



MARADECA Inc.

# Maradeca

The Official Publication of the Maranao People Development Center, Inc.  
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UPDATES



MARADECA together with RHU conducted community outreach activity in Brgy. Sawer, Masiu, LDS serving GIDA community

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## Outreach and Microplanning Helps Deliver Life-Saving Vaccines to Last-Mile Places

- Fairoso B. Casan

Life-saving vaccines have been delivered to infants in the so-called Last Mile barangays, or the hard-to-reach barangays of Lanao del Sur in a new way to implement routine immunization efforts. The strategy called Enhancing the implementation of the Reaching Every Purok (REP), barangay and municipal health workers were able to knock on the doors of the most remote and underserved households and deliver life-saving vaccines to children 0 – 24 months old. The municipalities of Pagayawan and Masiu in Lanao del Sur witnessed this significant innovation of community-based outreach activities that were conducted under the Covid-19 and Routine Immunization Delivery Support – Last Mile Project.

The outreach activity was conducted through house-to-house visits and barangay-based immunization sessions to overcome logistical challenges such as transportation barriers and caregiver hesitancy, which often hinder vaccine access in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. To complement the vaccination drive, Group Learning Sessions (GLS) and social listening activities were conducted with parents and caregivers to raise awareness about the importance of routine immunization, dispel common myths and misinformation surrounding vaccines, foster trust between health workers and community members, and encourage active participation in immunization efforts.

Ms. Saimah Baulo, Communication for Development (C4D) specialist and a GLS session facilitator said *“Routine immunization is not just about protecting children today—it is an investment in their future. Every missed dose is a missed opportunity to save a life.”* She emphasized on the importance of timely and complete vaccination to prevent outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. *“Before, I was afraid because of what I heard from neighbors about side effects. But now, I understand better why vaccines are important for my baby’s health,”* a mother from Barangay Biabi in Masiu said. Another father from Pagayawan said, *“I did not know that missing one vaccine could leave my child at risk. I will make sure my youngest completes all the vaccines.”* Baulo said a microplanning workshop was conducted to strengthen the operational capacity of frontline health workers and to effect behavior change to address vaccine hesitancy particularly in the post-pandemic context. These were done to coordinate efforts on strategic planning, localized communication, and active community participation in achieving equitable immunization coverage. The workshop identified and mapped high-priority areas with zero-dose and under-immunized children and ensure these were aligned with the National Immunization Program (NIP) goals.

MARADECA, Inc. and Relief International, together with UNICEF supported the activity in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in advancing child health and immunization outcomes.

## **EDITORIAL**

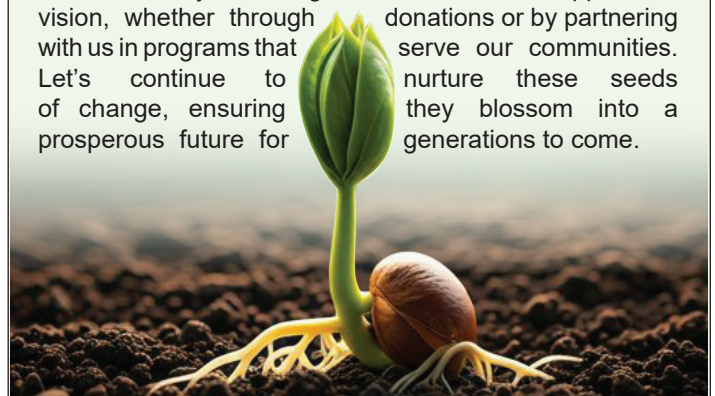
### **Resilience: Sowing Seeds of Change for a Thriving Community**

For years, this publication has chronicled the vibrant spirit and unwavering commitment to progress within our community. Today, we shine a light on the vital “seeds of change” we’re diligently sowing – initiatives designed to cultivate sustainable development and secure a prosperous future for everyone.

