



MARADECA Inc.

Maradeca

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UPDATES



**MARADECA:
EMPOWERING
BANGSAMORO
FARMERS THROUGH
COLLABORATION**

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ABOUT THE COVER PHOTO



The cover photo captures women working together during a LEAP project post-harvesting training. Gathering around a traditional bamboo sorting tray, their hands collaborate to sort vibrant red coffee cherries—a scene that illustrates the intergenerational knowledge transfer at the core of MARADECA's mission in Sulu and Basilan.



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EDITORIAL

Community development is not built through isolated interventions but through the convergence of efforts that address interconnected needs. The recent initiatives of the Maranao People Development Center (MARADECA) Inc. across Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Basilan, Zamboanga del Norte, and Cebu demonstrate this principle in action. From emergency response and health caravans bringing tuberculosis screening to remote areas, to peer mentoring programs and agricultural coaching empowering farmer leaders—these programs share a common foundation: sustainable development emerges when communities, organizations, and individuals work together, shifting from top-down delivery to partnerships that build local capacity and create lasting change.

The power of collective effort manifests across multiple sectors. In education, peer mentoring creates networks where both mentors and mentees grow together. In health, mobile X-ray units bring tuberculosis screening directly to communities. In agriculture, farmers receive seeds and training, with focal leaders becoming knowledge brokers who share improved practices throughout their communities. In emergency preparedness, response teams enhance capacity through field-based training grounded in real community conditions. Each initiative addresses specific needs, yet together they weave a fabric of comprehensive resilience that strengthens communities across health, education, livelihood, and crisis response.

What makes these programs effective is their foundation in partnership and local ownership. MARADECA's collaboration with PLAN International, TELUS Digital, the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), People in Need (PIN), and Give to the World demonstrates how external resources can amplify local expertise. The emergency response training exemplifies this approach—teams conducted actual field assessments with disaster survivors, developing response templates grounded in real conditions. This investment in capacity building ensures that when external support concludes, communities possess stronger capabilities than when partnerships began.

The true measure of these collective efforts lies not in metrics alone but in transformed possibilities. When struggling students begin to dream of futures as nurses and doctors, when farmers use diversified income to support their children's education, when neglected schools become sources of community pride—these are markers of fundamental shifts in what communities believe is achievable. In a region that has endured conflict, displacement, and systemic underinvestment, such transformations require deliberate collaboration across multiple sectors. MARADECA's integrated approach offers a vital lesson: resilience is not built through singular solutions but through the patient accumulation of capacities, partnerships, and small victories that, woven together through collective effort, create communities strong enough to face whatever challenges lie ahead.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: STRENGTHENING BONDS

ASEAN for People Conference: Sharing Mindanao's Peace Journey



Reconciliation:
*Southeast
Asia's Lessons
for a Troubled
World*



Programme Coordinator Fairosa Casan shares insights on community-based peacebuilding in Lanao del Sur

In an increasingly interconnected world, the strength of regional cooperation lies not merely in diplomatic agreements or economic partnerships but in the genuine understanding and solidarity among people. The ASEAN People Conference represents a vital platform where communities can transcend borders through shared narratives and collective learning. By sharing Mindanao's unique journey at international gatherings, we recognize a fundamental truth: meaningful regional integration begins with knowing one another's struggles, aspirations, and triumphs.

In October 2025, MARADECA proudly represented Mindanao and the Bangsamoro region at the ASEAN for People Conference in Jakarta, Indonesia. The two-day gathering brought together civil society organizations, peace advocates, and development practitioners from across Southeast Asia to discuss emerging challenges and opportunities for regional collaboration.

Programme Coordinator Fairosa Casan served as discussant in the session "Reconciliation: Southeast Asia's Lessons for a Troubled World," sharing insights on community-based peacebuilding in Lanao del Sur and the broader Bangsamoro region. During the panel, Ms. Casan emphasized that reconciliation is not a one-time political event but a long-term, community-driven process that must be continuously nurtured. Drawing from MARADECA's work, she highlighted that sustainable peace depends on inclusive participation, particularly the meaningful involvement of women, youth, traditional leaders, and local government actors. She underscored the importance of sustained dialogue, strengthening local peace mechanisms, and empowering conflict-affected communities to become active agents of resilience rather than passive beneficiaries of aid.

