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2020 MID-YEAR REPORT

UNITED NATIONS
POPULATION FUND



UNFPA 2020 MID-YEAR SALIENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This report summarizes the achievements, challenges, and plans of the UNFPA Country Office in the Philippines covering 01 January to 30 June 2020 in responding to the unique needs of Filipino women and girls.

The first half of the year 2020 - the beginning of the last decade toward the achievement of Agenda 2030 including the SDGs - witnessed a significant shift in the development landscape in the Philippines with the local transmissions of the global COVID-19 pandemic that followed the historic Taal Volcano eruption and the first typhoon for the country for the year, Typhoon Ambo (Vongfong). By the end of June 2020, in just five months since the confirmation of the first COVID-19 case in the Philippines (30 January 2020), the number of COVID-19 positive patients approached 38,000 (DOH). While the majority of the confirmed cases concentrated in the National Capital Region (NCR) with high population density, epidemiological centers started being spread to other areas. The pandemic and associated quarantine measures have further compounded the pre-existing vulnerabilities and inequalities faced by women and girls in the Philippines, especially where conflict- and disaster-induced displacements are common including BARMM. Despite these fundamental changes and unforeseen challenges faced during the period under review, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in the Philippines with additional assistance from development partners, was able to adapt to the 'new reality' and provide needed assistance to the most vulnerable women and young people in the Philippines and support the health system strengthening, especially for addressing their sexual and reproductive health and rights and freedom from violence.

UNFPA Philippines estimates that, out of the targeted poor population in NCR, Provinces of Batangas and Cavite in Region IV-A, Cebu City in Region VII, Zamboanga City in Region IX, North Cotabato Province in Region XII, and BARMM, many had already been vulnerable prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, including pregnant and lactating women, young people, persons with disabilities, the elderly, as well as women who face heightened risks to violence. As of end June 2020, one out of six (17 percent) confirmed cases were healthcare workers, which indicates that those who take care of the patients take the brunt, both physically and mentally. 69 percent of them were female, including nurses, physicians, and community-based health workers.



The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic is putting the capacity of national and local health systems under strain. This entails a risk that necessary attention and resources for sexual and reproductive health services, as well as for the health sector response to Gender-Based Violence (GBV), can be diverted to deal with the outbreak, which can, in turn, result in a rise in pregnancy complications, maternal mortality and morbidity, as well as an increase in unmet need for modern contraception, teenage pregnancies, and GBV (see the table below for projections).

MATERNAL MORTALITY	UNMET NEED FOR FAMILY PLANNING	TEENAGE PREGNANCY	GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
22% increase	63% increase	23% increase	16% increase
in Maternal Deaths in 2020 3,170 from 2,600 in 2019	in Unmet Need in 2020 5.2 million from 3.1 million in 2019	18,000 additional teenagers will get pregnant compared to 2019	115,000 additional women will experience intimate partner violence compared to 2019

Source: UNFPA Philippines and University of the Philippines Population Institute (UPPI) estimates

While UNFPA continued its response to the population displacements caused by the series of earthquakes in Mindanao and the Taal Volcano Eruption, it quickly integrated and adjusted its efforts with the new demands of the pandemic. Since the beginning of the year, UNFPA provided all possible assistance to the national and local governments led COVID-19 responses with a view to contributing to “building back better and differently” by meeting the unique needs and rights of women and girls. UNFPA donated hand-held thermometers, personal protective equipment (PPE), triage tents and Dignity Kits to the Department of Health (DOH) and its designated COVID-19 referral hospitals in NCR and Taal Volcano eruption affected areas, as well as to BARMM, especially for the protection of frontliners working on maternal health and GBV. To date, UNFPA has provided a total of USD 496,000 worth of donations for health workers and hospitals in coordination with DOH. UNFPA amplified its communication activities to reinforce advocacy and behavioural change communications (BCC) by publishing a series of video messages on safe motherhood, family planning and anti-domestic violence amid COVID-19. UNFPA also developed the Policy Paper, “Bayanihan to Heal As One Act (COVID-19 Response)”, for the Philippine Senate to advocate for the continuity of the essential services including for SRHR and GBV while focusing on COVID-19. This Policy Paper has been cited by the DOH in its daily media brief as well.