Empowering Through Sustainable Agriculture. This is a prime example of this transformative approach that goes beyond simply boosting income for local farmers; it’s fostering a sustainable agricultural model that champions environmental respect and ensures long-term economic stability. By equipping farmers with essential knowledge, resources, and market access, MARADECA demonstrates a holistic development strategy that recognizes the interconnectedness of economic prosperity and ecological well-being. Prioritizing Community Health Our dedication to community health remains paramount. This is also an ongoing, proactive tuberculosis (TB) screening program that underscores our commitment to safeguard well-being. By providing free, accessible screening and education, we’re actively working to break the chain of TB transmission and build a healthier community. Similarly, our immunization program stands as a testament to our efforts to protect children from preventable diseases, laying a strong foundation for a lifetime of health and resilience.

Investing in Our Youth and Future Beyond immediate healthcare, MARADECA is investing deeply in the potential of our community through child sponsorship. This crucial program offers vital support, enabling children to access education, nutrition, and essential resources. It’s about empowering them to break the cycle of poverty and realize their full potential. We also believe in nurturing personal growth within our team, fostering a supportive and enriching work environment for all and providing opportunities for staff to develop professionally.

A Collective Vision for Prosperity. This edition of MARADECA Updates is a powerful testament to the impact of collective action. Every program, every initiative, is a vital thread in the rich tapestry of our community, woven together by shared values and a common vision. Together, we are cultivating resilience, planting enduring seeds of change, and building a community where everyone has the opportunity to truly thrive. As we move forward, we wholeheartedly encourage our readers to support our vision, whether through donations or by partnering with us in programs that serve our communities. Let’s continue to nurture these seeds of change, ensuring they blossom into a prosperous future for generations to come.



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## Women Role in Conflict, Climate Risks highlighted in ASEAN training

- Aquila M. Kahar



Ms. Minette Soriano guides the Philippine team sharpens their focus on key findings and streamlines their presentation for maximum clarity and impact.

Women leaders in Lanao del Sur and across the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) may find themselves taking on more challenging roles in policy and peacebuilding agenda if they got the necessary tools and skills.

This was the gist of the sessions for women leaders engaged in conflict, displacement, and climate risks in critical areas as the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace, and Security (ASEAN RPA on WPS) offered a framework to address these gaps. Ms. Aquila M. Kahar of MARADECA, who represented civil society sector of Lanao del Sur said the series of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) trainings held in Manila, Bangkok, and Jakarta, highlighted Important points such as creating indicators that reflect women's lived experiences, applying community-led data collection methods, and ensuring findings directly influence policy changes.

During the final workshop in Jakarta on February 24–26 Ms. Kahar said the participants engaged in designing and refining MEL tools for conflict-affected communities.

*“Data is not just numbers—it’s a story of people’s lives, and if we fail to capture the voices of women, we fail to tell the full story of peace,”* said Ms. Minette Soriano, a resource persons in the MEL training. She said the MEL *“is more than a technical tool; it is a means to amplify the voices of women in conflict-affected areas”*.

Ms. Kahar also presented MARADECA’s evaluation plan, presented during the workshop, addressed the specific challenges and opportunities of integrating women’s perspectives into peace and security policies in Lanao del Sur.

The ASEAN RPA on WPS was attended by delegates from the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Vietnam.



Philippine team refines evaluation findings to reflect accuracy, insight, and integrity

## Lanao del Sur Youth Explores Sensitive Issues

- Aquila kahar



A young leader from Butig steps up, offering bold ideas for child protection in youth discussions.

MARADECA Inc., in collaboration with LYDOs, SK Federations and youth networks gathered a group of youth in Lanao del Sur to explore and discuss sensitive issues like child and teen marriages and children’s rights.

The organizers wanted to emphasize the need for the youth to know the correct steps in reporting abuse, the value of building trust between children and community leaders, and the importance of integrating peacebuilding into everyday youth activities.