The importance of MARADECA's intervention lies in its practical grounding. By presenting concrete experiences from Mindanao, Ms. Casan demonstrated how grassroots-led reconciliation can endure beyond formal peace agreements and shifting political climates. Her contribution reinforced the need for people-centered approaches in regional peacebuilding efforts and positioned community empowerment as a strategic foundation for long-term stability in Southeast Asia. The conference opened new opportunities for regional collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and solidarity-building among ASEAN organizations, strengthening ongoing peacebuilding and development initiatives in Mindanao.





Non-Food Items Distributed to Earthquake-Affected Families in Tabogon, Cebu



Today, we are grateful because the assistance we received included complete supplies. We now have something to sleep on, blankets, mosquito nets, and a bucket containing toothpaste and soap. Even though Barangay Canao-canao is very remote, they still came. The people were overjoyed—they did not expect such generosity from people all the way from Marawi."

– A person with disability (PWD) from Barangay Canao-canao.

The aid addressed immediate needs and helped maintain the daily routines of affected families despite their temporary living conditions.

"We are thankful for the tarps we received, which we can use to build makeshift shelters so our family can sleep safely," shared Giselle Ray Etulle, a severely affected resident of Barangay Canao-canao. Her gratitude reflected the sentiment of many families who received not just supplies, but renewed hope for recovery.

The emergency response in Barangay Canao-canao demonstrates steadfast dedication to reaching even the most remote communities during times of crisis. As an organization that has consistently answered the call to serve during every disaster, helped families regain a sense of safety and stability by providing essential relief items and addressing urgent needs. The operation ensured every family had the resources necessary to begin their recovery journey from the earthquake's devastating impact.

A total of 629 families affected by the recent earthquake in Tabogon received non-food items through an emergency response conducted in partnership with Give to the World.

MARADECA has built a strong track record of responding to humanitarian crises across disaster-stricken communities, aimed to provide immediate relief and help families regain comfort, safety, and well-being after the devastating earthquake.

The relief operation took place on November 20, 2025, focusing on Barangay Canao-canao, an underserved and remote barangay that was among the most severely affected by the earthquake. Houses and essential belongings were damaged, and many families were afraid to return inside their homes because cracks had formed in the structures and aftershocks continued to pose a threat. Relief items distributed included shelter kits, hygiene kits, sleeping mats, blankets, and other household necessities identified as priority needs during the rapid needs assessment.

Maintaining its commitment to reach even the most marginalized communities during every disaster, coordinated closely with local officials to ensure aid reached these remote areas. Despite the distance and challenging terrain, the teams successfully delivered assistance to all 629 families in need.



629 families in Municipality of Tabogon, Cebu received Shelter kits, hygiene kits, sleeping mats, blankets and essential household items

Relief Efforts Bring Hope to Typhoon Tino- Affected Families in Cebu



371 families of Municipality of Balamban and Talisay City, Cebu received Blankets, mats, butane, shelter kits, and kitchenware

“ I am happy because someone helped us today, as life has been very difficult for us after Typhoon Tino. We are truly grateful to you for giving assistance. Without this support, life would be even harder for us because we have no jobs and I am already old.”
– A resident of Barangay Cabagdalan.

Families in remote and hard-to-reach areas of Cebu have received critical non-food items as MARADECA, in partnership with Give to the World, conducted relief operations in the aftermath of

Typhoon Tino. MARADECA has been at the forefront of humanitarian response during every disaster, aimed to provide immediate assistance, restore hope, and help devastated communities begin the recovery process.

The relief operation reached Barangay Cabagdalan on November 26, 2025, where 315 families received essential non-food items, followed by Barangay Biasong in Talisay City on November 27, 2025, where 79 families were assisted. MARADECA, continuing its mission of serving vulnerable communities during disasters, prioritized these areas due to their limited access to aid. Cabagdalan's main bridge was destroyed during the typhoon, while Biasong faced muddy, impassable roads and had only a small evacuation site.

Each family received blankets, sleeping mats, butane, hygiene kits, shelter kits, kitchenware, and other essential supplies designed to help them rebuild a sense of normalcy after the disaster.

The distribution ensured that the most vulnerable residents had access to basic necessities during their time of greatest need. Working closely with local government units (LGUs), coordinated the delivery of supplies to ensure aid reached even the most isolated communities. The LGUs provided critical support for transportation, helping teams navigate damaged infrastructure and difficult terrain to reach hard-to-access areas.

