

Civil Society

Providing access to health, food security and livelihoods to indigenous peoples communities in Philippines

"We are thankful to the HEAL project because this is the first time in the history of the barangay that we have a written 3-year Barangay Development Plan (BDP). I'm very happy that I'm part of the group who drafted the first BDP. With this, Barangay Tudok has now a direction and a plan to be implemented."

Mr. Roque Tahay, Barangay Councilor, Tudok, T'boli, South Cotabato



EU Partners

Mahintana Foundation

Local Government Units

Allah Valley Development Foundation

Maguindanaoan Development Foundation

OND Hesed Foundation

Sta Cruz Mission and Tribal Leaders Development Foundation

Facts and Figures

- EC Contribution: € 700 000 (90% of total budget)
- Duration: 2009 – 2012



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Context

Indigenous Peoples (IPs) are among the country's poorest and most vulnerable groups. They usually live in remote upland barangays, where there is limited road and transport access, leading in turn to limited access to information or to basic social services. This makes them most vulnerable to health-related problems and socio-economic exploitation, often resulting in exclusion from local development processes.

Objectives

- Improved socio-economic condition of marginalised households in 15 upland barangays in 3 provinces of South-Eastern Philippines by providing a steady source and supply of nutritional food requirements and continuous access to health services and improving family and community-based income generating activities.

Impact

- Increased access for 16,031 barangay residents to improved LGU health services.
- 7 village pharmacies ('Botika ng Barangay') established resulting in improved access to low-priced but effective medicines.
- The establishment of backyard gardens together with the provision of iron supplementation, Vitamin A and breastfeeding have contributed to the reduction of under-nutrition of under-five children from 26% in 2009 to 18% in 2010 in 12 barangays.
- 782 households have started and generated additional income from alternative livelihoods.

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Access to basic health services

EU and HEAL project are just two of the names that have made a complementing impression in most homes of beneficiaries and the Rural Health Units (RHU) of respective implementing partner organisations. It has not only improved the living conditions of marginalised communities and uplifted the dignity of IPs, but also enriched the project implementers' learning, awareness, and appreciation of IP culture. RHUs have become busier and staff more visible in communities, conducting immunisation, bringing health services, and participating in other health-related activities of the project. RHUs have assigned permanent midwives and a regular Maternal and Child Health (MCH) schedule in the covered barangays/sitios of remote/upland areas. Further, the project's provision of complementary basic medical equipment and supplies, active advocacy, monitoring and follow-up, house-to-house visits, and personalised approach by Community Health Volunteers (CHV) have been considered by RHUs as contributing factors to their increased performance in MCH and Family Planning (FP) services. To quote Dr. Jaileen Milar, Municipal Health Officer (MHO) of Maasim, Sarangani Province, "Because of the project, we have become busier now in the RHU than we were used to. While we are sometimes irritated because of various project invitations as resource person or as participant for a certain training, we are thankful now for the contribution of the project especially on our increased performance in immunisation in Barangays Amsipit and Lumasal." Reinforcing this sentiment, Dr. Jocelyn Bayquin, MHO of Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, has expressed that "Through the years, NGOs especially Mahintana, have been consistent in reminding us of our low health performance in Lake Sebu. So instead of arguing with them, I initiated an LGU-NGO coordination meeting in Lake Sebu and other health initiatives like RHU on wheels and clustering system for project complementation and wider health coverage. With our concerted efforts, we have significantly increased our health performance this year. Thanks to our HEAL partners in Lake Sebu."



World Malaria Day

