



WFP Innovations in the Philippines

Background

Identifying and implementing innovative solutions are key to address long-term and protracted issues, such as recurring natural hazards and exposure risks, in a country like the Philippines. The Philippines is amongst the countries ranked high or first in global indexes including INFORM (the Index for Risk Management) and the World Risk Index, respectively.

The Philippines is also one of the first countries to commit to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the third Voluntary National Review in 2022, the Philippine Government specified innovations and the need to accelerate progress as central themes, which showcased their approaches to achieve the SDGs.

WFP as an innovation enabler

Innovations are embedded in WFP's work and helps increase the efficiency of WFP's support to the Government. In line with SDG 2: Zero Hunger through food and nutrition security initiatives and working in tandem with stakeholders in the spirit of SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals, WFP collaborates with the Philippine Government to i) strengthen emergency management capacity and resilience, ii) reduce malnutrition, and iii) improve access to income-generating activities for the rural poor and other groups vulnerable to food insecurity.

WFP's Executive Director Cindy McCain stated, "Innovation is crucial to tackling the incredible challenges of the global food crisis. While hunger soars and resources run dangerously low, we need creative ideas and solutions

“My priorities are clear: increase our resources, improve our effectiveness and scale up partnerships and innovation to bring modern solutions to those most in need” - WFP Executive Director, Cindy McCain

to feed more people with less.” Innovations are investments to support people to prepare for, recover faster, and be more resilient to food and nutrition security challenges.

Human-centred design methodology

GECS-MOVE and mini-MOVE

In any natural disaster, one of the first collateral impacts is the disruption of internet and phone services. This isolates the affected communities and blocks crucial and life-saving information, which prevents both the survivors and the first responders from exchanging vital information.

Restoring telecommunications is therefore one of the first critical steps in any emergency response.

With WFP and the Government’s **GECS-MOVE** project (Government Emergency Communications System - Mobile Operations Vehicles for Emergencies), mobile vehicles (composed of a truck, a 4x4 pick-up, a motorcycle, and two high-powered drones) were designed to restore telecommunications in diverse geographical terrains. Once deployed to emergency operations, MOVE units provide telecommunications services for frontline rescuers, such as disaster coordinators, and health and welfare responders, to quickly communicate critical information. WFP trained more than 200 government emergency responders on the use of this equipment.

WFP built two **mini-MOVE** units that can be easily towed by regular pickups (4x4 vehicles) to reach challenging terrains and provide radio and internet connectivity services. The mini-MOVE units are strategically prepositioned in WFP warehouses in Central Luzon and Southern Mindanao regions to support emergency operations.

Farm2Go

IN 2023

In the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), agriculture and fishery are the main sources of food, employment, and income, accounting for 36 percent of the region’s economy. However, the Region’s relative advantage in agriculture, fishery, and forestry does not automatically translate into sustained food security. BARMM’s agri-food system faces challenges in market access and with 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 fisherfolks.

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 in 2023. 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 improve farmer’s income and increase consumers’ access to fresh and competitively priced produce.

Drones

Unmanned Aircraft Systems, more commonly known as drones, help monitor and assess the damage caused by natural disasters like typhoons, floods, droughts, or earthquakes. In emergency situations, drones also help provide communications connectivity. These offer low operating costs and rapid deployment even in difficult weather conditions. WFP has been developing the use of drones since 2017 to improve preparedness for and response to humanitarian emergencies, encouraging collaboration and capacity strengthening of first responders and government stakeholders worldwide.

	EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE	ENHANCED RESILIENCE	STRONGER TELECOMMS
IMPACT OF INNOVATIONS IN FIGURES FOR 2023	<p>12 Government-led emergency response operations supported</p> <p>396 trucks mobilized</p> <p>565,000 Family Food Packs delivered</p>	<p>15 cooperatives registered through Farm2Go</p> <p>549 partner staff trained in technical assistance activities</p>	<p>343 Government and partner staff trained</p> <p>2 MINI-MOVES prepositioned in disaster-prone areas</p>



As drones help provide communications services in emergencies, WFP envisions a bigger role to cover an entire affected area. WFP continues to seek additional donor support to utilize drones for geospatial (risk, needs and damage) assessments before and after hazards strike to inform efficient anticipatory action, as well as emergency preparedness and response measures.

Mobile kitchen

To augment emergency operations, WFP conducted a test run of the Government's mobile food kitchen at the National Training School for Boys in Tanay, Rizal. WFP provided technical support to the Department of Social Welfare and Development in enhancing the operational design of the mobile food kitchen, so nutritious food could be promptly provided to people in moments of intense need during emergencies.