The assistance brought visible relief to affected residents. A resident from Barangay Biasong shared,

“ Thank you so much to Give to the World and MARADECA for the support you gave us today. We can now start over because we were truly back to zero. After Typhoon Tino, all our belongings and our home were washed out, and we weren't able to save anything. The items you provided are a great help for us as we begin rebuilding our lives.”

Ms. Fairosa emphasized that humanitarian response is grounded in impartiality, neutrality, and a rights-based approach. She clarified that MARADECA does not select beneficiaries based on religion, ethnicity, political affiliation, or social identity, but solely on vulnerability and level of need. According to her, humanitarian action must transcend religious and cultural boundaries, especially in times of crisis. MARADECA's mandate is to uphold human dignity and ensure that assistance reaches the most underserved and hardest-to-reach communities, regardless of who they are or what they believe in. She further explained that serving non-Muslim communities is not an exception to MARADECA's work, but a reflection of its core values — inclusivity, equity, and the principle of “Do No Harm.” For her, genuine service means responding where help is needed most, without discrimination.

“ We are truly grateful that we were chosen. In fact, you were the very first organization able to enter Barangay Cabagdalan and bring help to our people. This barangay is one of the least served and hardest to reach because the main bridge leading into our community was destroyed. We initially thought that you would only help your fellow Muslims and the Muslim community, but you showed us that your assistance is open to everyone, regardless of religion. We truly admire MARADECA and Give to the World for your dedication and determination to assist us despite the challenges. We salute your commitment to helping our community.”
–Municipal Mayor of Balamban, Hon. Amos Cabahug

By extending assistance to isolated and less-served severely affected areas, it once again demonstrated its unwavering commitment to humanitarian service. The organization, which has consistently responded to every disaster with compassion and efficiency, helped ease the burden carried by families after Typhoon Tino. The relief operation not only addressed urgent needs but also reinforced the resilience and hope of communities striving to rebuild their lives.



Training on strengthening coffee quality through improved post-harvest practices

POST-HARVEST TRAINING IMPROVES COFFEE QUALITY AND MARKET VALUE

Proper post-harvest handling is critical for coffee quality and market value, yet it remains challenging for smallholder

farmers in Bangsamoro. To address this gap, the Coffee Post-Harvest Handling and Processing training under LEAP project reached 808 participants across Basilan and Sulu: 66 participants from Barangay Buheyawas, Lamitan City, and Barangay Tairan, Lantawan in Basilan, and 742 participants from 10 barangays across Patikul, Indanan, and Talipao in Sulu.

Training emphasized that drying dictates the final quality, flavor, safety, and market value of coffee beans, making it one of the most critical post-harvest steps. However, many coffee farmers traditionally dry their beans on roads, where the beans absorb foul odors from asphalt, vehicle fumes, and road heat. This practice ruins the coffee's natural aroma and flavor, leading to lower market value and rejection by quality buyers.

Farmers learned selective manual harvesting, focusing on picking only ripe cherries, along with proper floating, sorting, and drying techniques using elevated platforms rather than roads or bare ground.

In Barangay Kabbon Takas, Patikul, the training's impact extended beyond individual practice when the Barangay Captain issued an

ordinance prohibiting road drying, leading to increased adoption of solar dryers. The barangay ordinance was enacted to ensure the safety and Halal compliance of coffee beans by maintaining cleanliness and preventing contamination from animal waste (which would render them Haram) and pollution such as vehicle emissions. Farmers received nets and tarpaulins for constructing improved drying facilities.



Before, we placed coffee cherries directly into sacks without proper drying or sorting, and the beans often turned black. Today, we understand that quality coffee requires careful handling at every step."

Reynaldo A. Parado,
Cluster Leader, TARBAMC,
Barangay Tairan, Basilan

These targeted interventions intend to improve product quality, increase incomes, and strengthen sustainable livelihoods across coffee-growing communities in Bangsamoro.

