

INVESTING IN WOMEN

THE
CORNERSTONE OF
QUALITY LIFE

Inspiring Stories of Good Practices from the 6th Country Programme 2005-2011



UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

INVESTING IN WOMEN

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CORNERSTONE OF
QUALITY LIFE



UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, works to promote the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity.

UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty.

UNFPA's vision is of a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV and AIDS, and every woman and girl is treated with dignity and respect.

INVESTING IN WOMEN

A decorative grey flourish consisting of a horizontal line with elegant, symmetrical curves at both ends, positioned beneath the word 'WOMEN'.

THE
CORNERSTONE OF
QUALITY LIFE

Investing in Women
The cornerstone of quality life

CONTENTS

Foreword 6

Introduction 8

Making services accessible 12

- 14 Matagangtang: For the community, by the community
- 18 Baleno: Change starts in leadership
- 23 Milagros: Finding a new purpose for the old coin bank
- 28 Placer: My birth place
- 32 Lagawe: Reliving the 'bayanihan' spirit
- 40 Carmen: Enhanced safe motherhood program (e-SM)
- 46 Sulat: 'If you build it, people will come'
- 52 Bolosao: 100% facility-based births
- 58 Tawi-Tawi: Project 100 RUBIES
- 66 Tawi-Tawi: Saving lives—a joint responsibility

Family planning 72

- 74 Bubong: Satisfied family planning users
- 80 Talibon: One man's vision becomes a reality
- 84 Carmen: Involving men

Empowering women and the youth 90

- 92 Ifugao: Connecting to young people
- 98 Masbate: Defying the odds through multisectoral collaboration
- 106 ARMM: In the words of religious leaders
- 112 Isulan: Preparing couples for the responsibility
- 116 DSWD: Gender-sensitive response to VAW cases

Preventing HIV and AIDS 122

- 124 Olongapo: Working together to stop the menace

Making data work for programmes 132

- 134 Isulan: Empirical governance
- 138 Olongapo: A city that inspires

Acknowledgement 145



FOREWORD

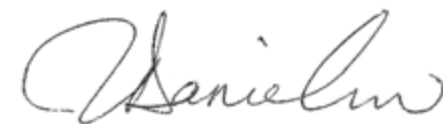
Looking back seven years ago, it was clear that substantial effort would be needed to achieve Millennium Development Goal 5 and ensure that mothers do not die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.

UNFPA's 6th Country Programme of Assistance to the Government of the Philippines (2005-2011) led to increases in: child deliveries assisted by health professionals with midwifery skills (such as a midwife, nurse or doctor); the number of pregnant women that had regular medical check-ups during pregnancy; and the use of modern contraceptives. These were achieved by government, development agencies and civil society organizations working together as partners.

As the 6th Country Programme comes to a close, we have taken stock of methods, techniques and systems that led to the success of the programme. These efforts, practiced and refined over time, form a rich and diverse array of experiences that highlight the importance of collaboration, partnership and working with communities.

This book documents how these good practices have led to tangible improvements in the lives of Filipino families. UNFPA hopes that these stories will inspire stakeholders and convey the message that with cooperation and a deep sense of commitment, the Millennium Development Goals will be achieved.

UNFPA looks forward – with much optimism – to continued partnership with stakeholders, through the 7th Country Programme, so that all Filipinos can enjoy a life of health, dignity and equal opportunity.



Ugochi Daniels
Country Representative
UNFPA Philippines



INTRODUCTION

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, began the sixth cycle of assistance to the Philippines in 2005 with the overall goal of improving the reproductive health status of the Filipino people through better population management and sustainable human development.

The 6th Country Programme was implemented at two levels: At the national level to address policy issues, and at the field level to support efforts to improve reproductive health care in selected programme sites in the poorest provinces. Anchored on the objectives of the International Conference on Population and Development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the programme had three thematic components which are inextricably related: reproductive health, population and development, and gender equality.

The programme covered three of the poorest municipalities each in the provinces of Ifugao, Mountain Province and Masbate in Luzon; Bohol and Eastern Samar in Visayas; and Sultan Kudarat, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao in Mindanao. Olongapo in Central Luzon was the lone city included in the Programme.

The Programme supported advocacy, training and service delivery, and ensured continuous family planning services and contraceptives supply in approximately 30 per cent of the municipalities and 50 per cent of the cities nationwide. It also emphasized on pro-poor, gender-responsive, culture-sensitive, rights-based and demand-driven objectives. In addition, conflict prevention and peace building efforts were integrated in the activities for programme sites in Mindanao.

An evaluation of the 6th Country Programme noted significant gains in its focus areas. Efforts to increase skilled birth attendance, antenatal care and facility-based deliveries paid off, especially because majority of those who accessed the services and information were the poor and vulnerable women. Advocacy and policy dialogues led to the passage of the Magna Carta of Women as well as local reproductive health codes in 60 per cent of UNFPA-assisted municipalities. Through advocacy efforts, public awareness of population and reproductive health issues likewise increased. “Reproductive health” and “RH” became household terms amidst impassioned debates over a proposed national policy that will provide public funding for family planning services and information.

Strategies that demonstrated proven methods, techniques and practices that contributed to the success of the seven-year programme have been documented in this book. Interestingly, this compilation of good practices highlights the key role of facility-based delivery, skilled birth attendance and family planning – the three-pronged strategy – in preventing maternal deaths and saving mothers’ lives.

The stories compiled in this book intend to serve as model and inspiration for people in the communities and their leaders who believe that quality life starts with providing quality reproductive health care for women. After all, healthy mothers beget healthy families that in turn constitute healthy communities that build a strong nation.



Making sure that emergency obstetric and newborn care is available to women is fundamental to UNFPA's efforts to prevent maternal deaths.



MAKING SERVICES ACCESSIBLE

Women die in childbirth chiefly as a result of haemorrhage, sepsis, unsafe abortion, hypertensive disorders and obstructed labour. In many instances, maternal deaths are aggravated by the absence or inaccessibility of a birthing facility for women to safely give birth.

In the Philippines, the 2008 National Demographic and Health Survey found that 56 per cent of deliveries take place at home. As in many developing countries, the poorest women deliver at home without the help of skilled birth attendants, resulting in high mortality rate.

Making sure that emergency obstetric and newborn care is available to women who develop complications from pregnancy and childbirth is fundamental to UNFPA's efforts to prevent maternal deaths. Evidence has shown that the major causes of maternal mortality can be treated in a well-staffed, well-equipped health facility.

Skilled attendance, or having trained health care professionals to provide basic and emergency health before, during and after childbirth, works hand-in-hand with facility-based deliveries in preventing maternal and newborn deaths. A 'skilled attendant' refers to people with midwifery skills, such as doctors, midwives and nurses who have been trained to proficiency in the skills necessary to manage normal deliveries and diagnose, manage or refer obstetric complications. They are capable of recognizing the onset of complications, perform essential interventions and start treatment.

Considered the single most critical intervention for ensuring safe motherhood, skilled birth attendance hastens the timely delivery of emergency obstetric and newborn care when life-threatening complications arise. Eight in 10 maternal deaths can be averted



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