UNFPA PROCURED AND DONATED 131,516 PIECES OF BASIC PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) to BARMM for the protection of frontline health workers, particularly those who are providing maternal health, family planning, and gender-based violence (GBV) response services, from the COVID-19 infection risk.

Outcomes

SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

UNFPA, as Reproductive Health Sub-Sector Coordinator, ensured that Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights was incorporated in the Philippines' Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Response Plan and ultimately in the 2nd United Nations Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) for COVID-19. Out of a total funding appeal of USD 10.97 million identified by UNFPA, USD 1.39 million have so far been mobilized through the GHRP/Humanitarian Trust Fund and through reprogrammed funds from DFAT/Australia and internal UNFPA resources. As part of its policy advocacy with the Department of Health (DOH), UNFPA incorporated maternal health, family planning, and protection against GBV to the Guidelines on Continuing Essential Health Services for Pregnant and Lactating Women and Children under COVID-19. UNFPA provided technical assistance to the Health Cluster and Crisis Communication Cluster in developing the BARMM Contingency Plan on COVID-19, which included advocating for the continuation of essential services such as maternal health, family planning, and clinical management of rape, for pregnant and lactating women and for young people during the pandemic.

While the response to COVID-19 has been a top priority for UNFPA during the period under review, work on other regular development and humanitarian streams under UNFPA's 8th Country Programme of Support to the Philippines was sustained as follows:

- Provided technical inputs to the Department of Health (DOH) in the review and preparation of the 2021 budget for the National Family Planning Programme.

UNFPA's analysis concluded that by 2021, 8.4 million women of reproductive age should have access to Family Planning services, to achieve the 2022 national goal of significantly reducing unmet need for FP. This would require an estimated PHP 3.95 billion in funding from the national government. UNFPA also provided technical advice to the DOH Family Planning Regional Coordinators on cost-effective methodologies to identify and monitor changes in unmet need at the LGU level, such as through Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS).

- Reviewed the PhilHealth benefits packages for family planning in line with the implementation of the Universal Health Care Law, including an analysis of policy and operational gaps and presentation of recommendations to respond to the gaps.

- Launched an online platform that targeted employees with correct family planning information (through the Business Action for Family Planning (BAFP) initiative in partnership with the UN Foundation / UN Fund for International Partnerships).

Under COVID-19, this platform has been expanded to cover other services including maternal health, young people, HIV/STI, gender based violence, mental health, and health reminders on how to prevent COVID-19 infection. A total of 425,585 individuals have visited the rh-care.info site and social media pages since 10 May 2020.

- Completed the analysis of bottlenecks and non-health determinants to farmers' and fisherfolks' access to family planning information and services (with support from Global Affairs Canada). The results will be presented to the government and stakeholders in Q3/2020.

- Responded to the SRH and GBV life-saving needs of the affected women and girls by Typhoon Ambo (Vongfong) (in partnership with DFAT/Australia and coordination with the DOH).

The assistance amounted to approximately PHP 4.7 million (USD 93,000) and targeted 10,160 women and girls in the provinces of Northern and Eastern Samar. In partnership with the provincial governments, UNFPA distributed 2,591 solar radios and 369 dignity kits to PLWs, and provided 8 sets of RH kits and 3 RH Medical Mission sets to 2 rural health units and 2 provincial hospitals.



In focus

TAAL VOLCANO ERUPTION RESPONSE

Compared to the other COVID-19 high-burden areas such as NCR, BARMM etc., CALABARZON does not seem to have attracted much attention from development partners. UNFPA is however among very few UN agencies in the Philippines which provided emergency response to the Taal Volcano eruption and Typhoon Ambo affected women and girls until recently, and therefore has already established a strong network with regional/local government and NGO partners in the region especially in the SRHR and GBV sectors.

