action Against Hunger also provided the communities with the necessary training during calamities, such as Water Search and Rescue "WASAR," Basic Life Support, and Incident command system. They also provided the communities with early warning devices and other equipment for disaster response, such as megaphones.

When a disaster comes, it disrupts the conventional operations of a community, and such circumstances are beyond human control. However, it must be taken into account that every single individual must take action in disaster management, and with strong support from the government as well as other private entities, mitigating the effects of a disaster to the bare minimum is possible. At present, there's still so much work that needs to be done but we're off to a good start.



Food Security Livelihoods

Food security exists when “all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO, 1996).” The four pillars of food security are availability, access, utilization, and stability.



Figure 1. Pillars of Food Security

First, availability refers to the physical existence of food inside the household or food available in the market. Moreover, availability is the capacity of people to grow their crops which they could either utilize for their consumption or sell to the market.

Second, access is met when all households or families have enough resources to obtain sufficient quantity and quality of the food that they need daily. Access is about the capability of people to purchase or acquire the available food resources in the community.

Third, utilization is about the knowledge and attitude of people about food. It describes their understanding of safely and adequately handling the food they eat and effectively deciding what kind of food to eat.

Finally, stability describes the temporary nature of food and nutrition security, respectively, the time frame over which food and nutrition security is being considered. Stability is achieved when the food supply on the household level remains constant during the year and in the long term.

Through the Four Pillars of Food Security as the basis, Action Against Hunger partnered with the municipalities of Calanogas, Datu Piang, Datu Salibo, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, and Radjah Buayan.



Five barangays per municipality were the initial project partners with two essential programs and services:

- Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, which focuses on the aspects of availability and stability and;
- Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL), which is geared towards addressing food access and utilization.

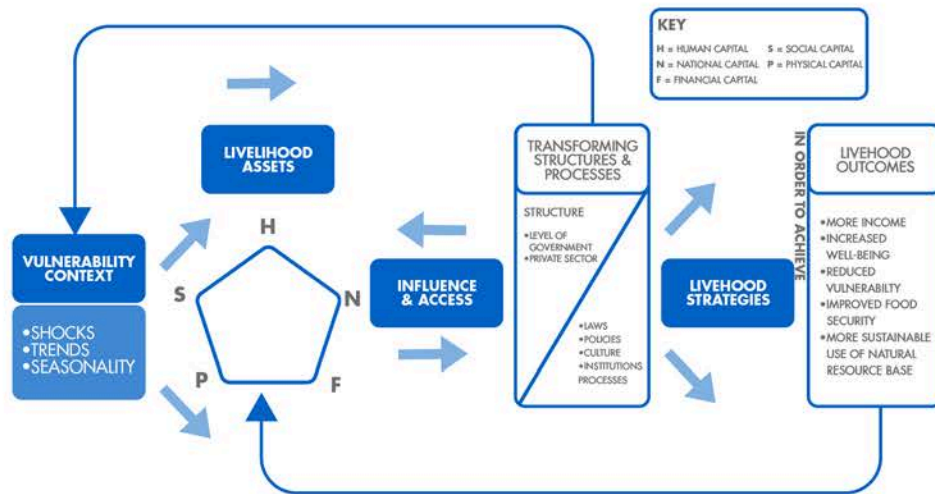


Figure 1. Sustainable Livelihoods Framework Graph from DFID 1999.

Livelihood assets and factors that can create vulnerability

Social – Gender inequality, cultural, inadequate participation of marginalized groups in community networks, poor social safety nets, lack of cohesion within a community.

Human – Lack of knowledge, such as knowledge of disasters or evacuation routes, limitations in specific skills, i.e., literacy, financial management, or conservation in agricultural activities, disabilities, poor health, etc.

Political factors – lack of appropriate regulatory systems, inadequate participation and representation in government, poor access to government services (welfare), etc.

Financial – Lack of savings, insecure access to land or resources, limited access to financial mechanisms, fluctuations in market prices or food and other essential items, and limited opportunities to diversify livelihoods.

Physical – Lack of safe storage for assets and stocks, poorly designed infrastructure, inadequate housing, etc. items, and limited opportunities to diversify livelihoods.



Agriculture and Food Security

Sub-sector 1: Improving Agricultural Production

Community Awareness and Orientation on Resilient Livelihood; Targeting & Profiling of vulnerable HHs; Feedback mechanism. Vulnerable farming households in the 5 covered municipalities were determined. We also held community orientations on livelihood resilience to instigate Climate Resiliency Field Schools (CRFS) with the BLGU who also participated in the gathering of the participants. In line with this, beneficiary feedback mechanism boxes were installed in all the barangay LGU offices to enable the gathering of feedback from the community.