Through these discussions and group work, young people were empowered to serve as active advocates for child protection and peace.

The youth came from six municipalities for series of youth-led community orientation and workshop sessions on children’s rights, Anti-Child Marriage Law, referral mechanisms, and grassroots peacebuilding tools against the backdrop of persistent challenges of early and forced marriage, community violence, and weak protection systems.

*“Protecting children is not just the duty of parents—it is the collective responsibility of the whole community,”* said Ivan Dave Dusil, one of the participants in Wao, Lanao del Sur. The UNICEF and the European Union helped realize the youth empowerment sessions.

# Empowering Frontline Workers Community Health Worker Train on Routine Immunization

- Fairosa B. Casan

Listening is as important a skill as it is to ensure that children get their routine immunizations

This was a crucial point in a training for health workers in Lanao del Sur in the Covid-19 and Routine Immunization Delivery Support – Last Mile Project in places still mired in vaccine-hesitancy and cultural divide.

*“Special attention was given to contextualizing health messages in the Bangsamoro setting, recognizing the importance of respecting local values, beliefs, and social dynamics. CHWs were trained to use empathetic, culturally appropriate approaches when engaging with caregivers and families to improve vaccine acceptance and foster community trust in health services,”* project manager and facilitator Ms. Fairosa Casan, told the participants to the innovative approach in child immunization.

The training for the Basic National Immunization Program emphasized on critical technical and interpersonal skills development such as Interpersonal Communication and Counseling for Immunization (IPCI) – focusing on culturally sensitive communication, listening skills, and addressing vaccine hesitancy through empathy and trust-building, and Immunization Program Management – with emphasis on cold chain and vaccine handling, recording and reporting, and monitoring of immunization performance.

*“In our communities, trust is the foundation. When a mother sees that we respect her culture and listen to her concerns, she becomes more open to protecting her child through*



MARADECA staff and CHWs in Pagayawan, Lanao del Sur

*vaccination,”* a participant in the Masiu session said.

A community health worker from Pagayawan said that *“Sometimes parents refuse vaccination not because they don’t care, but because they are afraid. This training gave me the right words and approach to help them feel safe and informed.”*

*“I realized that my role is not only to give vaccines but also to explain why they are important. I feel more confident now to answer questions and correct wrong beliefs,”* another participant said.

MARADECA, Inc., Relief International, and UNICEF reaffirmed the importance of empowering the CHWs with the right tools and knowledge to build a more responsive, inclusive, and resilient primary healthcare system in Lanao del Sur. As frontline actors, the trained health workers serve a pivotal role in improving immunization coverage, preventing outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, and promoting better child health outcomes throughout the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

## GENDER TRAINING STRESS TRANSFORMATION AWARENESS IN LANAO DEL SUR.

- Norliah Deron



Norliah Deron, MARADECA Project Officer, on Gender in Emergencies Training

A training on gender and disaster response emphasized a shift in focus: from being gender-aware to becoming gender-transformative, a new focus on orientation and education.

The two MARADECA representatives who attended the Plan International Philippines-sponsored training on

February 3-8, at Bayview Park Hotel, Manila said the shift was *“going a step further and accompanying these efforts with education and orientation transforms the approach into a gender-transformative one.”*

*“This not only addresses immediate needs but also contributes to sustainable, long-term change in gender dynamics within communities,”* they said, who added that *“this message deeply resonated with ongoing work in disaster response and community development”*.

The new focus further emphasized MARADECA’s gender-sensitive approach that becomes particularly evident in times of disaster, *“where disaster-response efforts ensure that the unique needs and vulnerabilities of women, children, and marginalized groups are not overlooked.”*

*“Disasters tend to magnify existing gender issues in communities,”* MARADECA said. *“This training helped us better understand how to design our emergency responses in ways that protect and empower vulnerable sectors.”*

## MARADECA conducts TB Active Case Finding for Cebu health office

- Johayma Diama

MARADECA conducted an Active TB Case Finding (ACF) activity in Cebu province during the first quarter for the Provincial Health Office of Cebu.