- Set-up functional multi-media health and protection information hubs in 7 evacuation centers (through the UNFPA Emergency Fund). As part of making information and materials on SRH and GBV accessible, UNFPA also focused on re-calibrating the delivery of key messages and targeting key populations with specific SRH and GBV advocacy despite strict protocols due to the community quarantines. Instead of the traditional face-to-face awareness-raising sessions, behavioral change communications (BCC) was integrated into the psychosocial support activities, “teleradyo/radyo-baryo”, Public Announcement systems (with an estimated reach of 3,840 women, adolescents and youth), Facebook platform (40,184 viewers), and SMS Text Blasts (5,177 women and youth reached). The project distributed printed IEC materials in the 7 ECs through 4,500 bottles of alcohol with sticker messages on COVID-19 precautions; 4,500 handy fans with referral pathway design; and 28 roll-up banners carrying the core theme on GBV with COVID-19 messages. Together with this, helpline tarpaulins were printed by the Batangas Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO) with the different contact numbers of agencies comprising the GBV referral pathway, the first of its kind in the province.

In addition, 17 service providers from the municipal social welfare offices and partner CSOs completed the Training of Trainers (ToT) on Women Friendly Space (WFS) management and functionality which enabled them to serve as facilitators in implementing these innovative BCC modalities in the evacuation centers, including responding to online and mobile call questions from the IDPs themselves.

- Provided Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) for frontline service providers and women and girls displaced by the Taal Volcano eruption (through the UNFPA Emergency Fund). UNFPA partnered with the Philippine Mental Health Association (PMHA) to deliver MHPSS online intake consultations for 65 individuals (including 6 frontliners), online counseling and follow-up sessions for 21 individuals (including 6 frontliners), and psychiatric consultations for 20 individuals (including 2 frontliners). Among the concerns that surfaced during these sessions were the feelings of anxiety and depression, which the patients have been experiencing even before the volcanic eruption and COVID-19 but were triggered and compounded by these emergencies. 226 health service providers and social workers from the LGU and CSO partners completed a four-day online training on topics that included “Frontliners’ Self-care” and “Psychological First Aid” while 546 individuals from Batangas (out of 804 attendees from Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao) participated in a series of webinars on “Understanding Anxiety, Depression and Suicide”, “Mental Health of Children and Adolescents”, “Geriatric Depression: Need to Address ASAP”, “Maintaining Wellness During COVID 19 Outbreak: For Patients and Caregivers” and “Finding Meaning Amidst Crisis: Using Positive Psychology to Enhance Well-Being”.

- Initiated the “24/7 Ligtas-Buntis Helpline or Safe-Pregnancy Helpline” for pregnant women about to give birth in the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon (through the UNFPA Emergency Fund). This provided access to information regarding functional Rural Health Units (RHUs), lying-ins or hospitals for 71 pregnant women from May 25 to June 30, and helped ensure continuity of facility-based deliveries and the prevention of home deliveries. In addition, social media boosting for this Helpline reached 72,125 viewers with 12,936 engagements.

- Created the “Health Emergency Locator Platform (Help-Now),” a rapid assessment mobile application that aims to collect data on SRH and GBV during the onset of any humanitarian emergencies (through the UNFPA Emergency Fund). The Help-Now application has been launched in partnership with the DOH Central Office and DOH Center for Health Development (CHD) Office in Calabarzon, Family Health Unit and the Humanitarian Emergency Unit, and will be an important information management tool to adopt in future humanitarian responses.