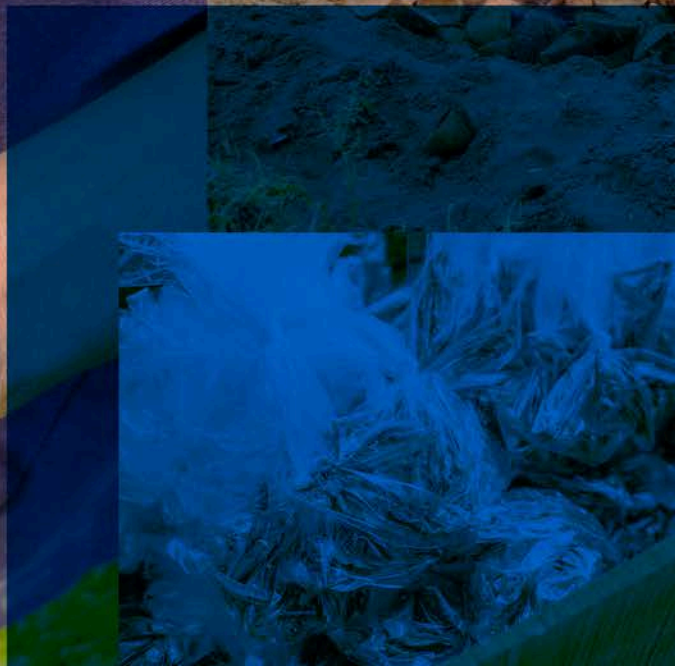
Community Livelihoods Risk Assessment. The project team aligned with the LGUs on the readiness of Action Against Hunger and risk targeting tools that can provide more extensive climate-risk data for each of the LGUs, and expressed willingness to offer coaching to the LGUs on the use of the tool when they agree.



Roll-out of climate resilient field schools. Weekly sessions were carried on over 12 weeks, based on the time convenient for the facilitators and participants. The CRFS objectives were laid during the general orientations phase. This gave the farmers an idea of what the resilient field school is and how the season-long training on vegetable production can improve their farming practices and achieve resilience. The Project provided the farmers with a set of tools during the training such as a hoe, shovel, pick, matok, and rakes, as well as sprinklers to be used in the practical application of their learnings in the demo farm. Other materials such as nylon string, tie wires, and sprayers were provided to the participants during the training. High-value vegetable seeds were provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform (MAFAR) such as sweet potato, squash, and tomatoes to name a few. MAFAR ensured their suppliers have a seed certification and Seed Grower's Declaration of Quality as a

Family dialogue for inclusive & resilient livelihoods.

There were 25 Household Decision Making Dialogue (HHDMD) Facilitators trained to aid the family sessions and do supplemental discussions with the selected families to improve decision-making dynamics through clarification of tasks and duties, creating harmonious family relations. A family resilience action plan was designed by each of the participating families because of the workshop. This was used by the HHDMD Facilitators to follow-up on the progress of the families.



Sub-sector 2: Fisheries and Aquaculture

Cash Transfer for Community Resilience Projects. The project involves plans for local resource enhancement and utilization for enterprise development, improvement of farm-to-market roads, portable solar dryer, community production and local business enhancement, and tree planting activity as a contribution to flood control and improvement of the drainage system.

Enterprise and development training. The three-day training aimed to educate the community on topics such as aspiring entrepreneurs, basic financial literacy, business plan development, and simple bookkeeping. In the end, farmers were taught the basics of financial management and business planning which they implement in their farming activities.

Capacity Building for Establishment of Community Savings Groups. The Action hosted a training of trainers to 100 CSG Chairpersons and Record Keepers after their first cycle of operation to sustain the positive impact of the initiative. They will serve as local CSG facilitators in their barangays to form new groups and mentor existing ones to ensure adherence to the CSG standards.



Sector 3: Economic recovery and market system

Sub-sector 1: Financial services

Support for Financial Inclusion. The activity introduced the usage of digital platforms such as GCash for more efficient payment and money transfers in their micro businesses. An orientation on the “how to’s” of their GCash account was held prior to the facilitation of cash transfers.

Finance and Investment Trade Fair.