From March 6 to March 28, the ACF found 140 persons who tested positive and have already started TB treatment. Some 247 presumptive TB (PTB) clients were identified and underwent GeneXpert testing.

*“Many of these individuals expressed gratitude and relief at having access to free testing and treatment services. Some even shared stories of how they had been living in fear of the disease, unaware of their status. The ACF activity brought hope and reassurance to these communities, demonstrating*

*the importance of accessible healthcare,”* the MARADECA said.

Dr. Ronald Jarvik A. Buscato, Regional NTP Coordinator of Region VII lauded MARADECA’s efforts in conducting the ACF activity as he highlighted the importance of partnerships in achieving a TB-free community.



Active Case Finding (ACF) in Cebu Province

## Moro Youth Maps out Problem Analysis

- Aquila Kahar



*Young leaders from Taraka map out pressing local issues, identifying specific concerns in each location and establishment through a powerful visual mapping activity.*

The MARADECA Inc. and the Ranaw Youth Development Office (RYDO) opened safe spaces for the youth to map out solutions to the challenges hounding their sector.

In a series of youth-led conversations from September 2024 to February 2025 across Lanao del Sur, participants engaged in group mapping, problem analysis, and solution-building exercises to address issues like limited access to quality education, mental health concerns, unemployment, and the lasting impact of conflict.

These engagements will help them know the importance of inclusive leadership that values every voice, the need for consistent youth participation in local decision-making bodies, and the use of creative advocacy methods to engage both peers and policymakers, according to Mr. Jamil Faisal S. Adiong, head of RYDO.

*“Youth are not just the leaders of tomorrow—they are the co-leaders of today,”* he said. *The consultations were created to provide safe spaces for young people to share their realities, voice their aspirations, and identify solutions using participatory tools like the Visual Map and the Three H’s framework (Head, Heart, Hands),* the RYDO said.

The activities were supported by the UNICEF and the European Union (EU).

## MARADECA Extends Support to Vulnerable Communities during Ramadhan

- Safia Dimatingcal

In the sacred month of Ramadhan, which fall in March this year, MARADECA Inc. upheld its long-standing tradition of community service by distributing hygiene kits and offering free iftar meals to vulnerable communities throughout the province of Lanao del Sur.

On March 13, a team from MARADECA extended its outreach to Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) at the Provincial Jail and Marawi City Jail. Hygiene kits and iftar meals were distributed to the inmates.

MARADECA also reached out to three Toril (a place where the students stay during their studies in Islamic education) and in two masjids and 11 barangays.

*“It’s a yearly practice every Ramadhan that MARADECA visits our PDLs. This is our way of letting them know they are not forgotten by people outside,”* said Ms. Nadjeba Maruhom, a staff member of MARADECA’s Peacebuilding Program.



MARADECA’S Iftar Drive for PDLs in Lanao del Sur

## Feature: Money in Coffee Bean

- Faridah U. Salic

The recurring conflict in Kabbon Takas, Patikul, Sulu, has left deep scars on its residents, ravaging both land and lives. Livelihood, once rooted in fertile coffee and vegetable farms, withered under the shadow of war.

This is the story of Rony N. Hammisani, a 30-year-old father, one that resonates among many other residents who struggled, forced to flee their homes and abandoning his aging coffee trees, believing they no longer held value.

In 2020, Rony returned, now a father and sole provider, facing unemployment. He explored every avenue, even considered the backbreaking work of logging, just to feed his family. Amid the hardship, Rony's spirit remained unbroken. He persevered, returning to the land he knew and resuming the grueling work of farming.

The BAEP-LEAP, a project funded by European Union implemented by People In Need (PIN) in partnership with the Maranao People Development Center Inc. (MARADECA), became a turning point.