Low-tech innovations with high return

Radio

Radios are critical when there are power outages, which is often the case after a natural disaster. To facilitate coordination efforts after an emergency, Sorsogon Province in Bicol region set up the 'One Tone - One Frequency' radio. With WFP's support, relevant responders, including local authorities, the national Army, Coast Guard, and police, the Bureau of Fire, and all municipalities were connected to the radio and exchanged critical information.

The radio frequency was also used for reporting medical emergencies.

The province recently added 20 units of satellite phones to build emergency communications redundancy (which means having multiple back-up communication modalities). Information about risks and early warning is shared to the public through other media platforms such as local radio stations and social media networks.

Climate-smart locally led solutions

Mangroves

The coastal municipality of Prieto Diaz, Sorsogon is particularly vulnerable to typhoons, storm surges, monsoon shifts, and tsunamis. To protect communities, the municipality invested in nature-based solutions such as the rehabilitation of mangroves, in partnership with the Municipal Agriculture Office, the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office, and WFP.

Mangroves are important natural protectors. They shelter land and coastal communities from natural disasters by reducing erosion and absorbing storm surge impacts. According to UN Environment Programme's research, mangroves extract up to five times more carbon from the atmosphere than forests on land, and protecting mangroves is 1,000 times less expensive per km than building seawalls – a green innovation to solve climate change challenges for local communities.

“We are pleased that (the) WFP is committed to helping the Philippines achieve our vision of upper middle-income status by prioritizing human capital development, climate resilience, and crisis response, critical for continued progress on food security and nutrition.”

Secretary for Social Welfare and Development,
Rexlon Ting Gatchalian

Coffee plantations

The coffee plantations created after Typhoon Yolanda struck in 2013 improved soil stabilization through increased vegetation and are a new source of livelihoods for farmers in the municipality of Tublay in Benguet region. This area is regularly affected by typhoons, intense winds, and heavy rains which trigger recurrent landslides and damage infrastructure.

One of Tublay’s approaches to mitigate disaster risks stands out: growing coffee to address soil erosion, while creating a sustainable livelihood supplement for its communities. WFP sees coffee production at scale as a potential livelihood source for Tublay. The coffee plantations have so far provided income sources for more than **1,000 farmers**. Coffee beans can be stored for a long time, so they complement the farmer’s existing vegetable production.

Innovations at scale

Mechanized Packing System

Since the 1960s, the Government of the Philippines has been distributing family food packs (FFPs) to people affected by disasters. Since Typhoon Yolanda struck in 2013, the Government and WFP have worked together on improving FFP production and delivery capacity to respond in future emergencies.

The installation of a mechanized packing system in the National Resource Operations Center (NROC) in Manila enabled NROC to produce up to 18,000 FFPs in an eight-hour shift – enough portion for **90,000 people**. The system has increased NROC production by 43 percent. This scale of production allows the Government to stockpile and pre-position FFPs in regions prone to natural disasters, thereby reducing delivery times. The Government has recently referenced the system as one of the most notable contributions of WFP.

“WFP continues to push the innovation envelope by jointly identifying and scaling effective, creative solutions with our partners and by keeping the pulse of the communities and their needs.”

WFP Country Director ad interim, Dipayan
Bhattacharyya

Information management systems

The Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development, with the support of WFP, is developing a solution for the information management system of its national social protection programme called *Walang Gutom (No Hunger) 2027*. This system builds on the experience and lessons learned from the pilot project running on SCOPE: WFP’s beneficiary information and transfer management platform. Data that has been collected in SCOPE since 2018 will be migrated to this new, Filipino in-house system.

Vision for the way ahead

Globally, WFP is entering the next stage of collaboration, innovation, and technology, in partnership with a diversity of stakeholders, to address hunger in the face of funding constraints and other challenges. WFP will continue to pilot and scale existing innovative approaches to end hunger in the Philippines, in close partnership and support of the Government (national and BARMM), donors, and partners.

*Photo page 1: MOVE prepositioned at WFP Warehouse in Mabalacat, Pampanga, 2023
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Photo page 3: A WFP staff meets with members of the Kayod Ka Bangsamoro Cooperative in Labungan. The cooperative is partnered with WFP for Farm2Go, a digital platform enabling farmers to sell their produce online, 2023 © WFP/Christian Reyes

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