Plan International Pilipinas and MARADECA

Strengthen Family Bonds Through Family Day in Saguiaran and Marantao



Sponsored children from Barangay Dilausan joyfully celebrated Family Day together with their families

On December 10 and 11, 2025, Plan International Pilipinas, in partnership with MARADECA, successfully held a Family Day celebration under the Child Sponsorship Program for families from Barangay Mantapoli and Camalig Poblacion in Marantao, Lanao del Sur, and Barangay Dilausan and Miphaga in Saguiaran, Lanao del Sur. The activity brought together parents, children, and community members to highlight the importance of strong family relationships in building safe, supportive, and resilient communities. During the event, Joel Dizon, Program Operations Manager of Plan International Pilipinas in Lanao del Sur, explained,

“The Child Sponsorship Program is rooted in sustained communication between sponsored children and their sponsors through regular letter writing. Sponsorship is not a scholarship but a relationship that allows sponsors to learn about the child's life and community.”

He added,

“We currently have 90 active sponsored children, with more recently included. We also use School in a Box learning materials, implement pre-birth registration in Marantao and Saguiaran, conduct barangay-level child protection trainings, and have established Multi-Disciplinary Teams to ensure children have support mechanisms in case of protection concerns.”

He further noted,

“We have achieved a 99 percent nationwide timeliness rate in sponsor communication, and we will distribute school supplies and toys to children. We encourage families to continue engaging with their sponsors.”

The significance of family, health, and child well-being was emphasized by local government partners. Norhana L. Mohammad Ali, Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer of Saguiaran, said,

“The values we celebrate on Family Day should be practiced every day. Homes must be spaces of protection, children's rights to education and nutrition must be upheld, and communities should promote peace while preventing violence against women and children.”

Health messages were reinforced by Dr. Apasra Macala, Local Health Dentist of Saguiaran, who reminded families,

“Proper nutrition, oral hygiene, and regular access to health services are essential for children's well-being.”

Through interactive discussions, games, and group activities, families strengthened bonds and practiced positive parenting, concluding the celebration with a shared commitment to unity, care, and cooperation in nurturing children and building stronger communities in 2025.

PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING TRANSFORMS EDUCATION IN RAMAIN AND MARANTAO, LANAOS DEL SUR

Peer-to-peer mentoring and coaching represent one of the most powerful yet underutilized tools in addressing educational disparities, particularly for slow learners who often fall through the cracks of traditional classroom instruction. In Lanao del Sur, where educational challenges are compounded by decades of conflict, displacement, and limited resources, slow learners—particularly in numeracy and reading—face a difficult reality. Many struggle silently in overcrowded classrooms, where teachers, despite their dedication, cannot provide the individualized attention these learners desperately need.

Recognizing these challenges, as an advocate of peace and an organization whose core programs include development and education—launched its flagship coaching and mentoring program to bridge these gaps through an innovative peer-to-peer approach. In July 2025, Grade 6 learners from Pugaan Elementary School in Ditsaan-Ramain and Sultan Guro Elementary School in Marantao received specialized training at the Ragayan Training Center in Poonana, Marantao.

These Grade 6 learners were equipped to serve as peer mentors for Grade 4 learners in their schools.

This strategy not only enhances academic performance among mentees but also cultivates leadership, responsibility, and confidence among the mentors themselves.



As I helped others in their learning, I discovered that I was also deepening my own understanding.

Fatma Zahra Minjamin, Grade 6 Mentor

Throughout August and September, MARADECA conducted regular monitoring visits to partner schools to observe classroom interactions and evaluate progress. These sessions ensured alignment with program objectives: bridging learning gaps, nurturing confidence, and fostering collaboration among students.



The mentoring sessions helped me realize that learning is not just for myself. When I help my peers, we all grow together.

Mo'men Maguidala, Grade 6 Mentor

Implemented in partnership with TELUS Digital and aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), this program embodies MARADECA's vision of fostering a culture of support and resilience throughout the Bangsamoro education system.



Grade 6 mentor Mr. Mo'men Maguidala of Pugaan Elementary School joined in the mentoring training at Ragayan Elementary School.



MARADECA and Partners Celebrate Reading Months at Pugaan Elementary School

Learners of Pugaan Elementary School participate in Reading Month activities, with MARADECA joining the event.

PUGAAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, in partnership with TELUS Digital, joined the reading month celebration on November 27, 2025, anchored by the Division of Lanao del Sur 1, with the theme: "Bangsamoro Learners: READ, COUNT, CONQUER." The event showcased the school's dedication to advancing literacy and numeracy while fostering creativity and a lasting love for reading among its learners. The celebration was marked by a vibrant display of literacy performances, with learners, teachers, and community partners uniting to acknowledge learner progress.