The project provided invaluable training, exposure trips to thriving coffee farms, and essential farming tools. These experiences sparked a profound transformation in Rony's outlook. He learned the entire process—from planting and rejuvenation to harvesting—and became convinced that coffee farming could indeed uplift lives and generate income. There is money in coffee beans, he realized.

*"As a focal leader, I am thrilled to have participated in the training," Rony shared. "Our cluster received vita tools—sprayers, shovels, seedlings, and more. My mindset has transformed. I've adopted proper planting techniques, coffee*



*"tree rejuvenation methods, and raised-bed drying. Now, I aim to be a model farmer, inspiring others in my community"- Rony*

*tree rejuvenation methods, and raised-bed drying. Now, I aim to be a model farmer, inspiring others in my community."*

Rony envisions Kabbon Takas becoming a leading producer of high-quality coffee. He dreams of accessible processing facilities that will lower costs and streamline production for local farmers—recognizing the dedication and collective effort that goal will require.

## Feature: Brewed Awakening: A New Era for Coffee

- Alvin Abbas

"Kapeng Barako," a familiar Filipino folk brand of strong coffee, captures the nation's deep love for coffee. More than just a drink, it is a cultural cornerstone, a source of comfort, and a social connector. With the Philippines cultivating all four commercially viable coffee varieties, this passion is not just a trend—it's a tradition and a key to revitalizing the country's coffee industry.

Imagine rolling hills blanketed not in conflict but in coffee trees, their branches heavy with ripe cherries. This is a vision of the People In Need (PIN) and Maranao People Development Center Inc. (MARADECA) project under the BAEP-LEAP program—working to bring coffee back to life in the Bangsamoro region, especially in Sulu and Basilan. They are not merely planting crops; they are planting the seeds of sustainable economic and community development. The project is funded by the European Union (EU).

The Philippine coffee story began in 1740, with a single seed planted by a Spanish friar in Batangas, transforming the region into the coffee capital. By the 1800s, the country was a key global supplier. However, in the late 1900s, a coffee

rust epidemic swept across the archipelago, decimating plantations, and the industry struggled to compete globally.

For decades, Philippine coffee languished—a forgotten treasure. But the 21st century ushered in a resurgence and a renewed commitment to restoring this once-proud industry. The new focus: not just quantity, but quality—cultivating exceptional coffee with unique flavor profiles, grown sustainably to meet the demands of a discerning global market. Fast forward to Sulu and Basilan. With their fertile lands and dedicated farmers, these provinces hold the promise of writing the next chapter in the Philippine coffee saga.

The PIN and MARADECA projects go beyond agriculture—they are investments in peace and prosperity. By empowering local communities to grow high-quality coffee, these initiatives offer a sustainable alternative: a path to economic independence and a brighter future. They are, in essence, brewing hope. This is not merely a revival; it's a rebirth. A chance for the Bangsamoro region to take its place on the world coffee stage and write a bold new narrative—one rich in the aroma of possibility.

## MARADECA to Roll Out Farm Package after Farm Visits in Lanao del Sur

- Fairosa Casan

MARADECA has conducted farm visits in the municipalities of Balabagan and Kapatagan, Lanao del Sur, as preparatory activities for a subsequent distribution of farm inputs.

The farm visits covered Kapatagan (Barangay Matimos) and in Balabagan (Molimoc, Purakan, Bagoaingud, Magulalong Oriental, Magulalong Occidental, Igabay, Tataya, and Pindolonan).

The MARADECA said the visits will verify land suitability and readiness for vegetable cultivation and to gauge the interest and preparedness of local farmers to participate in the upcoming livelihood support program.

A Barangay Purakan farmer told the MARADECA team that *“when the floods came, we thought we would lose our fields for good. Now, knowing that seeds and tools are coming, we feel hopeful again that we can plant and feed our families.”*

After these preparatory activities, a package of agricultural support will be rolled out, including the distribution of vegetable seeds, organic fertilizers, and farming tools, to help flood-affected families restore their sources of income and food security through sustainable vegetable production.

