



UNICEF
**Seven Decades of Upholding the
Rights of Filipino Children**

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UNICEF: Seven decades of upholding the rights of Filipino children

Cover: ©UNICEF Philippines

Research: Jennee Rubrico

Editorial Support: Maria Mutya Frio

Graphics design and layout: McCann Erickson

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Ang kabataan ang pag-asa ng bayan.

The youth is the hope of our nation.

Philippine national hero Jose Rizal's most famous quote still rings true after more than a century.

It is exactly with this hope that the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, established its Philippines office on 20 November, 1948 to safeguard the lives of children after the Second World War.

The Philippines was one of the first four offices established in Asia, within two years since UNICEF was established on 11 December 1946 by the United Nations to meet the emergency needs of children in post-war Europe and China. Its full name was the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. In 1950, its mandate was broadened to address the long-term needs of children and women in developing countries everywhere. UNICEF became a permanent part of the United Nations system in 1953, when its name was shortened to the United Nations Children's Fund, retaining its original acronym.

In the Philippines, our programmes have expanded over the past seven decades to encompass all critical aspects of a child's life. Our passion and dedication to protect and promote the rights of children remain unchanged after 70 years. Despite changes in leadership, shifts in beliefs and practices, and moves towards progress and development, our commitment to the children of the Philippines is as strong as ever. We believe our work for the most disadvantaged, excluded, and vulnerable children in the country has never been more relevant, nor more urgent.

UNICEF Philippines' story, as outlined in this publication, is everyone's story. Behind these pages are the faces of tireless government and NGO partners who share our common goal of caring for every child, donors and supporters who provide resources and encouragement for us to continue our work, and celebrities and advocates who lend their voices for the cause of children.

Most importantly, this is the story of generations of Filipino children whose resilience and determination have inspired us for all of these 70 years. Through challenges and crises, Filipino children smile and persevere to be able to reach their dreams.

UNICEF Philippines' 70th anniversary is an opportunity to renew our commitment to the best interest of every Filipino child.

The youth, indeed, is the hope of our nation.

Lotta Sylwander
Representative
UNICEF Philippines



TIMELINE

1948

UNICEF opens Manila office. Assistance begins a year later with focus on supplementary feeding and the provision of equipment for maternal centers.

1958

The first nutritional survey in the country is launched with UNICEF assistance.

1970

UNICEF shifts from emergency aid to basic services. Immunisation programme against six communicable diseases is launched by the Philippine government, with assistance from UNICEF. UNICEF takes cognizance of the needs of children living in slums.

1980s

UNICEF's work on street children in the Philippines starts. UNICEF responds to a malnutrition crisis among children of farm workers in Negros Occidental. CPC 2 is implemented, with focus on building government's capacity for providing basic social services. The Philippine Milk Code is enacted.

1990s

Convention on the Rights of the Child is ratified, Local Government Code is passed, allowing for multiple points of entry to government for children-centered initiatives.

Anti-child abuse law is passed. Children as Zones of Peace initiative is implemented in conflict-ridden areas in Mindanao. UNICEF sends emergency aid to victims of the 7.7 magnitude earthquake that rocks Luzon and the Mt. Pinatubo eruption.

1950

Anti-malaria campaigns and immunisation programmes to fight TB, yaws, and other childhood diseases are mounted.

1965

UNICEF receives the Nobel Peace Prize for its international humanitarian work.

1979

UNICEF moves away from individual projects towards a more systematic programme approach for interventions through the implementation of Country Programme for Children (CPC 1) in the Philippines.

1988

CPC 3 is implemented. Focus is on child survival and development programmes in seven most depressed provinces (Ifugao, Negros Occidental, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi).

2000

CPC 5 directs UNICEF's efforts towards child rights. The Philippines adopts the Child Friendly Movement strategy. Later, CPC 6 turns UNICEF Philippines' attention to disparity among children in national and focus areas.

The Philippines eradicates polio. The Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act is passed, bringing up the age of criminal liability to 15 from 9. As an immediate result of the law, children 15 years old and below are released from jail. ECC Law is passed.

Legislative measures seeking to address child trafficking, child pornography and child labour, as well as violence against women and children, are passed.

The law mandating the screening of newborns for preventable causes of disability and deaths is passed. HIV/ AIDS awareness campaigns and initiatives take off. Days of Peace campaign is implemented in conflict areas. Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act is passed.

2018



UNICEF marks its 70th anniversary of operations in the Philippines. A new country programme is being drafted to continue the work of the organisation in the country.

1994

UNICEF shifts to CPC 4, which focuses on child survival and development, rural and urban integrated services, maternal and child health, water and sanitation, nutrition, child labor and social mobilization.

2010

UNICEF establishes presence in Mindanao through a sub-office, in Cotabato. UNICEF pushes for the establishment of lactating stations in private and public offices.

The Philippines eliminates maternal and neonatal tetanus. The first national baseline survey on child violence is completed, informing the Philippine Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children. UNICEF Philippines implements its first unconditional cash transfer scheme to 10,000 households recovering from the effects of Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda).

UNICEF provides assistance in three major emergencies and two armed incursions during the period. It proposes more permanent measures in addressing the issues of climate change and disasters and of children in conflict-affected regions.



NARCISO G. REYES

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UNICEF @ 70



In his memoir *Memories of Diplomacy: A Life in the Philippine Foreign Service*, the late Filipino diplomat Narciso Reyes credited his stint with the United Nations Children's Fund in New York for saving him from cynicism during his time with the United Nations.

Reyes, who holds the distinction of being the only Filipino to have chaired the UNICEF Executive Board to date, deeply appreciated being assigned to the specialized agency.



IMMUNISATION TO PREVENT DISEASE

A mobile tuberculosis vaccination team sets up shop in the shade of a village headman's house in Bulacan province, the Philippines.

@UNICEF

Two thousand and eighteen marks UNICEF's 70th year of operations in the Philippines. For seven decades, the UN children's agency has served in various ways to advance the Filipino child's wellbeing. We have fed toddlers, vaccinated children and built toilets in areas where there was none. We have provided emergency relief to hundreds of thousands of people affected by natural and man-made calamities. We have trained teachers and engaged communities to improve children's access to education. We have advocated for legislative measures and policies that protect the welfare of children and their mothers.

UNICEF Philippines' longevity is cause for both celebration and introspection. The organisation's work spanning over seven decades is a testament to its core principle of upholding children's survival, development, protection, participation, dignity and rights. After seven decades, UNICEF remains more relevant than ever and much work is still needed to advance the rights of Filipino children.







Before all else, survival

UNICEF opened the Philippine office on November 20, 1948, following a signed agreement with the Philippine government for continued assistance. In the aftermath of a devastating world war that triggered the need for emergency assistance to children, UNICEF Manila was established as one of four country offices in Asia.

The following year, UNICEF jump-started a US\$300,000 (around US\$3 million today) aid to the Philippines focused on child and family welfare services such as supplementary feeding programmes and general maternal and child health services. UNICEF also provided equipment for maternal and child health centres, trained local personnel in midwifery and child aide nursing, and provided supplies for children with disabilities and for premature baby care.