Finance and Investment Trade Fair. The Action launched the 1st Resilience Trade Fair in partnership with Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism (MTIT), Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform (MAFAR), City Mall of Cotabato, Municipality of Datu Piang, Datu Salibo, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Radjah Buayan and Calanogas. The trade fair featured 20 livelihood groups from 10 barangays which paved the way for the exhibitors to improve their product design and quality, marketability, and production capability and develop their brand with guidance from MTIT and MAFAR.

Apart from these, there are two more commendable activities by the community produced by Action Against Hunger namely; Community Savings Group (CSG) and Household Decision Making (HHDM) , which are both components of the FSL program.

Community Savings Group

The activity assisted the people in the provinces of Lanao Del Sur and Maguindanao in learning the importance of financial literacy and saving for emergencies and their future needs. It also taught them how to have a sustainable business model to roll out in the community.

In considering Islamic philosophy, which discourages lending that only serves personal vested interests, CSG is aimed at empowering the community, with the projected 0-3% service charge profit to be shared by all the members. It answers to the calls of expanding local capital through community savings. Its primary goal is to provide mechanisms for saving and securing loans for emergency purposes, protection for small and vulnerable businesses, having a sound financial management system for its covered families, and subsidizing funds for potentially viable businesses, aligned to the needs of the members. It is offered to the most marginalized and vulnerable communities which do not have easy access to financial services, such as those offered by micro-financial institutions (MFI).

CSG is usually composed of 10-25 members with sets of officers such as their chairperson, who motivates and manages their activities and progress. There is a box keeper who safeguards the fund of the group and three key holders who essentially have the responsibility to keep the key in the box. Organized groups have their own constitutions and by-laws governing their operations. The policy is agreed with and set by and between the members of the CSG.

The savings may be used as loan benefits for the members, which they may use for starting their own business, or sometimes for their farming needs. The loan member needs to return the money in the agreed timeframe. Interested members who would avail of the loan would have to submit and qualify for the loan approval. Surcharges are not required, however, there are groups that implement in accordance with the



members' agreement. Record keepers track and document the cash flow in the member's passbook and keep another copy for themselves.

CSG has a social protection mechanism called the Social Fund. It is a separate contribution from the regular savings and a fixed amount decided by all members. They utilize the Social Fund if a member faces any kind of emergency like hospitalization or any disaster-related situation. The primary target of the CSG is to empower women for them to actively contribute to providing for the family's financial needs and improve their overall resiliency.

The advantageous features of the CSG program include its proximity to the community members, easy access, sets an affordable amount as the contribution, simple loan repayment scheme, security savings, and transparency. It is anchored on nine principles namely;



1. Independence and autonomy. Community members themselves manage CSG, establish policies and provisions collectively, and do not rely on external entities for their contributions, which come from their own pockets.

2. Shared Leadership. Each member actively chooses the management committee officials through a democratic process and ensures accountability for everyone.



3. Transparency. All transactions are done only during official meetings, where every member is a witness. There is a detailed record and documentation of said transactions.

4. Shared Accountability. Each member has a duty of knowing and recalling how much is the social fund and loan fund, placed on its respective bags, who took out a loan, who paid a loan, and the contributions of each member. Every community member has a responsibility toward each other in ensuring policies are followed and tasks are fulfilled by everyone.



5. Shared responsibility. Each member has the responsibility of ensuring no transactions are made outside of community meetings. Funds placed inside locked storage kits can only be opened with the presence of 4 members and officials. Lastly, members should follow agreed-upon policies on savings, loans, and payments, and who can avail of CSG benefits.



6. Responsiveness. There is a managed social fund that is earmarked for answering specific needs of CSG members. Policies created should make appropriate considerations on the needs of members, including selling of shares, and problems with loan repayment.



7. Time-bound. Existence of CSG follows a predetermined time and schedule, which covers one cycle. It should not go beyond one year should there be weekly meetings. After a designated period, members partake of the profit generated by CSG, based on member shares and savings. Keeping to a schedule helps to maintain trust among members.

8. Simplicity. There is only one passbook, where transactions, including savings, loans, and payments, are documented. There is no need for a ledger since every member is mandated to remember all transactions within the group. There is a simple, direct process being followed during meetings.



9. Sense of humanity. It is ensured that all policies pertaining to social funds, savings, loans, and penalties are humane and does not put tremendous burden on the members, while guaranteeing that measures are installed to promote discipline and responsibility.

Community Awareness and Orientation on Resilient Livelihood; Targeting & Profiling of vulnerable HHs; Feedback mechanism.