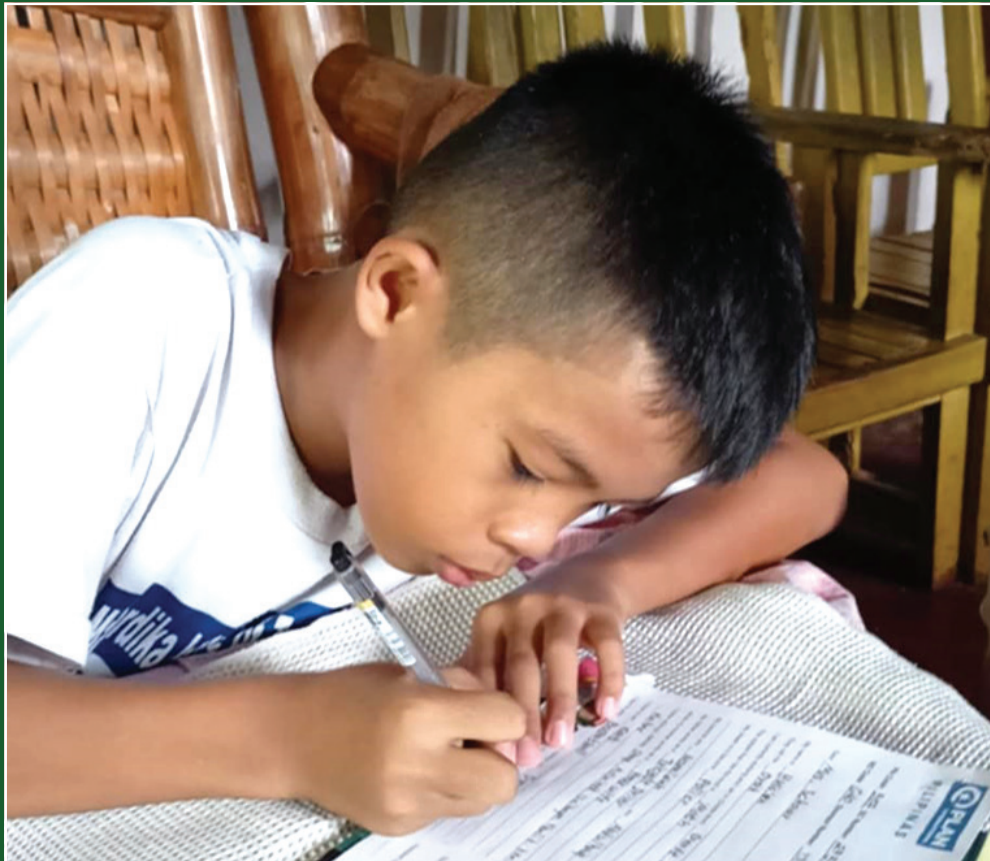


MARADECA staff assessing farmers for vegetable farmland suitability

This initiative is being carried out in partnership with Give to the World.

## Sponsor Communication Strengthens Child Sponsorship Programs in Lanao del Sur

- Norliah Deron



A sponsored child in Saguiran, Lanao del Sur draws a welcome greeting for their sponsor.

Marantao, Lanao del Sur — Sponsor communication has taken center stage in the child sponsorship programs of Plan International Philippines Foundation Inc. and MARADECA Inc., now being implemented in the municipalities of Marantao and Saguiran.

Through regular exchanges, often in the form of children's essay writing, sponsors gain firsthand insights into the growth, challenges, and achievements of the children they support. This process not only keeps sponsors informed but also builds stronger, more meaningful connections between them and the children.

Program partners highlight that this initiative enhances transparency, deepens accountability, and strengthens the overall impact of sponsorship within the community. By giving children a platform to share their voices, the program fosters trust and ensures that support grows into a lasting relationship that inspires hope and progress for the children and the community as a whole.



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