Health programmes soon made their way to the country including battling tuberculosis and reducing infant and child mortality and morbidity (by curbing the use of insecticides). Later, UNICEF carried out anti-malaria campaigns and immunisation drives against contagious childhood diseases such as yaws. By the end of the 1950s, the yaws campaign covered all affected areas in the Philippines.¹

UNICEF trained traditional midwives and birth attendants, locally known as "*hilot*", in the safe delivery of newborns. This led to a surprising but welcome outcome: mothers who initially shunned health centres in favour of traditional attendants started going to the facilities.²

From emergency to development assistance

UNICEF drops 'international' and 'emergency' from its name to become what is known today as the United Nations Children's Fund.

In the late '50s, UNICEF spearheaded the country's pioneering nutritional survey on the food and nutrition situation in the Philippines. The Food and Nutrition Research Institute, a UNICEF partner, surveyed nine out of 10 regions in a 10-year span, giving the country impetus to expand the survey with other partners. Survey results would then be used to formulate the government's first policies on nutrition.³

1960s: The transition years

The 1960s was a period of transition for UNICEF. The leadership re-oriented its approach to reflect the concept of the whole child whose needs are interrelated and cannot be separated from the



In 1965, UNICEF receives the Nobel Peace Prize for international humanitarian work.

family and community, and from UNICEF's programming and area concentration.

In 1965, UNICEF received the Nobel Peace Prize for international humanitarian work.

The decade marked the beginning of the agency's effort to give children's needs their rightful place in national planning, rather than out of a sense of compassion. It explicitly recognised the economic and child development benefits of investing in this young human resource.

1970s: The whole child in the community approach

When the 1970s rolled in, UNICEF expanded its programmes with a new focus on the holistic development of the child. From the emergency response approach in the early years, UNICEF then embarked on projects that focused on basic services,

Children with disability

UNICEF pioneered a nationwide nutrition survey that revealed that one-fifth of Filipino children below six years old had impairments that could deteriorate into disabilities if left untreated. The more malnourished the child was, the more impairments he or she was likely to suffer from.

sought out participation at grassroots level and harnessed community resources.

Project Compassion, one of UNICEF's first integrated programmes, combined four separate schemes: food production, nutrition, family planning, and environmental management. The combined delivery package helped children in need to improve their nutrition, environment, family and community through a combination of measures offered by the four programmes, namely health and nutrition, education, water sanitation and hygiene, and child protection. UNICEF provided two dozen vehicles, public address systems and other supplies and equipment to get things moving.

UNICEF helped strengthen hospital facilities for family planning; conducted initiatives for mass prevention of blindness due to Vitamin A deficiency, which was prevalent in the country; supported the training of personnel in nutrition programmes it was assisting; assisted what was then the Ministry of Health in an immunisation programme against diphtheria, pertussis



and tetanus, TB, and polio; provided assistance to develop services for the young child⁴ including at a subnational level; and promoted breastfeeding.

In 1972, UNICEF once again rolled up its sleeves to provide humanitarian relief when the Great Flood of Luzon inundated the country's largest island for six weeks. It left 775 people dead, more than 350,000 displaced and over US\$200 million⁵ in damages to infrastructure and agriculture. The devastation became one of the reasons behind the declaration of Martial Law a month later.

The '70s marked a few firsts in UNICEF's outreach: providing assistance in education and to women's livelihoods, and reaching children with disabilities.

It piloted an accelerated teacher training project to reach tribal areas in Mindanao. Trainees returned to their villages to open schools. The programme was later expanded and the teachers were accredited by the Department of Education.

To increase women's participation in social service delivery, UNICEF supported women's income-generating activities to boost their motivation for advancement and participation in community affairs. The three-year project, piloted in five sites in the Philippines, was introduced by UNICEF East-Asia and Pacific Regional Office.

To prevent children's disabilities from turning into permanent conditions, UNICEF pursued prevention and early treatment through the Reaching the Unreached programme. It identified impairments among very young children and promoted

community involvement in early detection and treatment. Launched in 1979, the programme was piloted in two villages in Nueva Ecija and was spearheaded by the Philippine Foundation for the Disabled and the Mental Feeding Programme.

In the 1970s, UNICEF expanded its focus from rural areas to cover urban improvement programmes in cities in Davao, Cebu and Cagayan de Oro. UNICEF, together with the government and the World Bank, supported daycare services, health and nutrition education for parents and teachers, and the construction of sanitation facilities. They also trained residents, field workers and slum resettlement professionals on these social services.

As the '70s drew to a close, UNICEF Philippines formally shifted from individual projects to programme-based initiatives by launching the first of its country programmes. The Country Programme for Children 1 (CPC 1), implemented from 1979 to 1982, emphasised using community resources to meet children's needs.

Typhoon Nitang

UNICEF provided relief to 135,000 people affected by Typhoon Nitang where more than 1,426 people perished in Surigao, Negros Island and Bohol. UNICEF also provided construction materials to rebuild centres and water supply systems.

1980s: Malnutrition, breastfeeding, and the Milk Code

The 1980s was a challenging time for the country. Politically, the Philippines was on shifting sands. Martial Law was declared in 1972 and would be in force until 1981. In 1985, a new government would take over after the ouster of President Marcos through a peaceful revolt. Economically, the country was struggling to pay its foreign debt.

In Negros Occidental, a crisis was brewing. Sugar prices fell resulting in mass layoffs of farm workers at the country's biggest sugar producer. This led to a food crisis in the province from

1984 to 1986. Around a million people were fighting hunger and 140,000 children in Negros Occidental suffered from second- and third-degree malnutrition.

UNICEF worked with the government on an emergency feeding programme to run more than 2,000 feeding centres that provided 'super snacks,' a high calorie food supplement made of rice, mung beans, skim milk, cocoa and vitamin A.

Long-term survival schemes were needed to sustain recovery so UNICEF provided 25,000 packets of high-germination vegetable seeds that were distributed to 11,500 families, 50 elementary schools and 450 community groups. Gardens were cultivated at the homes, schools and communities. UNICEF also supported activities in nutrition education and growth monitoring to complement production efforts. The agency would continue supporting these until 1994, seeing a 25 per cent fall in malnutrition in Negros Occidental.

The 80s ushered in an era when breastfeeding became more widely practiced in the Philippines. Baguio General Hospital, under its chief of paediatrics Dr. Natividad Relucio-Clavano, started gaining attention for its maternity policy of rooming in newborns with their mothers. It also instituted policies on breastfeeding right after childbirth while mother and child were still in the delivery room, and removing posters that promoted infant formula around the paediatrics section.

The experience would later inform the guidelines of UNICEF's Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative.

By 1986, a new government was installed in the country. President Corazon Aquino issued Executive Order 51, establishing the Philippine Milk Code. The law restricts the marketing of breast milk substitutes and makes it state policy to declare the superiority of breast milk over infant formula. EO 51 faced staunch opposition but also enjoyed immense support.

Decades later, in 2006, the revised implementing rules for EO 51 were issued, prompting pharmaceutical companies to seek a restraining order before the Supreme Court. UNICEF, under the leadership of Nicholas Alipui, countered with public service

“There are no enemy children.”