TAAL VOLCANO ERUPTION RESPONSE

- **Distributed 850 maternity packs, 2,160 hygiene kits, 700 solar lamps, maternity tents, women-friendly space tents, COVID-19 triaging tents and surgical masks for women with disability, pregnant and lactating women, young people, and frontline health and GBV service providers (through the Multi-Year SRH and GBV Prepositioning Project in partnership with DFAT/Australia and the UNFPA Emergency Fund).** As the number of COVID-19 cases rose in the country, UNFPA supported the communities further and delivered emergency tents to expand the maternity care of the provincial and district hospitals and tents on triaging for COVID-19, and distributed 20,000 face masks to health care workers and 500 masks to GBV frontliners. The three emergency maternity tent facilities (EMTF) donated by UNFPA supported the safe deliveries of at least 200 pregnant women, who also received dignity kits and maternity packs after they gave birth. Due to the community quarantines and the fear of being infected by COVID-19, a decrease was observed in the number of survivors seeking help in hospital-based Women and Children Protection Units (WCPU). With UNFPA's donation of a WFS tent and supplies to the Batangas Medical Center's WCPU, which was set up outside of the hospital proper to assuage potential clients' fears of getting infected by COVID-19, the continuity of the health sector response to GBV was ensured resulting in 69 GBV survivors being served during the period under review.

- **Co-organized with DOH the Regional Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) Inter-Agency Reproductive Health Coordinating Team (through the UNFPA Emergency Fund)** for the Taal Volcanic Eruption and COVID-19 humanitarian response. UNFPA provided technical assistance in developing the Regional Guidelines on the MISP Regional Inter-Agency Reproductive Health Coordination Team and the Continuity of Antenatal, Intrapartum, Postpartum and Neonatal Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- **Co-convened with CARE Philippines the Inter-agency Rapid Gender Analysis on the impact of Taal Volcano eruption** in the lives of men, women and young people in February 2020. The results were presented to the Provincial and Municipal Camp Coordination and Management Team (CCMT) of Batangas and informed a more gender-responsive delivery of services in the evacuation centers.