Community Livelihoods Risk Assessment

Climate Resilient Field Schools (CRFS) Project Roll-out of climate resilient field schools

TOT on climate-informed resilient livelihoods

Family dialogue for inclusive & resilient livelihoods

Cash Transfer for Community Resilience Projects

Cash Transfer for Community Resilience Projects

8,771 individuals benefiting from fisheries/aquaculture activities.

21 community adaptation and livelihood mitigation projects were completed.

9 demo farms which the farmers are now using to plant different sorts of crops.

18 community sessions that made way for the communities to craft their own family resilience plan

24,609 USD worth of community livelihood adaption and mitigation projects supported/funded.

4, 100 individuals trained in fisheries/aquaculture, community-based enterprise development and livelihood skills.

50 Community Savings Groups established.

750 individuals assisted to start using digital financial platform in their small enterprise activities.



Household Decision Making

The prevalence of a patriarchal system has certainly led to mindsets and practices that put women and girls in a disadvantageous position, especially in Mindanao. They are seen to be more vulnerable to poverty, despite the significant contributions they make in the household. Responsibilities in the household can be dichotomized into productive tasks and reproductive tasks, with the former often assigned to the men in the household while the latter to the females. However, research has shown that changes have been observed in these responsibilities; women are also involved in productive activities with their male counterparts. However, this is an added burden to their reproductive tasks, which has not diminished, leading to overwork of women.

While women participate in income-generating activities, their decision-making participation is still very limited. Men still have the power to decide on key issues such as mobility, heritage, work assignments, use of land, and the like. Moreover, agricultural knowledge and labor are the primary responsibility of men. The dominance of men in decision-making has put women at a disadvantage, despite the strong impact of such decisions on all members of the household.

The purpose of HHDM is to mainstream gender equality and promote gender empowerment. Such purposes are crucial as it should underlie interventions that influence household decision-making, integrated into Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL). This addresses challenges related to child health and nutrition, which is tied to the ultimate mission of Action Against Hunger. Such programs may not have a direct association with ending hunger, but they are crucial in enabling paradigm shifts for households, to become empowered in decision-making and building community resilience. Recognizing the important role of women in household decision-making paves the way for self-regulation, time management, mobility opportunities, trust in men, personality confidence, and equality in sharing household chores. Moreover, in embracing long-term change, it is imperative that it should start with a cognitive paradigm shift.

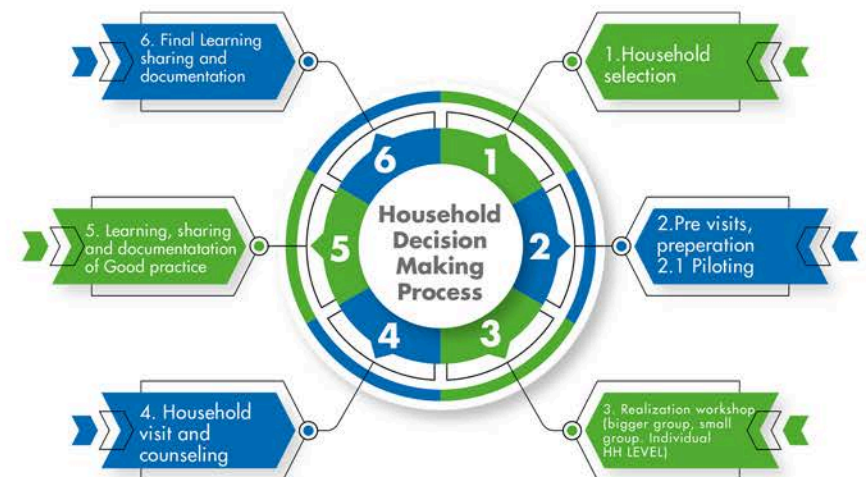


Figure 1. Household Decision Making Process Cycle

Like many communities in the Philippines, many women in Lanao Del Sur and Maguindanao also face discrimination and are disadvantaged just because of their gender. This situation is very unfortunate as women cannot achieve their full potential in many cases.

HHDM is another component of the FSL Program, anchored on three principles:

1. **Strengthening of the Family.** The family, as the basic unit of society, has a vital role in achieving success in the family.
2. **Family Engagement.** There needs to be open communication between its members to strengthen the family and promote shared responsibility among men and women.
3. **Women Empowerment.** It is essential to empower women by letting them know their rights and making them aware of their vital role in community-building.