Maurice Pate

*UNICEF's first Executive Director
to serve from 1947-1965*

campaigns and information awareness advertisements that supported the measure and touted the benefits of breastfeeding.⁶

Meanwhile, UNICEF's third country programme for children (CPC 3) started implementation in 1988. It focused on child survival and development programmes in seven most depressed provinces: Ifugao, Negros Occidental, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi.

New challenges cropped up in the '80s: acute respiratory infections were on the rise; rising child sexual exploitation was becoming a cause for concern, with 20,000 children earning a living through commercial sexual exploitation in Metro Manila alone. A new programme intervention, protecting children in armed conflict, was added in UNICEF's category of children facing grave violations of rights.

1990s: The rights of the child

A new outlook on programming

In 1989, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was promulgated and it established a legally and morally binding framework for signatory countries to uphold and protect the rights of children. The following year on July 26, 1990 the Philippines ratified the Convention⁷. This shifted UNICEF's operations towards a rights-based approach.

The Convention calls on signatories to 'undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation' of the rights of children, which UNICEF clusters into four aspects: survival, development, protection and participation. While UNICEF had been upholding the first three rights since its inception, the right to participation as identified in the Convention was a new focus area.

The Convention also urged signatories to acknowledge the existence of and to stop the sexual exploitation of children and of children in armed conflict.

In 1991, the Local Government Code was passed, paving the way for the decentralisation of social services.

The 1990s also saw a new scheme for UNICEF to raise funds by assisting the government in debt conversion. Rather than debt servicing, it financed children's development programmes.

The arrangement freed up developmental funds for the country while commercial banks generated goodwill through debt donations.

These developments shaped UNICEF's work in the country during the decade, although change was neither instantaneous nor easy.⁸

It is telling that the agency's fourth country programme, which began in 1994, focused on sectoral programming from the area-

based approach of CPC 3. Like earlier UNICEF initiatives, it upheld children's rights but focused on strengthening programmes on urban basic services, child labour and social mobilisation, water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as core foci like mother and child health and nutrition. Children's rights would only be articulated as the guiding principle of UNICEF Philippines' country programming at the turn of the millennium, with the adoption of CPC 5.

Protecting children

Two years after ratifying the Convention, the country issued the Philippine Plan of Action for Children or Proclamation 855. In the same year, Congress passed the law mandating special protection of children from all forms of abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation and discrimination, and specifies penalties for these under Republic Act 7610.

Children under these circumstances included, as defined by law, those in a community beset by armed conflict; working under hazardous working conditions; living or fending for themselves in the streets; being a member of an indigenous

A street child turned police officer in Cebu



In 1981, 13-year old Bill Felisan was apprehended for eating food left unattended at a stall. He thought they were someone's leftovers. It was not his first act of mischief, nor his first brush with the law.

Bill and other children were rounded up for Operation Fishnet, an initiative to take juvenile delinquents off the streets and send them for rehabilitation at the Community Scouts Youth Guidance Center. Bill, who stopped studying at grade five, went back to school. In high school, he took a placement exam that led him straight to college and was awarded a scholarship.

Then, Bill's life of mischief came full circle. The boy who spent his life running from men in uniform turned out to be a police officer. He continued at the centre, now a UNICEF-supported facility, to care for the children the way he was taken care of.

Now 50, a husband, a father, and better known as Kuya Bill, SPO4 Felisan has made it his life's work to help transform minors who tread the path he once walked.

community and living under conditions of extreme poverty; and disaster victims⁹. The law also stipulates the creation of a comprehensive programme against child sexual exploitation and abuse, child trafficking, and inappropriate use of children in sexual content¹⁰.

In 1991, UNICEF implemented projects to identify and help children who were psychosocially traumatised by armed conflict. Section 22 of RA 7610 declares Children as 'Zones of Peace' and calls for, among others, a ceasefire between government troops and other sectors engaged in armed conflict. This would allow delivery of basic social services — and protect those providing the service — to minors in zones of conflict.

UNICEF helped governments and NGOs in investigating and exposing child labour and initiating programmes that provided protection, non-formal education and services to working children. The Committee on the Rights of the Child also visited the Philippines and met with children working at garbage dumps outside the capital.

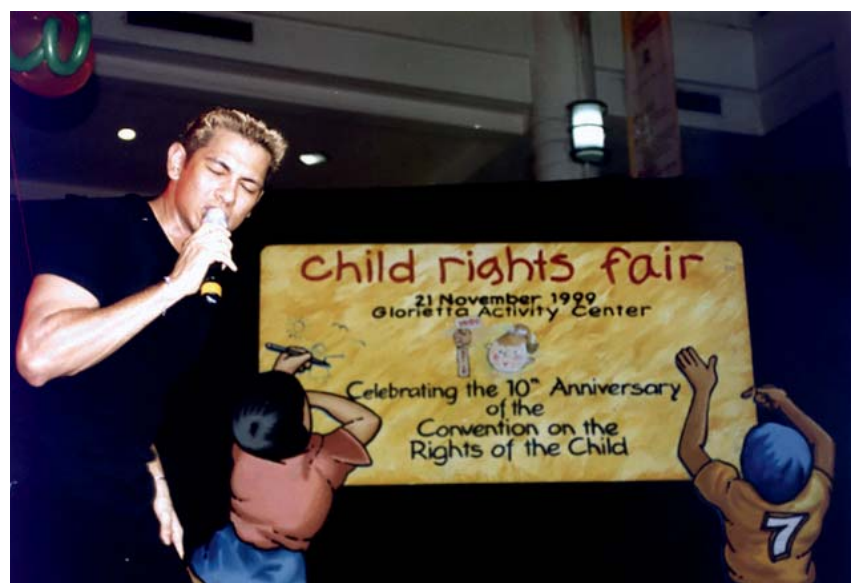
Meanwhile, the passage of the Indigenous People's Rights Act in 1997 prompted UNICEF, along with five other UN bodies, to issue in 1999 a joint statement that pledged to "assist the indigenous people in empowering themselves and improving the quality of their lives"¹¹.

Supporting education

Long-standing support to parent education programmes and mobile schools with multigrade teachers became institutionalised. In March 1996, UNICEF assisted the Education department in establishing multigrade demonstration schools to improve teaching in Benguet, Ifugao, Antique, Guimaras, Agusan del Sur, and Surigao del Sur. The schools were primarily intended to serve as working models for effective teaching strategies and processes for supervision of multi-grade teaching.

Enhancing health systems

The mid-90s saw AIDS spreading rapidly in Asia. In 1994, six per cent of the cases found were in the region, from one per cent the previous year¹². UNICEF Philippines began gathering



Celebrity power: UNICEF engages high-profile celebrities to help amplify its advocacy and raise funds for its programmes. Shown here is UNICEF Philippines National Ambassador Gary Valenciano performing at a child rights fair held in 1999 in Manila to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

data and analysed them for advocacy, social mobilisation and communication. The agency supported NGO programmes involving the youth in the design and implementation of activities that would reduce the vulnerability of young people to STD, HIV and related problems. It also worked with civic organisations to incorporate youth health including HIV/AIDS into the national health policy.