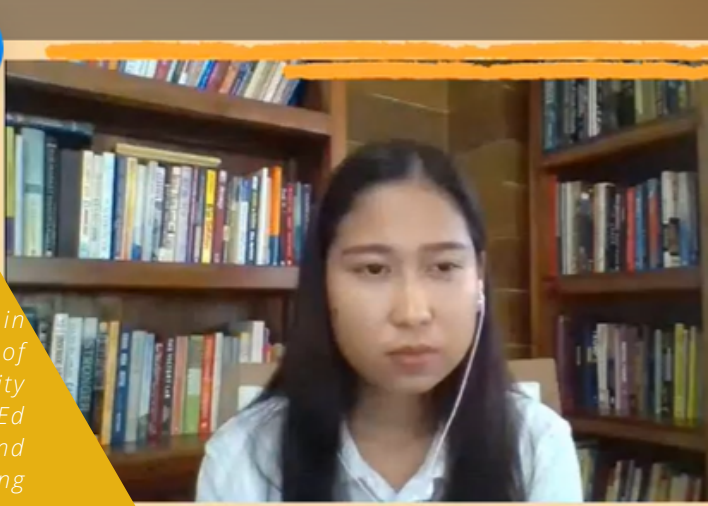




Outcomes

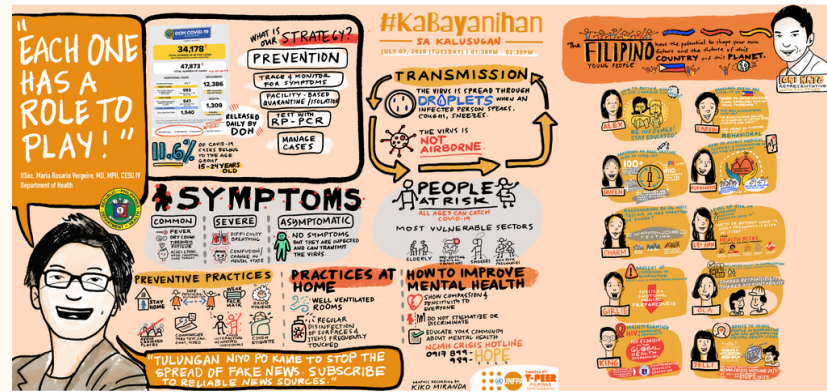
ADOLESCENTS & YOUTH

UNFPA continues to be the lead development partner in providing technical assistance to the Department of Education (DepEd) in rolling out Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in schools. In April 2020, the DepEd Secretary requested for the National Economic and Development Authority's (NEDA's) assistance in securing funds for CSE roll-out in School Year 2020-2021 amounting to PHP 448 million (~USD 8.97 million compared to the USD 400,000 initially allocated for 2020), and cited the CSE Costed Implementation Plan (CIP) - jointly developed by DepEd and UNFPA - as basis for the request. UNFPA also provided TA to the DepEd in orienting regional supervisors nationwide on CSE to galvanize support for its implementation using materials (e.g. lesson plans, modules) developed with UNFPA assistance. In addition, the technical assistance to the Bangsamoro Youth Commission, development of a youth governance model and accompanying capacity building modules to address structural barriers to youth participation under the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus, are on-going.



- **Launched the #KaBayanihan National Campaign**, an intergenerational dialogue of young people with key government officials on issues related to health, education, economic opportunities, human rights, and peace and security. To date, the KaBayanihan campaign has reached about 500,000 individuals through various social media platforms. The KaBayanihan (*Kabataan + Bayanihan*) aims to strengthen young people's participation in decision-making processes and inform government policies and priorities, strengthen existing support mechanisms and services for young people's empowerment and development, and provide grants to youth-driven innovative solutions to health, education, economic opportunities, human rights and peace and security. This initiative resulted from the #UNFPAasks: Pilot Crowdsourcing on Adolescents and Young People's Leading Concerns launched during the early days of the COVID-19 outbreak.

- **Distributed 8,916 condoms and 1,360 lubricants to young key populations in urban poor barangays (through UBRAF)**, in partnership with the Community and Family Services International (CFSI) and Red Whistle, in Pasay City and Makati City for the prevention of HIV infections and unplanned pregnancies during the pandemic.





Outcomes

GENDER AND PROTECTION AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

UNFPA, as GBV Sub-Sector Co-lead, successfully advocated for the inclusion of Protection-related issues in the Philippines' Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Response Plan and in the 2nd Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) for COVID-19 even as the government and most development partners were heavily focused on the immediate health-related response in the initial phase of the pandemic. The latest revision of the HRP reflects a USD 4.0 million funding request to support enhanced and innovative GBV prevention and response programming in the COVID-19 context.

- As the COVID-19 pandemic that worsened during the period under review has posed a devastating impact on vulnerable women and girls, UNFPA as **GBV Sub-Sector Co-lead** also **initiated and coordinated an inter-agency Gender and Inclusion Assessment (GIA) of COVID-19 Impacts (with support from DFAT/Australia)**. UNFPA was able to secure the engagement and participation of 26 agencies in the GIA, including the endorsement of the national Commission on Human Rights and the BARMM Ministry of Social Services and Development

- **Supported the Commission on Human Rights in the community-based peer monitoring led by women with disabilities (WWDs)** in the National Capital Region (NCR), Cebu and Cagayan de Oro amid COVID-19. Forty-two WWDs were trained on GBV prevention and response, and provided with cash for work to monitor cases in their respective areas and facilitate their referral to the appropriate agencies in the GBV referral pathway. In addition, UNFPA supported CHR in developing a **Gender Ombud GBV online reporting portal (www.gbvcovid.report)** that provided an accessible platform to facilitate reporting, referral.

- **Developed a prototype Women and Children Protection Unit - Violence Against Women and Children (WCPU-VAWC) database** in collaboration with the DOH to strengthen the documentation, tracking, analysis and reporting of the health sector response to GBV cases. The cloud-based database is designed to be interoperable with the data systems of other member-agencies of the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking and Violence Against Women and Children (IACAT-VAWC) by integrating the minimum common set of data points necessary to enable an

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