

# NP PHILIPPINES



Photo: NP Philippines with women partners produced facemasks made from locally available materials to be distributed for free in their communities. July 2020/NP

## Provided direct physical protection to vulnerable populations and individuals

**NP Philippines' multi-pronged quick response to COVID threats in remote communities**

When COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, the Philippine government immediately put in place tight restrictions on movement of people within and across communities. This

has adversely affected the livelihood of many families still rearing from the harsh effects brought by displacement due armed conflict. There was no time to prepare, as the pandemic spread across the globe and into local communities in just a matter of days.

In Lanao del Sur, where the tragic Marawi Siege displaced thousands of families who many of whom until now still lives in IDP transitory camps, the number of COVID cases suddenly took a surge. The national

and local governments immediately imposed lockdowns of communities where residents were not allowed to go out and visitors are also prohibited to go in. Suddenly families were trapped without access to their source of living and food.

Early Warning Early Response (EWER) volunteers send reports to NP Civilian Protection Monitors of locked down families in IDP Camps and far-flung villages who have no access to rations and assistance from the government. NP immediately referred these concerns to their respective local governments and aid agencies who swiftly responded along with good-hearted individuals who also send personal donations to the distressed families.

NP was immediately put on board the government's Coordinating Center for Mindanao on COVID-19 (CCMC19) tasked to monitor and report issues and concerns arising from the pandemic and the implementation of government protocols and assistance across Mindanao. These reports provides guidance for response and actions of the National Inter-Agency Task Force (NIATF) created by the government to respond to the pandemic and its effects to people in the Philippines.

NP also partnered with the Ministry of Health of the newly-established Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in a quick information campaign to

prevent the spread of the virus especially in vulnerable remote communities. NP with local partners, local governments, including the security forces put up posters and streamers in strategic locations for people to know how to protect themselves and avoid the spread of the virus. Together with a local partner, a radio program was also established to reach more remote communities. NP Protection Monitors also conducted visits to IDP camps and homes hosting IDPs to educate them on how to prevent the spread of COVID.

**Women action.** Assisted by NP, women local partners immediately put there sewing machines humming to produce facemasks made from locally-available cloths (Malong) to be distributed for free in their communities. There was a shortage of supply of commercial facemasks during the initial onslaught of the pandemic, and this has to be addressed by producing locally-made facemasks.

In collaboration with government and other humanitarian agencies, NP Philippines conducted activities in local communities promoting a referral pathway to educate and inform the people which agency they should inform or approach when they have issues and concerns. These initiatives somehow made these remote communities get connected and felt the presence of government services.



Photo: NP Philippines conduct strategic planning workshops for former combatants of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to strengthen their capacities in transforming their camps into productive and peaceful communities. /September 2020/NP

**Strengthening local infrastructures for violence prevention, self-protection and peacebuilding**

**From combatants to development workers, NP helps former rebels’ transition towards peaceful and productive civilian lives**

With established years of trust and confidence with NP, key officials of the MILF underwent a series of strategic planning workshops to help them identify impact projects and programs for the transformation of their camps into productive and peaceful communities. The workshops also help them synergize their individual capacities and abilities towards a

common goal of developing their communities.

One of the highlights of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) signed by the Philippine government and the MILF in 2014, is the Normalization process which mainly involves the decommissioning of the combatants and putting their weapons beyond use, and the transformation of MILF camps into peaceful and resilient communities.

In the provinces of Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte in Mindanao, NP’s legacy – the Multi-stakeholders Coordination Meeting-initiated by NP Philippines almost a decade now, has become a regular forum between

different stakeholders to come together and discuss issues especially the security of communities in the area. These meetings bring together the government military, the MILF, local governments, and other nongovernment organizations up until now with or without NP whenever a stakeholder calls for it to convene to address pressing issues and concerns.

It has also improved the confidence between the government military and the MILF, where the latter is already opening up their camps to visits of the military to discuss projects and programs for the development of the camps.

NP Philippines also taught UCP to decommissioned MILF combatants who are now hired as forest rangers to protect the natural resources of the Bangsamoro autonomous region. The former rebels expressed appreciation on how they can apply UCP principles in safeguarding the environment.

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