Meanwhile, the Act for the Iodisation of Salt Nationwide (Asin Law), which UNICEF actively advocated for, promoted nutritional fortification of food and made it a priority for the country to combat micronutrient malnutrition through the iodisation of food-grade salt¹³.

The Philippines began buying its own vaccines through its 'vaccine independence initiative,' from which the country could get vaccine supplies under flexible payment terms. UNICEF's revolving fund bridged payment intervals.

On its part, the baby-friendly hospital initiative reached its peak, with 83 per cent of facilities in the country declared baby-friendly.

Responding to natural and man-made disasters

The early '90s would evoke memories of devastating natural disasters in the Philippines: the 7.7 magnitude earthquake in Luzon and the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in Zambales. The 1990 earthquake, by far the worst in Philippine history, claimed 2,000 lives and caused damage within a 20,000 sq m area. Mt. Pinatubo's eruption was the second largest volcanic eruption on earth in this century and by far the largest eruption to affect a densely populated area, according to the US Geological Survey. In both disasters, UNICEF provided emergency shelter, essential drugs, medical supplies, basic food, feeding supplies and potable water.

During the financial crisis that gripped Asia in 1997, UNICEF worked with the government to protect vulnerable groups from the effects of budget cuts and austerity measures. The crisis resulted in 9-10 per cent unemployment rate, caused food price surges and trimmed budget allocations for some social services.

Harnessing the power of media

Work on child rights and the media began in the mid-90s with the staging of the first Asia Pacific Summit on Child Rights and the Media in Manila. The Philippines passed Republic Act 8370 which created the Council for Children's Television to formulate a comprehensive media programme for children. President Ramos declared the country's National Children's Day of Broadcasting (to coincide with the international one), a UNICEF initiative that encourages broadcasters to focus on children's rights and to include children in the shows.

UNICEF created Cartoon for Children's Rights, an animation consortium of 14 animation companies from different countries including the Philippines. The consortium was created to produce animation shorts that would spread awareness about child rights. The first distribution reel of 29 spots was produced in 1997.

Holders of rights, not objects of charity

CPC 5, implemented from 1999 and formulated with the Philippine government, bolstered the era of children's rights. A drastic departure from the needs-based approach, CPC5 revolved around the vision of creating child-friendly neighbourhoods,

schools, facilities, media, workplaces, parents, religious communities, barangays, municipalities, cities and provinces.

It aimed to engage government at all levels to build the capacity to address children's issues as stipulated in the CRC. The strategy, known as the Child Friendly Movement (CFM), was designed in 1996 by UNICEF and the Department of Social Welfare and Development. CFM placed children at the centre of the human development agenda. Surrounding them are local, provincial, regional, and national organisations and institutions that were aware and capable of providing services to children.

As a result, UNICEF helped 200 schools to adopt the child-friendly schools programme which reached 165,000 children. A survey of 33 schools showed that with the programme, more students – 93 per cent – finished the 2000/2001 school year compared to the 80 per cent in the previous school year.

But enactment of laws and policies on children needed critical attention. This entailed working at the policy level. The CFM envisioned societal changes that required strong commitment and a long-term approach from the government and from UNICEF.

CPC 5's geographical coverage spanned 19 provinces and five cities. Fourth and fifth class municipalities where CPC 4 activities were ongoing and where potential for success was high based on track records were chosen. Areas with existing and proposed interventions were also considered.

Projects focused on communication; local policy and institutional development; health and nutrition; education; children in need of special protection; gender and development; and cross-sectoral support.

2000s: Child sexual exploitation, progress in health, and protecting children in Mindanao

At the turn of the millennium, Child 21 was created under Executive Order 310 as a framework to develop local policies and action plans for children. The Executive Order, issued by

High rates of violence against children



2 in 3
experienced
physical violence



2 in 5
experienced
psychological violence



1 in 4
experienced
sexual violence



2 in 3
experienced
peer violence

Council for the Welfare of Children and UNICEF,
National Baseline Study on Violence Against Children, 2015

President Estrada, required 10 national government agencies and enjoined all local governments to integrate programmes for children in their plans. These were to be funded under the General Appropriations Act or the internal revenue allotment for the local government¹⁴.

Addressing sexual exploitation of children

As the fight against sexual exploitation became more systematic, UNICEF and the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) crafted a framework for Action Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. The four-year framework examined the systems that allowed exploitation of minors, and depicted the gamut of structures and processes, policies/programmes and services, and stakeholders involved. It looked at how these elements could bring positive change in child victims and those at risk of sexual exploitation.

Community-based education galvanised the efforts of parents, volunteers, teachers, NGO leaders and local officials in successfully pushing for the Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act to pass. Republic Act 9208 institutes policies to eliminate trafficking of persons especially women and children. It establishes institutional mechanisms to protect and support trafficked persons and provides penalties for its violation. UNICEF and child advocates also fought against child sex trade on the demand side, pushing governments to criminalise and prosecute customers.

UNICEF and the Department of Labor and Employment documented the experiences of 24 trafficked children between the ages of 14 and 17¹⁵. From this, community-based interventions were recommended such as activating *barangay* councils to protect children, strengthening inspection and surveillance and rescue mechanisms, and formulating a comprehensive framework against child trafficking.

In 2004, UNICEF ran a study that showed a rise in the use of sexual content using children. It underscored the need for laws that would address the crime including using the internet in its perpetration. UNICEF worked vigorously with partners including CWC, the Inter-Faith Network, the DSWD and internet company Netopia on various initiatives. These efforts would later contribute to the passing of the Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009 or Republic Act 9775. The law penalises the use of children in pornographic performances and materials, and the inducement or coercion of a child to engage or be involved in pornography.

Around this time, laws to protect working children were also passed: Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Act of 2003 or Republic Act 9231, amended the Child Protection Act of 1992; and the law prohibiting the employment of children below 15 years. The new law takes into consideration the provisions and standards of the International Labour Organization Convention No. 182, or the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 1999.

Such forms of labour identified in the Convention included, among others, slavery, the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom.

Children and justice

In the last quarter of 2000, UNICEF and the Philippine Judicial Academy conducted a seminar for trainers on a comprehensive justice system for children, youth and families. Among others, the training tackled strategies on child rights, effective communication skills on child and family care management, effective management practices at various stages of handling family court cases, and development of training modules on mediation and other techniques to promote better coordination of all pillars of justice.

A tie-up with the Philippine Children's Television Foundation led to the production of a media tool kit containing information and resources on child rights, which were distributed to broadcasters, media specialists, and journalism and communication schools.

The passage of the Juvenile Justice Act of 2006, which UNICEF advocated for, gave children in conflict with the law another shot in life. Apart from raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility in the country from nine to 15 years, the measure also provides for a diversion process for minors in conflict with the law so that they circumvent being imprisoned with hardened criminals, provided that for someone above 15 but below 18 years old, he or she must not have acted "with discernment"¹⁶ in the commitment of the wrongdoing he or she is accused of. As an immediate result of the law's passage, jailed children 15 years old and below were released.

