



SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

Farm2Go

Connecting smallholder farmers to markets

Thanks to its terrain and tropical climate conditions, the Philippines benefits from its rich agricultural produce. Starting in the 1960s, the agriculture sector started growing at an adequate pace due to the geographical characteristics combined with the new technologies at the time. In 2023, agriculture is the second largest sector in the country employing 11.8 million people (24.5 percent) in farming, fisheries, livestock, and forestry.¹ According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, agriculture only contributed 8.9 percent of the country's gross domestic product in 2022, the lowest in five years. This is attributed to slow growth in production due to, inter alia, climate change.²

In the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), agriculture and fishery are the main sources of food, employment, and income, accounting for 36.41 percent of the region's economy. The region has vast resources and potential, including 165,000 hectares of irrigable land which can boost the country's rice production and ease the need to import. However, BARMM's agri-food system faces challenges in market access and limited integration of farmers into the value chain. With limited production and

logistical capacity, competitively entering the market poses a great challenge for smallholder farmers and fisherfolk.

With food security as one of the priorities articulated in the Philippine Government's 10-point policy agenda, WFP supports smallholder farmers and fisherfolks through technical assistance to improve agricultural productivity, increase market access, and develop value chains.

Gaps and Challenges

Farmers and fisherfolks remain the poorest in the country with a poverty incidence of 30 percent which is almost double the national poverty incidence of 18.1 percent.³ According to the World Bank, farmers, who are mostly in the bottom 50 percent of earners in the country, only share 14 percent of the national income.⁴ Market access, capital, postharvest facility, innovation, and climate change exacerbate poverty and income inequality among smallholder farmers and fisherfolks.⁵

The current market structure in the Philippines is seen to be highly concentrated with few large actors. With limited production and logistical capacity, competitively entering the market poses a great challenge for smallholder farmers and

¹ Labor Force Survey – August 2023, Philippine Statistics Authority.

² Philippine agriculture: Current state, challenges, and ways forward, Philippine Institute for Development Studies, December 2021

fisherfolk. It is also difficult to make informed decisions on crops they can invest in, considering the insufficient information flow on the market such as prices and demand trends. In 2022, the Province of Lanao del Sur in BARMM had a high surplus of squash as the farmers produced the same crop due to a lack of market information.

While the support of traders, popularly known as middlemen, extends a more convenient way for smallholder farmers to sell their produce, this entailed smaller income since fair prices were not ensured due to heavy reliance on the middlemen. Smallholder farmers tend to subscribe under this arrangement due to i) the need for quick return of investment, ii) save on transportation cost from farm to market, and iii) the lack of access to information on market trends.⁶

Smallholder Agricultural Market Support

Through active engagement with community-based organizations and cooperatives, WFP is i) promoting access of smallholder farmers and fisherfolks to agricultural support services and ii) enhancing their skills and knowledge about farming practices, food processing, and storage techniques. WFP further supports the crop production capacity of farmers and their access to potential markets for fair prices and terms.



Farm2Go

To encourage better demand for local crops and boost the capacity of smallholder farmers to bargain on the market, WFP launched the Farm2Go digital application in BARMM. Farm2Go creates a digital marketplace where different value chain actors can interact remotely and in real-time for better and fair price negotiation. This platform

aims to contribute to improving farmer's income and increasing consumers' access to fresh and competitively priced produce while encouraging an exchange of market information.

The application reduces the presence of middlemen on the market and increases potential profits of smallholder farmers by selling their crops and commodities on the spot directly from their farms. Farm2Go enables the cooperatives to plan their production based on the demand trends observed from their direct engagement with the buyers.



In the pilot launch of Farm2Go, WFP registered 15 licensed cooperatives across BARMM. These cooperatives are currently working with state social institutions (hospitals, boarding houses, penitentiary institutions) which regularly procure local goods and commodities. WFP closely worked with the regional government through the Bangsamoro Food Sufficiency Task Force in setting the criteria for the identification of cooperatives and buyers. WFP conducted a Farm2Go training for the value chain actors identified for the pilot implementation. Together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform (MAFAR), WFP provided agricultural extension services to smallholder farmers to increase their yields and introduce new commodities for investment.

Photo page 1: WFP/Christian Joseph Reyes

Photo page 2: WFP/Christian Joseph Reyes

³ Philippine Statistics Authority, 2021.

⁴ Overcoming Poverty and Inequality in the Philippines, World Bank, 2022

⁵ Top 5 challenges faced by Filipino Farmers Today, PhilSEED, 2023

⁶ Strengthening Markets of High Value Fruits and Vegetables in Mindanao, Llanto, et al., 2013

