

# COVID-19

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

2nd Progress Report - May 18th



**One Bayanihan** - A community-led approach to support the most vulnerable and hardest to reach communities during the COVID-19 Emergency

Cebu, Philippines Response



**BAYANIHAN MISSION**  
HOPE HELP THY NEIGHBORS

**FUNDLIFE**





**On March 28th, the province of Cebu declared a province-wide Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) for 30 days in response to concerns over the spread of COVID-19. This was in response to the growing concerns around the spread of the Corona Virus and to contain the COVID-19 disease.**

The government imposed an army controlled ECQ saw all services, non-essential business and public-transport cease until the ECQ was lifted. Students and those over 65 years old were put under 24-hour quarantine.

The impact of these measures were felt hardest by daily wage earners and informal workers who are usually on 'no work, no pay' contracts and who do not qualify for any employer or government welfare during the ECQ.

A report published in 2016 suggested that up to 55% of all Filipino workers operate under 'no work, no pay' conditions. With a population of over 2 Million across Metro Cebu, this puts 1.1 Million people at risk of food insecurity and fully reliant on government help.

#### **Updated Situational Analysis – Region VII, published on May 18th, 2020**

On May 15th, it was announced that Cebu City, Mandaue City and Lapu Lapu City (Metro Cebu Cities), would remain under Enhanced Community Quarantine until May 31st while the rest of Cebu Province will revert to General Community Quarantine (GCQ) from May 20th. Under GCQ, there will be a resumption of approximately 50% of all businesses, albeit under strict guidelines which include limited workforce and practising social distancing. Even with declassification to GCQ, many of the most vulnerable groups will be facing intense financial pressure as the economy begins to adjust to a post ECQ environment.





The unimaginable strain of ECQ will therefore continue for the most vulnerable people, who have already been under ECQ since March 28th. While the government is doing its best to provide financial and food aid to these groups, targeted beneficiaries report that the support systems are breaking down under the scale of the emergency. More support is needed.

On May 15th, The Department of Interior Local Government (DILG), the government agency in charge of COVID-19 response, issued a statement asking Local Government Units (LGUs) and Mayors to explain the 'poor performance' of the Special Amelioration Program (SAP), which is to provide emergency cash assistance to those who need it most.

Despite two extensions, DILG announced that 43 LGUs had only achieved 21% delivery of SAP by May 10th – six weeks after the ECQ was announced.

These poor performance indicators are further compounded by the fact the Local Governments have been using the 2015 census to identify the most vulnerable people. The revelation has resulted in improper distribution of relief as well any people who have moved after 2015 are not qualifying for any support.

This failure, combined with several other local governance issues, has had a catastrophic impact on those who survive on daily wages and have been unable to earn since the lockdown. Each passing day increases the risk of hunger for their families, with several reports indicating people dying because of heatstroke just to claim their SAP.

These highly vulnerable groups also face an increased health risk from COVID-19. Often living in temporary shelters, social distancing is not an option and basic personal hygiene products are lacking. Risk of contagion in these communities is amplified and those with symptoms of COVID-19 infection are unlikely to seek medical attention for risk of unaffordable hospital bills.





Since May 5th Cebu City has had the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Philippines. That number currently stands at 1,610. On May 15th, the latest WHO COVID-19 report showed that 14.8% of all confirmed cases came from Region VII. Despite the rise of infections, the death rate remains low, with only 3.5% of all COVID-19 deaths coming from Region VII. This data confirms that the most immediate need for many vulnerable families continues to be food and livelihood rather than healthcare.

Beyond basic food essentials and immediate health issues, secondary risk factors of the COVID-19 lockdown continue to intensify, with growing concern about the physical safety of children and the mental well being of communities who are forced to live under extreme conditions.

FundLife remains especially concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable children who are not in school and without access to learning. In a country where basic education completion is already low, this enforced break from education, combined with unprecedented socio-economic challenges, school dropout rates and related issues like teenage pregnancy threaten to spike, while also increasing the possibility that young people turn to high-risk and illegal activities such as drugs to secure income.

FundLife is continuing to work closely with existing and new partners best placed to reach out to the hardest hit by the ECQ and those who fall through the cracks of support systems, however, the call for help far exceeds our limited reach.





## **FundLife's Response to COVID-19 - updated May 16th**

Adopting a community-led, women-first approach, FundLife continues to collaborate with local stakeholders from government, private sector and community to reach those who need immediate assistance.

Partnering with Bayanihan mission, a local CSO in Cebu City, FundLife initiated the #OneBayanihan project to reach people who are in greatest need of emergency food relief.

As of May 11th a total of 3,800 families (approx. 17,100 adults and children) have been reached through the One Bayanihan project in Cebu City, Mandaue City and Talisay City, with food packs, hygiene kits and educational protection sessions around COVID-19.

These families represent the most vulnerable groups who often have been wholly reliant on government support and those who have been without income since March 28th FundLife has also responded to stranded informal workers who do not qualify for government support or DOLE benefits. For the majority of the families who FundLife has supported, they have expressed concerns regarding the amount of food they are receiving is not enough.

In addition to regular distribution drives for the most vulnerable, FundLife and Bayanihan Mission have committed to sponsoring Sitio Marna, on the border between Mandaue and Cebu City. Sitio Marna is a densely populated community consisting of 550 highly vulnerable families (approx 2,100 individuals) ,supported mostly by daily wage earners.

Responding to partner needs, FundLife has also helped to sponsor 32 families in Pasig, Manila, who are under the care of the Gawad Kalinga Football Program and initiated emergency feeding programmes in Palo, Leyte.