UNICEF also reached children displaced in armed conflict through programmes on youth organising, rights advocacy, community-based peace education, disaster management, emergency relief, and psychosocial support services to ensure their protection and access to basic services.

Violence in schools was likewise tackled; UNICEF developed a draft child protection policy for schools which was submitted

to the Education department, and supported a school climate survey carried out in 10 schools in Cebu City, Camotes Island, Manila and the Mountain Province to gather data on the prevalence of bullying and peer violence and to pilot an intervention programme in the areas.

Kabataan News Network

In 2003, UNICEF partnered with Probe Media Foundation to establish Kabataan News Network (KNN, translated as Kids' News Network), a television programme produced by kids for kids to push the child participation agenda.

Participants aged 13 to 18 were taught all stages of media production. Under adult handlers, they pitched stories, wrote their own scripts, conducted interviews, and did camera and post-production work. They were also taught issues about child protection and upholding children's rights in their segments. UNICEF engaged 24 local governments which used KNN as a platform to disseminate information on children's rights and well-being.

In a related effort, UNICEF worked with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), NGOs and media partners to improve the quality of children's programming on television. The ASEAN Children's Forum held in Manila in October 2010 was the first children's meeting built into the calendar of the 10-nation organisation.

Immunisation, HIV and AIDS and progress in health

Work on immunisation scored a win when polio was eradicated in the country at the start of the millennium¹⁷, three decades after the national vaccination programme started. Elsewhere, immunisation drives ran under the government's Reaching Every Barangay strategy, which targeted unreached populations and sought to improve immunisation coverage by using local health facility assessment checklists and monitoring. UNICEF, along with WHO, provided technical and funding support for training. They also supported the Health department in procuring the vaccines under a strategy that allowed the Health department to continue its measles-elimination campaign.

By 2005, UNICEF's CPC 6 was commencing wherein HIV and AIDS was a major focus area. Extensive Information campaigns and capacity building on care and treatment went underway. UNICEF notably supported the MTV Music Summit for HIV and AIDS to put the issue on high profile among young audiences. UNICEF helped integrate HIV/AIDS modules in teacher training on Child-Friendly School Systems initiative, and developed modules to promote voluntary confidential counselling and testing. Further, UNICEF, along with WHO, helped strengthen national monitoring and evaluation systems through the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS.

During the decade, UNICEF pushed for exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months of life, following the passage of the Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act of 2009 or Republic Act 10028. It requires private and public companies to designate lactation stations in the workplace. UNICEF engaged companies and public organisations to champion the law, developed materials on the law as well as on guidelines in setting up the lactation stations, and partnered with celebrities and faith-based groups to promote exclusive breastfeeding.

Meanwhile, the Days of Peace campaign, the successor to the Children as Zones of Peace initiative of the '90s, paved the way for vaccination, vitamin A supplementation and deworming of young children in conflict-ridden areas.

Vitamin A supplementation was also incorporated into routine health care, resulting in high vitamin A coverage for children five years old and below. A law that mandates newborn screening to protect children from preventable causes of disability and death was also passed.

On water, sanitation and hygiene, the Essential Health Care Programme (EHCP), UNICEF's partnership with Procter & Gamble and NGO Fit for School Inc. that sought to improve hand washing and tooth brushing practices became a flagship programme of the Department of Education and was expanded from Mindanao communities to 10 provinces across the Philippines.

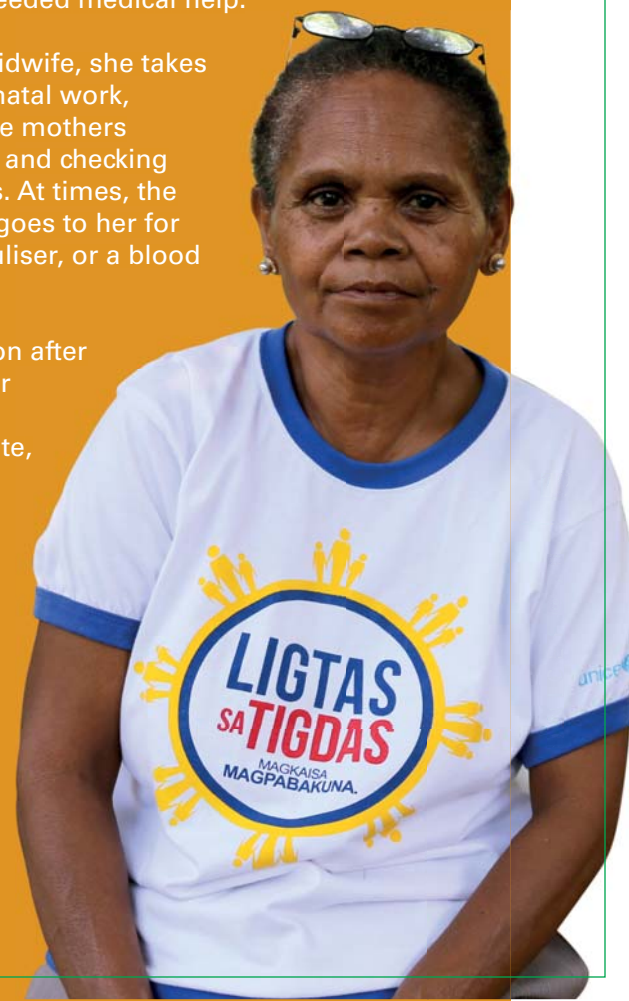
Mely Apang: A UNICEF scholar serves her people

Mely Apang, a mother of five and grandmother of nine, is the first among her people to have completed her studies and taken board exams. And for over eight years, this 61-year old Aeta midwife has been tending to the health needs of children and mothers in the indigenous communities of Pampanga.

After she was directed to educational assistance from UNICEF to study midwifery, Mely relied on her determination to fulfill her dream of completing her education. After graduating, she returned to her people to serve her community, seeing how much they needed medical help.

As the resident midwife, she takes care of doing prenatal work, helping soon-to-be mothers when giving birth and checking up on their babies. At times, the community even goes to her for medicines, a nebuliser, or a blood pressure reading.

Mely said that soon after she took home her community's first academic certificate, others have followed. Now, there are more teachers and social workers in the community.





Keeping the faith

I was 13 years old when I experienced the wrath of typhoon Haiyan. We were evacuated to a school and I was clinging to a window. I can still remember how cold it was.

When the storm passed, father told us that our house was wrecked by a tower behind our home. We spent the days after sleeping in wet clothes on wet floors. My family would share one plate of food.

Five years later and I am a grade 12 student. Tacloban hasn't just recovered, we're up and running. Now, I face each day with a hopeful heart. We went through devastation, but we were not alone in recovering from it because the world lit that hope in all of us.

We, the children of Tacloban, were minors then, unfamiliar with what we were experiencing. We could've lost hope, but we didn't.

Thank you to everyone, specially UNICEF, for every relief operation, for every smile and for every "how are you?"

I was 13 years old when I experienced the wrath of Haiyan. Today I'm 18 and headstrong, and I face life with a hopeful heart.

- Kiana Gualberto

As the project expanded, the Education department with UNICEF and Fit for School developed a monitoring and evaluation system to strengthen the management of the programme, assess programme coverage and facilitate effective programme steering.