The day commenced with engaging acts, including poem recitation, story retelling, Tahirawan, declamation, and choral reading, followed by a big book display and a lively book character presentation in which learners enthusiastically brought stories to life through creative costumes and live portrayals of beloved characters.

Learners participating in coaching and mentoring program demonstrated noticeable improvement in their reading fluency, comprehension, and expression as they performed with their mentors.

The program provides targeted support in reading and numeracy to 30 Grade 4 learners who require additional academic assistance, with 10 Grade 6 fast learners serving as peer mentors under the guidance and coordination of MARADECA in collaboration with classroom teachers.

Mentoring sessions are conducted for one hour, three times a week, throughout the academic year from June 2025 to March 2026, with schedules that do not disrupt regular classes early morning sessions at Pugaan Elementary School and late afternoon sessions at Sultan Guro Central Elementary School.

By strengthening fundamental literacy and numeracy skills, the initiative has been instrumental in boosting learner confidence, improving collaboration between the school and the community, and enabling families to participate in their children's education, helping to build an empowered community where every child is equipped to read, count, and conquer their future challenges.



FARMER LEADERS ALSO BREW KNOWLEDGE THROUGH FARM COACHING

Coaching farmers in Agri-aqua project is essential for successful knowledge transfer of integrated farming techniques, enabling behavior change from traditional methods, providing real-time problem-solving support, building confidence in new practices, and ensuring long-term sustainability of the system, ultimately leading to improve productivity, food security, and farmers income.



Farmer leaders in farm coaching—mastering coffee practices to mentor their communities.

In Sulu and Basilan, Philippines – Leaders of farmers in Basilan and Sulu have been assisted in farm production through coaching, a method currently applied to many aspects of the community programs of MARADECA Inc.

From September 2025, six barangays in Basilan have already completed farm coaching for focal leaders, while in Sulu, ten barangays have also finished their sessions under the Bangsamoro Agri-Enterprise Programme – Leveraging and Expanding Agri-Aqua Production (BAEP–LEAP) project.

These coaching activities aim to equip community leaders with practical knowledge in coffee production so they can mentor their members toward more sustainable and productive farming. The sessions covered essential practices such as mulching, fertilization, pruning, rejuvenation, plant spacing, intercropping with vegetables, and overall farm planning. By training focal leaders, the program ensures that best practices are passed on and adapted throughout their communities.

And through this approach, focal leaders not only learn to manage their own farms more effectively but are also empowered to guide others. Technical lectures were combined with hands-on field demonstrations, making it easier for participants to grasp new methods and immediately apply them.

“Through coffee farm coaching, our knowledge in managing coffee has greatly improved, especially with new practices like planting, rejuvenating, mulching, and fertilization. As a focal leader, it is my duty to share these learnings with other farmers so they can shift from traditional methods to improved practices. I believe this training is key to the success of MARADECA and BAEP–LEAP Project, and I hope Jolo, Sulu will soon be known as a top producer of quality Robusta and Excelsa coffee”
Almijir A. Samlani, focal leader from Barangay Kuhaw, Talipao, Sulu.

Hilma B. Asdani, focal leader from Barangay Taberlongan, Maluso, Basilan, said the field teaching made it easier to understand proper coffee practices such as mulching, organic fertilization, intercropping, pruning, and rejuvenation.

“I plan to share these learnings with my members so that our coffee yield will improve, and I am grateful to MARADECA and BAEP–LEAP for giving us this new knowledge in coffee farming.”

The BAEP–LEAP is funded by the European Union and implemented by People in Need Philippines, Maranao People Development Center, Inc. (MARADECA), and United Youth of the Philippines – Women, Inc. It aims to promote peaceful and inclusive development of agri- and aquaculture value chains in the Bangsamoro by improving the quality, diversity, and market responsiveness of coffee and seaweed production.

A farmer's second chance

MARADECA's impact on Community Health



Guaranteeing healthcare is essential for the elderly, especially vulnerable farmers whose livelihoods are threatened by climate change. This is the story of resilience, focusing on an elderly farmer who became part of TB prevention mission, proving that helping one individual can benefit an entire community. Seventy-year-old farmer Licio Avinido from Alegria benefited from free chest X-ray services.

“ I would like to thank MARADECA for the free chest X-ray provided for farmers like me, with no assurance to make profit from crops due to uncooperative weather.”
Licio Avinido



Farmer Licio Avinido, 70, from Alegria benefits from MARADECA's free chest X-ray services.