Action Against Hunger introduced HHDM in the community using two strategies. The first is by identifying women who currently hold volunteer positions in the community, such as VAWC staff of the barangay. The second is through community sessions.

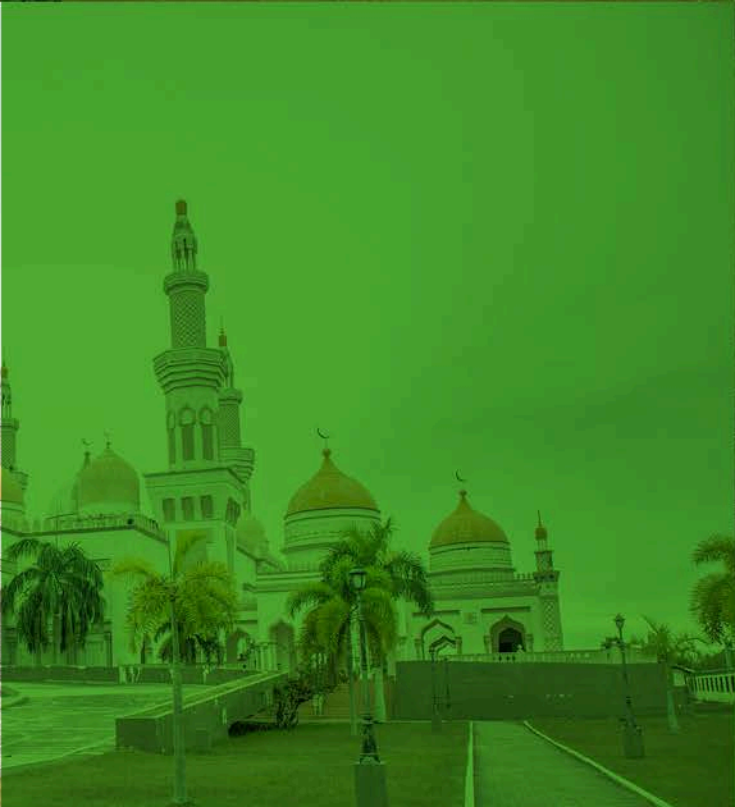
Action Against Hunger further trained VAWC staff through workshops about the different policies and laws protecting women and children. They also introduced the referral pathway, which presents the various agencies and authorities where abused women could ask for help.

After training them, the barangays initiated an activity where their VAWC staff would conduct a community session, house-to-house, and re-echo the community about their learnings. Initially, people in the community, particularly men, did not receive the program very well. However, this did not stop the trained women of Maguindanao from fighting for their advocacy.

Aside from focusing on VAWC, HHDM is also concerned with strengthening the family. They have conducted community sessions with the community volunteers about the values of respect, open communication, and shared responsibility in the family.







Adjahar Wali, Barangay Chairperson, Barangay Dado, Datu Piang, reports on the improvement of their barangay in terms of disaster risk reduction as follows,

“Our barangay already conducts regular cleaning to prevent flooding; we already have a well-established plan for disaster preparedness... So, I would rate 8/10 for the preparedness of our barangay when it comes to disasters.” solutions, while sharing our

Johar Lumenda, one of the Barangay Councilors of Barangay Gaunan also stated.

“Before Action Against Hunger came, we could not manage our Disaster Management plans in the community because we lacked the necessary knowledge and skills to do it. Support from the national and municipal government is not enough.”Gyron, a farmer.

“Action Against Hunger provided us with a demo farm that has become a valuable source of income and livelihood for everyone”. Rashid.

“The HHDM or Household Decision Making (process), allows families to openly communicate and discuss (important and sensitive) matters making families stronger (reach collective decisions).” Norhaya.

“We’re overjoyed. Thank you so much for teaching us the value of having our own savings. We never prioritized this before. Because of you (Action Against Hunger team), we realized it feels good to have your own savings. I have a lot of kids that I need to send to school. That is why I need to have my own savings for (the benefit of) my children. Back then I didn't understand the concept of savings, thus, we spend whatever we have.

When we opened (our community savings group) last January, I used (my savings and loans) to fund my own small sari-sari store. Whatever I earned, I saved. And I was able to use it for my child’s graduation in PMTC as transportation (going) to the ceremony and food allowance when we were (in Marawi City).” Samra.



The partnership built between Action Against Hunger and the local municipalities of Datu Piang, Datu Salibo, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Radjah Buayan in Maguindanao and Calanogas in Lanao Del Sur has led to the creation of programs and services that solve the root cause of poverty and food insecurity.