Life off the streets

UNICEF reached out to street children and out-of-school urban youth by providing preventive, protective and rehabilitative services including basic education and vocational training, alternative learning systems, street education, paralegal assistance, counselling and psychosocial services. UNICEF partnered with the inter-agency body National Network on Street Children, with NGOs and with local governments.

Early childhood care and development

Early childhood care became state policy upon passage of the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Act, which institutionalises care for children six years old and below. UNICEF provided technical and funding support to develop and strengthen the ECCD curriculum. It also provided parent education and involvement, capacity building, ECCD management and human resource development programmes. These helped upgrade ECCD workers' skills and provided them with career advancement opportunities.

The Mobile ECCD and ECCD on-the-air increased the outreach in urban and remote areas with close to 110,000 parents benefitting from these alternative and innovative approaches.

Mindanao on the radar

The new decade saw UNICEF opening a sub-office in Mindanao to address the growing demand from conflict-affected communities for child protection. UNICEF leveraged its network to facilitate political processes that sought to diminish conflict and insulate children from its worst effects, among them being recruited into armed conflict.

UNICEF worked with the Mindanao Development Authority on a two-year assistance programme for some of the least developed provinces in the country. They supported a conditional cash

transfer programme for health and education to benefit 2.3 million families.

2010s: Supporting the government in realising the rights of children

The seventh and current country programme started in 2012. It focuses on the emerging risks that children face from regional disparities, climate change and natural disasters and conflicts, which by themselves already contribute to poverty and perpetuate inequities.

UNICEF has directed its efforts to move away from delivering services to upstream policy and public advocacy. The organisation has aimed to build stronger partnerships, pushed to reduce disparity, stressed peace-building, and strengthened disaster preparedness. It has also set out to promote the use of proven practices in pushing children's rights and evidence-based programmes and policies.

The organisation's mandate now is to strengthen the government's capacity to deliver social services and to work with NGOs and civil society organisations who can transfer the knowledge and technology to the government.

Noting the overall improvement in the Philippine economy and its transformation from a developing country to a lower-middle income country in 2009, the country has enough resources to deliver basic services.

UNICEF lobbied to include 36 poor and disadvantaged municipalities and cities in the national poverty reduction programmes that allowed them access to funding support. It partnered with civil society to monitor government projects and championed the inclusion of child-right provisions in what is now the Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act. Following the law's passage, UNICEF supported national consultations to raise awareness of the measure.

UNICEF also helped draft the implementing rules for the Gender and Development Code of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao — a law enacted in 2010 to facilitate removal of early

Super Typhoon Haiyan

UNICEF responded to Super Typhoon Haiyan which hit the Philippines on November 8, 2013 with the highest level of organisation-wide response. UNICEF was among the first responders reaching the affected population with immediate, lifesaving relief assistance. The response was sustained for two years through the recovery phase. UNICEF assistance exceeded US\$150 million that helped reach hundreds and thousands of children and families with water, sanitation, nutrition, immunisation, learning and psychosocial support.



marriage — to ensure that Muslim women and children have equal access to benefits, resources, services and programmes of the government and are accorded equal justice.

Following the passage of the Kindergarten Act in 2011 or RA 10157 making kindergarten education mandatory, UNICEF supported kindergarten catch-up programmes and training for daycare workers and elementary school teachers. UNICEF also worked with partners to expand culture-sensitive kindergarten curriculum models (*tahderiyyah*) for Muslim children in conflict-affected areas and children in indigenous communities to help them prepare for school.



Making kindergarten mandatory

A UNICEF survey in 2015 showed that fewer children aged 5 to 15 dropped out of school in 2013 (1.2 million) compared to those who left school in 2008 (2.9 million).

Notably in November 2017, the Philippines was declared free from maternal and neonatal tetanus following a large-scale immunisation drive in Muslim Mindanao (exceeding 90 per cent coverage). Eradicating the infection that is the most common life-threatening consequence of unsafe umbilical cord care practices was achieved despite the region's difficult terrain, isolated islands and security concerns.

UNICEF's advocacy to teach students proper hygiene paid off after two years when it was later adopted as national policy. UNICEF worked with the Education department to improve water and toilet provision in schools, contributing to a fivefold increase in the department's budget allotment for water and sanitation facilities in learning institutions. Continuous training in six provinces pushed up local budgets for the programme and ended open defecation in certain barangays. During emergencies, UNICEF provides hygiene kits along with the supply of potable water as its first line of response.

Meanwhile, the National Baseline Survey on Violence Against Children, a culmination of five years' work, was completed and released by UNICEF and the Council for the Welfare of Children in 2016. Under CPC 6, UNICEF began the groundwork in 2011 to look into violence against children in public schools. It committed an initial US\$300,000 in funding¹⁸ and is the first study in the country that provides statistically verifiable and concrete data on violence against children.

The study found that 80 per cent of children and youth experience some form of violence in their lifetime. More than 66 per cent of children experience physical abuse, more than half of which occurs at home, in schools and communities where they ought to feel the safest. Further, more than 21 per cent

of children are subjected to sexual violence, with brothers or cousins being the common perpetrators. Nearly half of children are subjected to cyberbullying or sexual violence online.

Subsequently, UNICEF became a major participant in formulating a Philippine Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children which drew from the results of the survey.

Meanwhile, HIV/AIDS has remained a key concern in the current country programme after the Philippines was found in 2015 to have one of the highest infection rates in the world. UNICEF asked Congress to remove the requirement for written parental consent in testing to allow more children access to the service. UNICEF also worked with the Health department in conducting a situational analysis of adolescents at risk of HIV. The analysis revealed that adolescents between 16-20 years old engaged in high risk behaviours. They also have low access to HIV services and have limited knowledge of the risk of contracting the infection. The analysis helped Davao City develop the terms of reference for its own HIV/AIDS strategy.

Spanners in the works

Three natural catastrophes in 2012-2013 occurring within near-succession would define UNICEF's flexibility in fulfilling its mandate: Typhoon Pablo (Bopha), a category 5 typhoon in Mindanao; a 7.2 magnitude earthquake in Bohol in the Visayas; and Super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan). Simultaneously, UNICEF responded to the needs of the victims of the Zamboanga siege.

UNICEF responded to all four humanitarian emergencies almost simultaneously (with Haiyan response placed at the highest level three emergency), dispatching relief goods to affected areas and distributing school supplies. It endeavoured to restore a semblance of normalcy by restoring water provisioning in Tacloban, bringing children back to school, and providing vaccination, access to water and psychosocial support as well as creating child-friendly spaces to establish a safe environment for children.

The agency also implemented for the first time an emergency unconditional cash transfer programme to 10,000 households in the most devastated areas to cover their immediate needs

and help them recover. Implemented by Action Contre la Faim International, the programme gave selected families in Yolanda-ravaged Tacloban City and the neighbouring municipalities of Burauen, Dagami, Julita, La Paz and Pastrana a monthly grant of US\$100 over a six-month period. The beneficiaries included households with pregnant and lactating women, children suffering from malnutrition, persons with disabilities, persons with chronic illness, elderly people, families headed by a single female, those headed by children and those hosting separated children.