He noted that the program is crucial for senior citizens unable to afford private healthcare. Mr. Avinido was already registered for drug-resistant TB treatment from a 2024 Active Case Finding initiative. Crucially, he seized his opportunity for a second chance. Upon learning of another free chest X-ray in October 2025, he arrived early to avail himself of the service again. His initial six-month treatment journey gave him attention and consciousness about his health, prompting him to take medication diligently, recognizing it was for the safety of his surrounding community as well as his own.

The Free chest X-ray, under PBSP's ACCESS-TB program funded by the Global Fund, facilitated Mr. Avinido's necessary treatment. For almost four years, MARADECA has partnered with national and local government agencies, private healthcare facilities, and institutions to support the Department of Health's National Tuberculosis Control Program in reducing and controlling the disease. These combined efforts have helped people in need and contributed to controlling this contagious disease in the community.

AGRICULTURE: CULTIVATING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

In the third quarter of 2025, a quiet transformation unfolded across the farmlands of Sulu and Basilan. Through the Bangsamoro Agri-Enterprise Programme – Leveraging and Expanding Agri-Aqua Production (BAEP-LEAP), 425 farmers from nine barangays in each province were introduced to plant and crop diversity strategies designed to boost household income while promoting sustainable farming practices.

Farmers received vegetable seeds to plant alongside coffee trees, along with hands-on training in proper planting techniques, crop care, and farm management. A key component was coffee diversification training, which encouraged integrating vegetables into existing coffee farms. A September refresher course reinforced these lessons, giving participants greater confidence in applying new knowledge.

Regular monitoring visits one month later ensured farmers received ongoing guidance. The results have been remarkable: healthier farms, new income sources, and more varied household diets.

“ The seeds you gave me have helped me tremendously. I earned ₱1,060 from selling vegetables, which I used to buy food and my son's daily school allowance. Thank you to PIN and MARADECA through the BAEP-LEAP project.” Nur Aisa S. Anal, Farmer, Barangay Tagbak, Indanan, Sulu



“My knowledge of vegetable cultivation has been greatly strengthened through the project's training sessions and the seeds and fertilizer provided.” — Joseph E. Pollico, Farmer, Barangay Bulingan, Lamitan, Basilan

Funded by the European Union and implemented by People in Need Philippines, MARADECA, and United Youth of the Philippines – Women, Inc., BAEP-LEAP aims to promote peaceful and inclusive development of agricultural value chains in the Bangsamoro region.

FEATURE STORIES:

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

The Teacher Whose Love Built a Better Classroom

“
Alhamdulillah,
the first thing
they gave us
was school
supplies

Mohaima Cocrie



The situation worsened during Madrasa days. Teacher Mohaima often watched children arrive without basic learning tools—no pens, no notebooks. Despite the principal's best efforts, resources were simply too limited.

The partnership became a genuine lifeline. “Alhamdulillah, the first thing they gave us was school supplies,” Teacher Mohaima shares with emotion. The children and parents were immediately overjoyed, and the financial stress lifted from struggling families. The support extended to School-in-a-Box, teacher kits, and—most crucially—plywood for partitions to organize the once-chaotic spaces. The kits became indispensable tools, enabling teachers and ustads to transform lessons into engaging visual experiences.

For Teacher Mohaima, MARADECA and PLAN International Pilipinas have ushered in a period where 'blessings have been continuously pouring in.' The institution that was once barely recognizable now proudly stands as a proper educational facility. She expresses deep gratitude for the organizations, seeing them as a 'bridge' connecting vital resources to deserving families—a powerful testament to enduring mission to uplift local communities.

Mohaima Cocrie, a 35-year-old veteran teacher at Bacong Primary School in Marantao, Lanao del Sur, vividly remembers her school's difficult past. Just five years ago, the institution bore the marks of profound neglect, barely recognizable as a place of learning.

Driven by the conviction that a school must be a source of pride, Teacher Mohaima—supported by her principal—initiated a crucial first step: painting the exterior. This determined act immediately signaled change and opened the door for partnership with MARADECA.

Beneath the fresh paint, however, deep structural and resource challenges persisted. The most critical issue was the chaotic, undivided classroom space. 'Sometimes it's hard for students to hear each other because there's no partition between each grade level,' she explains.