Firstly, through having joint efforts in strengthening the capacity of barangays in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM), the communities were able to craft a comprehensive BDRRM plan and contingency plans. Secondly, the introduction of the demonstration farms as a learning site for farmers in improving their farming practices allowed them to enhance the resiliency of their livelihoods against the negative impacts of disasters. Moreover, different community savings groups were formed, which promoted and introduced the idea of saving and entrepreneurship contextually suited to the Islamic culture of financing.

Furthermore, the partnership between different stakeholders in the communities also brought awareness to the existence of gender dynamics that affect women, putting them on the losing end by being dependent on men. This gender inequality is viewed as a risk factor that hinders the intended impacts of inclusive development. For this reason, Action Against Hunger also introduced the Household Decision Making Program (HHDM) to the communities, which aims to encourage more egalitarian gender dynamics by emphasizing the importance of shared responsibility and sustainable decision-making in the household. They have also incorporated HHDM using the rights-based approach by increasing the awareness of women about violence and how they could respond to it by challenging existing gender norms in the family.

FINAL MESSAGE



“Preparedness, when properly pursued, is a way of life, not a sudden spectacular program.” Action Against Hunger’s collaboration with the partner municipal LGUs in Maguindanao and Lanao Del Sur resulted to the development, enhancement and updating of their disaster risk reduction and management plans and resilient livelihoods strategies. After two years of engagement, the LGUs and communities were able to attend various trainings to improve their knowledge and skills and increase their capacities to be more prepared in dealing with the natural hazards affecting their lives and livelihoods.

Action Against Hunger would like to express gratitude to partners who helped realize our common goals. From the beginning, USAID has provided us with the necessary support in strengthening capacities of our partner local government units and communities towards resilience.

To the BARMM, led by Chief Minister Ahod B. Ebrahim and the collaborative partnership with the Ministries of Agriculture Fisheries and Agrarian Reform (MAFAR) and the Interior and Local Government (MILG).

Our appreciation also goes to the local government officials who tirelessly shared their valuable time, skills and knowledge especially the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Officers, Municipal MAFAR Officers, Municipal Engineers and their staff. To the communities who participated actively and showed utmost enthusiasm in all the activities conducted together.

The breakthrough of the policies was vibrantly revealed when the farmers themselves were able to incorporate what they learned into growing crops using alternative methods and members of the communities were able to show coherence to the programs implementing the suggested strategies in their day-to-day life from disaster preparedness and mitigation, community savings, community livelihood adaptation and mitigation, household decision-making and climate resilient field schools initiatives.

More importantly, to the community volunteers who helped implement the activities with joy, not thinking about their personal gains but of the common good the project brings to all of their communities.


Thank you and Mabuhay!

GENARO G. SANCHEZ
HEAD OF PROJECT



A portrait of Genaro G. Sanchez, a man with short dark hair, wearing a white polo shirt and a blue lanyard. He is holding a microphone and speaking. The background is a blurred banner with the text "ACTION AGAINST HUNGER".

Genaro G. Sanchez
Head of Project

A portrait of Ma. Angela Nalaunan, a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a blue and white striped button-down shirt. She is smiling. The background is a blurred banner with the text "ACTION AGAINST HUNGER".

Ma. Angela Nalaunan
Project Assistant

A portrait of Michael Ryan Queman, a man with dark hair, wearing a dark green polo shirt with the "ACTION AGAINST HUNGER" logo. He is smiling. The background is a blurred banner with the text "ACTION AGAINST HUNGER".

Michael Ryan Queman
Project Assistant

A portrait of Joel Dela Cruz, a man with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a blue and white striped shirt. He is smiling. The background is a blurred banner with the text "ACTION AGAINST HUNGER".

Joel Dela Cruz
Project Assistant

A portrait of Abdulrasid Montawal, a man with short dark hair, wearing a light blue polo shirt. He is looking slightly to the side. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

Abdulrasid Montawal
Project Assistant

A portrait of Abdulmaguid Mohamad, a man with short dark hair, wearing a dark blue polo shirt and a light blue surgical mask. He is looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

Abdulmaguid Mohamad
Project Assistant

ACTION AGAINST HUNGER TEAM

STRENGTHENING LOCAL RESILIENCE AND BUILDING CAPACITIES IN AREAS AT HIGH RISK OF NATURAL HAZARDS IN BARMM, MINDANAO.



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