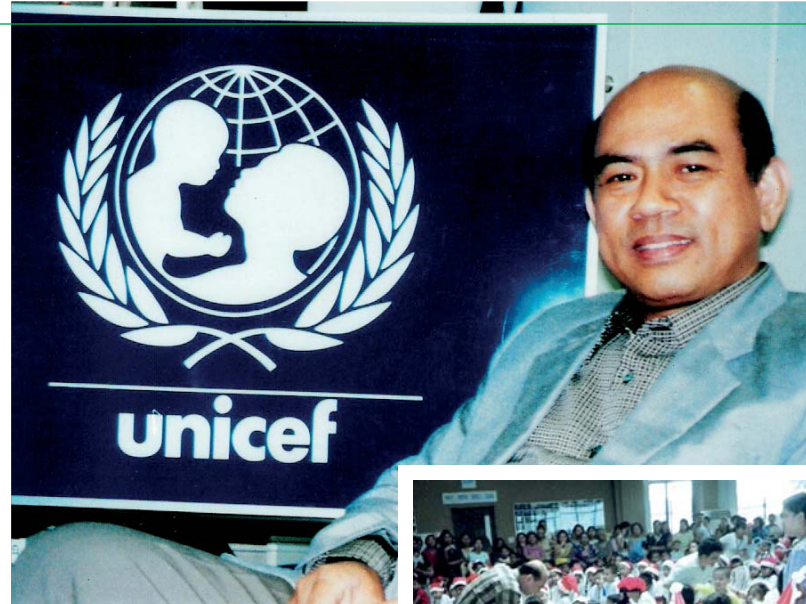
The cash transfer programme was a success, according to an evaluation by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies. The programme helped beneficiaries pay for immediate needs such as food, medicines, housing repair, livelihood and education-related expenses. More than half of the cash was spent on food which led to a decline in the malnutrition prevalence amongst children. Some households used part of the money to start or expand livelihood activities.

The emergencies underscored the country's – and children's – vulnerability to natural calamities and climate change and the need for longer-term solutions. UNICEF looked at building resilience and enhancing local communities' disaster preparedness. It also worked with government and partners to integrate disaster risk reduction measures in local communities and school programmes, focusing on the needs of children, adolescents, the youth and women.

Work in conflict areas

Onwards in September 2013, a rogue faction of the Moro National Liberation Front attempted to raise the flag of a self-proclaimed republic at the Zamboanga City Hall, resulting in a standoff between the group and government forces, which later degenerated into a skirmish that displaced hundreds of thousands of residents and killed civilians. The armed conflict lasted almost a month, but displacements continued for years.

Four years later, in May 2017, Marawi City was enveloped in armed conflict between government forces and pro-ISIS militants, displacing over 300,000 residents, half of whom were children. Martial Law was later declared in Mindanao. The



A life lived for children

Pol Moselina is a seasoned child rights advocate. His views on ensuring children's welfare was formed by what he saw as a boy growing up in a farming community.

"My father was a tenant all his life, despite land reform. I saw children drop out of school because of poverty and the tenancy issue," he said.

In 1984, UNICEF sent Pol on a study tour of street children in Brazil. It was the start of the street children programme in the Philippines.

"We saw that street children were the offspring of the urban poor. So if you'd like to address the phenomenon, you should address the situation of the urban poor."

He was then taken in as a project officer and later became chief of child protection. Though he left UNICEF in 2005 for health reasons, his advocacy continued.

"The reason I continued the advocacy for child-friendly institutions even outside of UNICEF is because I saw the strategy as workable nationwide."

"*Nireremind ko ang sarili ko* (I remind myself) – three Ts. Things take time. Never give up."

conflict impeded access to food, constricted the local economy and hampered the timely delivery of medical supplies.

UNICEF responded to both situations by providing immediate assistance and working towards more permanent solutions.

Children affected by the Zamboanga conflict were also given learning materials and vitamin A supplements. Emergency assistance was extended to severely malnourished children affected by the conflict. UNICEF also distributed hygiene kits as well as safe water and installed gender-segregated latrines and bathing cubicles.

UNICEF focused in Marawi which already had amongst the worst incidents of stunting, wasting and open defecation even before the armed incursion, and whose residents had to contend with lost household income and curtailed access to livestock and markets amidst the fighting. UNICEF prioritised screening for and addressing malnutrition, vitamin A supplementation, food

fortification, and counselling for mothers and young children. The organisation also gave evacuees safe water for drinking and household use and supplied materials for setting up emergency toilets to ease the conditions in evacuation centres. It provided school tents and childhood development kits for back-to-school initiatives in neighbouring Iligan City and Lanao, and coordinated between international and local NGOs. UNICEF also established child-friendly spaces for 7,000 children for psychosocial recovery and volunteer training.

On October 17, 2017, President Duterte declared Marawi liberated. Displaced families could start returning to their homes in phases as the military undertook clearing operations. UNICEF estimated that the return of the displaced families would take time, necessitating further assistance and raising concerns over the capacity of responding organisations to sustain the response. According to United Nations digital service Reliefweb, close to 50,000 families affected by the Marawi crisis remain displaced as of February 7, 2018.



Joemar's journey to health and happiness

Joemar Bacaltos, born under some of the most unfortunate circumstances, is the perfect example of a child deprived of many of the rights and opportunities he is entitled to.

I met him by chance on a visit to an indigenous community in Palawan. Little did I know that it would stir very personal memories, as I am a proud *Lola* to four grandchildren of which two were born premature and with nutritional challenges themselves.

Joemar is the face of 300,000 severely malnourished children who may never reach their fifth birthday. Seeing him made the

While addressing more immediate concerns, UNICEF worked towards more permanent measures. Following an agreement between the United Nations and the MILF facilitated by UNICEF Philippines, 1,869 children, 620 of whom were girls, were disengaged from the ranks of the group. Consequently, the MILF was delisted from the UN's record of armed groups recruiting and using children.

Looking ahead in the next decades

Seven decades of unwavering service to the Filipino child is a feat on its own. From the early years of UNICEF's emergency response to the shift to development assistance, to the holistic concept of the child, and onwards to protecting and upholding their rights, the organisation has evolved along with the changing times while upholding its core values. UNICEF cares for the Filipino children and continues to work with communities, families, educators, health workers, mothers and children to strengthen systems to build a protective environment for children. UNICEF has been present over the past seven

decades, upholding the rights of every Filipino child through its development and humanitarian assistance and support to peacebuilding.

We are a child rights organization with expertise, and are responsive and present on the ground. UNICEF has helped advance children's rights in the Philippines by influencing laws, policy, local governance, and services for children's growth and well-being.

Now more than ever, UNICEF's work for the most disadvantaged, excluded, and vulnerable children in the Philippines has never been more relevant, nor more urgent.

For over 70 years, UNICEF has championed the rights of children in the Philippines. We are 70 years young with a passion for children and the young people of the Philippines.



issue of malnutrition and its challenges so clear. His story helps explain a complicated problem in an understandable way, so it becomes human and close to the heart. He was given treatment and able to recover quickly from a near-death situation.