Teachers in Saguiaran, LDS were provided with new teacher kits to support classroom learning.

PLAN & MARADECA PROVIDE VITAL SUPPORT TO EDUCATORS IN SELECTED BARANGAYS OF MARANTAO AND SAGUIARAN, LANAO DEL SUR



Teachers are often regarded as second parents who shape young minds, yet many continue to face significant resource challenges.

Follow-up to the School-in-a-Box initiative, PLAN International and MARADECA distributed 153 teacher kits containing essential supplies to educators and Madrasah asatidz across the municipalities of Saguiaran and Marantao in late July 2025.

These kits now support teachers across 13 schools, four day-care centers, and 11 madaris. The intervention addresses a persistent challenge: public schools often

operate with severely limited supplies, forcing teachers to purchase materials from their own salaries.



This assistance truly eases the burden we carry. We are deeply grateful to PLAN and MARADECA for their unwavering support.

Norhaya Sangeopan, Principal, Bae Simalao Elementary School

This initiative directly supports SDG 4 (Quality Education) while reducing inequalities, demonstrating how targeted interventions create ripple effects throughout educational communities.

HEALTH: EXPANDING ACCESS TO VITAL SERVICES

MOBILE HEALTH CARAVANS BRING TB SCREENING TO REMOTE COMMUNITIES

For residents of remote barangays in Zamboanga del Norte and Lanao del Sur, access to healthcare has long been limited by cost, distance, and lack of equipment. In July and August 2025, in partnership with the

Philippine Business for Social Progress and with funding from the Global Fund—brought mobile X-ray screening directly to these communities through the ACCESS TB program.


On July 15, 275 residents of Siayan, Zamboanga del Norte received free tuberculosis screening. The service deliberately focused on vulnerable populations: senior citizens, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, and individuals living near current TB patients. For many participants, including 58-year-old Merlinda Gumibod

from Barangay Pange, months of untreated coughing finally received medical attention.

I've had a cough for months, but I didn't go to the health center because I was afraid of the cost and the distance. When I heard about the free X-ray, I went right away. It was so easy and fast! — Merlinda Gumibod, Beneficiary

In Madamba, Lanao del Sur, a similar caravan during National Lung Month on August 18 screened 190 residents at the Municipal Gymnasium. The results demonstrated the critical need for these services: 30 individuals were identified as presumptive TB clients, and subsequent GeneXpert testing confirmed ten positive cases. All were immediately enrolled for treatment through the Rural Health Unit.

This initiative directly contributes to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) by promoting community health and advancing social equity in underserved areas.



Ms. Merlinda Gumibod, availed free chest X-ray service in Siayan, Zamboanga del Norte

CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT TRAINING ON DISASTER AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE.



On-site Rapid Need Assessment exercise in Mantapoli, Marantao

For years, MARADECA has maintained a dedicated Emergency Response Team, consistently responding to disasters affecting vulnerable communities. Effective humanitarian assistance requires constant professional development, which led to the latest Capacity Enhancement Training on Disaster and Emergency Response held at Ragayan Training Center from September 15-17, 2025.

Facilitated by disaster preparedness consultant Telesforo B. Laplana, the three-day training covered critical competencies: implementing emergency response interventions, conducting Rapid Needs Assessments (RNA), and designing context-appropriate emergency programs.

Key discussions included disaster risk, the disaster cycle, the nine commitments of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, and understanding vulnerabilities in emergency contexts. On the second day, teams conducted field exercises in Barangay Mantapoli, gathering data from 20 individuals affected by the Marawi Siege, flash floods, and typhoons. Each team developed emergency response templates and intervention strategies based on real community needs.

This investment in professional development ensures MARADECA remains prepared to implement robust, life-saving emergency actions and continue its core mission of alleviating human suffering among the most vulnerable.



FEATURE STORY:

BRIDGING THE GAP
Three Dreamers Find Their Path

From the quiet intensity of their classroom at Pugaan Elementary School in Ramin, Lanao del Sur, three determined fourth graders share a single unified mission: an oath to heal, care, and save.

Nine-year-old Farhanah Munte and ten-year-old Junaisah Benasing dream of becoming nurses, while nine-year-old Nor-jannah Mojob aspires to be a doctor.

Yet the path to such futures was once steep. These learners faced profound challenges, struggling with fundamental reading, spelling, pronunciation, and calculation skills. Prior to the TELUS and MARADECA coaching and mentoring intervention, these barriers stood between them and their aspirations. Through the program, those weaknesses began to yield.

“ *I thank you because I understand what I didn't understand before,*”

a grateful Farhanah shared, proudly working to catch up with her peers. Junaisah, a quiet learner often seen peeping from the window during interviews, echoed a past where she

“ *almost always got a very low grade.*”

Now she can understand classroom lessons. For her, mentoring was a profound turning point. Nor-jannah was also vocal about her past struggles. Before the program, she often received very low exam marks. Now, young Nor-jannah is courageous and even boasts that her mentor chose her to compete in a contest.

The remarkable transformation is more than academic progress; it is testament to how dedicated mentorship can nurture learner potential and ignite the future of those who will hold community development in their hands. The success is due to the tireless effort of two inspiring sixth-grade mentors who revealed that few learners could read before the program's intervention. Now they proudly witness the gradual development of their mentees, who can read and grasp taught materials.



Three mentees from Pugaan Elementary School who shared their sentiment and gratitude to the program.

MARADECA CONDUCTED THREE-DAY PROGRAM MANAGEMENT TRAINING



MARADECA conducted a three-day Program Management Training in Marantao, Lanao del Sur.

MARADECA—The Maranao People Development Center, Inc. (MARADECA) concluded a three-day Program Management Training on November 8-10, 2025, at the RTC Session Hall in Marantao, Lanao del Sur. Facilitated by Mr. Dennis Alcy Ellorimo, Senior Program Officer of the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), the training aimed to strengthen staff capacity in proposal development and donor engagement, focusing on the Project Development, Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation (PDIMME) Cycle.

The intensive sessions covered proposal writing techniques, donor mapping, and project design strategies essential for securing international funding. Mr. Ellorimo emphasized the importance of including strong capacity statements in proposals, highlighting organizational efficiency such as high budget burn rates and timely project implementation.

Participants engaged in practical exercises, including reviewing actual emergency response proposals and planning relief operations for communities affected by recent typhoons.

MARADECA has demonstrated strong proposal development capabilities, submitting 11 proposals between June and November 2025, primarily under the Community Sustainable Development Program. The organization manages several multi-year projects including the six-year BRAC Philippines Project, the 15-year Plan International

Scholarship Program, and the I CAN Project, which uses peer-mentoring where Grade 6 pupils mentor Grade 4 slow learners to address Lanao del Sur's low literacy rate.



With the guidance of Sir Dennis, we hope to develop and secure more approved proposals, including direct submissions to funders such as the EU,"

said Sir Salic during the closing remarks.

Following the training, each staff member was assigned to develop project proposals in specific thematic areas including health, livelihood, environment, education, and governance. The organization has set an ambitious timeline with proposal development scheduled for November-December 2025, target submissions to donors in January 2026, and monthly submissions beginning February 2026.

Participants expressed increased confidence in developing fundable proposals, noting that the structured PDIMME Cycle approach made the complex process more manageable and strengthened their ability to showcase organizational strengths to potential funders.

**INSTITUTIONAL
DEVELOPMENT:
STRENGTHENING
FOR IMPACT**

**Year-End
Assessment
Charts Course
for 2026**



MARADECA successfully concluded a three-day year-end assessment

From December 15-17, 2025, MARADECA conducted its three-day Year-End Assessment at Ragayan Training Center in Poona Marantao, Lanao del Sur. The assessment reviewed completed and ongoing projects, assessed organizational performance, and set programmatic directions for 2026.

Chief Executive Officer Salic Ibrahim emphasized that the activity went beyond evaluating outputs—it focused on reflecting on lessons learned to strengthen MARADECA's service to communities. Over three days, staff presented initiatives including the Child Protection and Peacebuilding Project, Last Mile Immunization Project, Early Recovery and Emergency Response Projects, Child Sponsorship Program, I-CAN Project, Tutorial Center Program, BAEP-LEAP, and ACCESS TB Project.

The final day focused on organizational systems and strategic direction, with discussions on the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) system, database management, and project monitoring tools. A session titled 'Where Are We Now?' reviewed progress against its Five-Year Strategic Plan and included a policy review to strengthen governance and accountability. The assessment concluded with a synthesis of key learnings and a commitment to apply these insights toward more people-centered and effective programs in 2026.

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