I became invested in his future, personally checking up on him and the progress being made. I'm happy to share that on my fifth visit to Joemar, he now is near his optimal weight, he can walk, say "mama," "papa," and "ate," and play with his three sisters.

I am a proud *Lola* all over again.

- Lotta Sylwander



The United Nations, through its children's agency UNICEF, facilitated this process in line with the UN-MILF Action Plan addressing the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict in Mindanao.

In 2017, UNICEF facilitated the disengagement of 1,858 children who were formally or informally associated with the armed wing of the MILF, ending the recruitment and use of children within their ranks.

"Children affected by armed conflict are some of the most vulnerable children in the world. We need not look far, right here in the Philippines children are affected by armed conflict in different ways. They can be recruited as soldiers and engaged in direct combat, or as aides with seriously harmful consequences threatening their life and well-being. Let children be children — let them play, go to school and live healthy and happy," UNICEF Philippines Representative Lotta Sylwander said.

Life after disengaging from the MILF

By Amirah*

It has only been a year since I was counted among the children who have been disengaged from the MILF-BIAF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front-Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces). The disengagement process is part of the completion of the United Nations and MILF Action Plan to ensure that children are not recruited and used in armed conflict.

I'm thankful that Community Family Services International (CFSI), MILF Focal Points and UNICEF are monitoring the progress of children and families that were disengaged from the MILF-BIAF.

When I heard that CFSI was looking for volunteers to help in this project, I immediately signed up believing that not only would this help me but also other disengaged children. With CFSI, I trained to become a Para-Social Worker which gave me hope and self-confidence. I learned to talk to different kinds of people, to interview them, to collect information and to write reports.

I was timid at first but I slowly learned to open up and even be humorous; people no longer had to draw me out of my shell. Things I learned from my studies also greatly boosted my self-confidence. I am happy that I gained more friends including those outside of my social circle.

I wanted so much to be a Para-Social Worker because foremost I wanted to help my family and my community. Second, I believe helping other people is a way to earn God's reward. And as a disengaged child myself, I know that others also dream of getting a scholarship and going to school.

At present, I am able to go back to formal school and to a Madrasah, or Arabic School. I'm 17 years old now and studying in Grade 8. In the Madrasah, I am in Grade 5 and attend classes every Friday and Saturday.

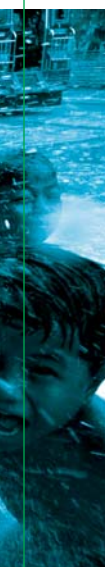
Like other children in my village, we walk for three hours to get to school. There is only one jeepney that plies our route due to the distance and poor road conditions. Despite these difficult conditions, I still work hard so that I can finish school.

I wish to be of help to my family and society, that they will be given livelihood assistance to meet their needs. Every time I receive my allowance, I give most to my mother who portions it according to the daily family needs while the rest goes to my schooling.

I dream that I will finish school and become a police officer. If I were given the chance to be granted a scholarship, I will pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Criminology. I also dream that my siblings get to go back to college because at the moment, they've stopped schooling because we can't afford it. I also wish that my parents will have a livelihood. Finally, I dream that one day I will become an Uztadia or a Hafidah (Quranic scholar/educator).

**In order to protect privacy, this is not the writer's real name*





unicef  **70**  **bata pa rin**



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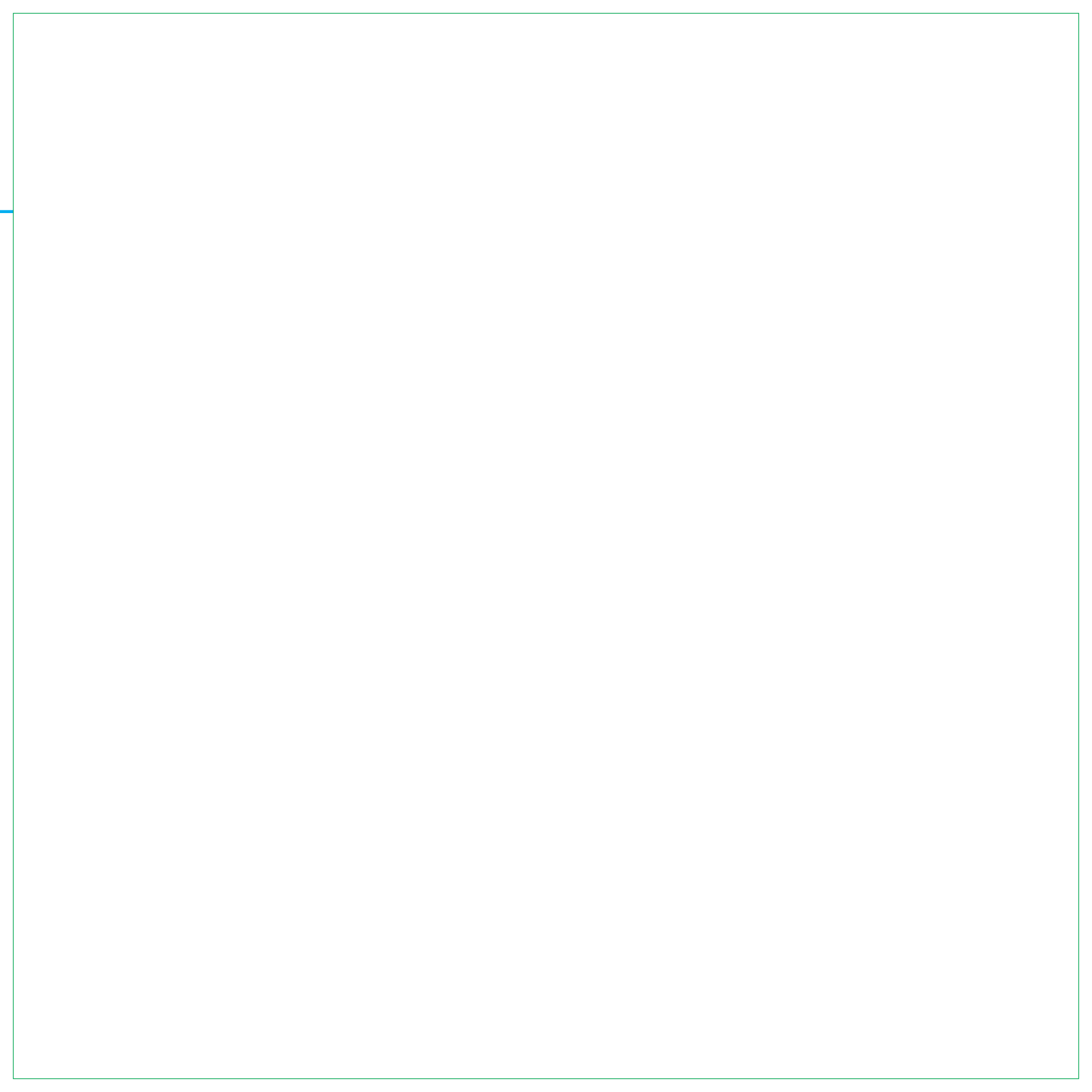
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