Responding to the needs of the local government, FundLife has facilitated the production of 150 face-shields and donated them to the Department of Health for direct use by medical practitioners and front liners. In addition to this, Bayanihan Mission, facilitated the production of over 3,300 face-masks and 380 face-shields that have been donated to front-liners.

### **From Relief to Recovery – A dedicated focus on children, adolescent girls and women**

Beyond providing immediate relief to the most vulnerable communities, FundLife is already coordinating with local stakeholders about recovery programs that focus on children, adolescents and women.

Risk factors due to COVID-19 for violence, exploitation and abuse have increased significantly for children living under restricted movement and socioeconomic decline. For highly vulnerable adolescent girls, the threat of sexual abuse, online exploitation and gender-based violence has intensified, which are compounded by the halting of education, thus increasing the danger of early marriage and/or pregnancy.

Continuing and amplifying our pre-COVID efforts to protect, educate and empower young people, FundLife will call NGOs, Governments and global agencies to prevent this pandemic from turning into a child protection and education crisis. These groups will need to account for the unique risks of girls and vulnerable children, including those who face increased danger of dropping out of school because of increased financial pressures that COVID-19 has caused. We will call for dedicated community-led approaches to ensure sufficient resources and agency is given to CSOs and youth on the ground. Moreover, we will ask for greater resources for urban poor women livelihood projects, so that the financial burden placed on in-school youth will be lessened.



We will further advocate for greater support across the entire CSO sector, especially to provide direct resources to CSOs who often do not qualify for INGO support due to highly complex and arduous financial requirements that many existing systems have in place.

It is imperative that we do not simply ensure sufficient resources for CSOs, but that the distribution of these resources is correctly accounted for. The evidence for more direct support is overwhelming and FundLife will strongly advocate for direct project funding for the communities who need it most.

Furthermore, FundLife will continue to ask for the progress of the 'Grand Bargain' Agreement, which was signed at the World Humanitarian Forum on 22nd May 2015 in Istanbul. The Grand Bargain is an agreement between some of the largest donors and aid providers, which aims to get more means into the hands of people in need, which has a target of ensuring 25% of all humanitarian aid should reach local and national CSOs by 2020.

At the latest published report by Oxfam in late 2019, it was found that 94% of all humanitarian funding does not go to local or national CSOs, but rather to International NGOs. We believe this is wholly inefficient and that COVID-19 has exposed an urgent need for INGOs to work in close partnership with local NGOs and community CSOs to effectively reach those who need help the most – and by doing so 'getting more means into the hands of people in need'.

As we all pivot to a new post-COVID reality, above all else, we must ensure we tackle the issues that have been prevalent in creating the very problems that COVID-19 has exposed. Beyond restoring normalcy to children, we must work together to create a new normal – one that is meaningfully different to life before COVID.

We must be courageous with our actions and collective in our approach. What can be done better together should not be done alone, and we must move beyond commitments to actionable efforts.

Above all, we must create new systems that can directly invest in CSOs that are already reaching and uplifting the most vulnerable groups.

# COVID-19 Relief Operations

FundLife in partnership with  
Bayanihan Mission



## Sitio Marna, Subangdaku, Mandaue City

Food Packs distribution and  
COVID-19 related Education Sessions  
Number of families reached - **423**



## Jaclupan, Talisay City, Cebu

Food Packs distribution and  
COVID-19 related Education Sessions  
Number of families reached - **176**





# COVID-19 Relief Operations

FundLife in partnership with  
Bayanihan Mission



## Barangay Apas, Cebu City

Food Packs distribution and  
COVID-19 related Education Sessions

Number of reach - **30 PWD's (blind masseurs)**



## Sitio Kalumbuyan, Brgy. Apas, Cebu City

Food Packs distribution and  
COVID-19 related Education Sessions

Number of families reached - **53**





# COVID-19 Relief Operations

FundLife in partnership with  
Bayanihan Mission



## Mandaue City, Cebu

Food Packs distribution and  
COVID-19 related Education Sessions

Number of families reached – **80 (Tricycle & Bicycle Drivers)**



## Sitio Daquit, Brgy. Guadalupe and Sitio Lower Kaunasan, Brgy. Kalunasan, Cebu City

Food Packs distribution and  
COVID-19 related Education Sessions

Number of families reached – **150**





# COVID-19 Relief Operations

FundLife in partnership with  
Bayanihan Mission



## Rapid Incorporation

Provision of Personal Protective Equipment  
(Facemasks and Face shields)

Distributed - **20 facemasks & 20 face shields**



## Olango, Cebu

Hygiene Kit Distribution and Feeding Program

Number of families reached - **200 (hygiene kits)**

Number of families reached - **700 (hygiene kits)**





# COVID-19 Relief Operations

FundLife in partnership with  
Bayanihan Mission



## The Children of Cebu Foundation, Inc. Pari-an and Inayawan, Cebu City

Number of individuals reached – **450 including street children**



## Badjao Tribe

Nutrition and Hygiene Kit Distribution to Pregnant Women  
Number of reach – **43 pregnant Badjao Women**





# COVID-19 Relief Operations

FundLife in partnership with  
Gawad Kalinga Football Foundation



## Pasig City, Manila

Food pack distribution for families of children under  
GK Football Program

Number of individuals reached - **32 players (and their families)**







## A Model for COVID-19 Relief, Recovery and Reviving of Communities

# MARNA PROJECT

Sitio Marna – an informal settlement located in the between Mandaue and Cebu with 550 households and 2210 residents, mostly composed of renters and daily wage earners have been suffering due to the shutdown of the economy due to COVID-19

Just like many urban poor areas in the Philippines, it is mostly composed of unregistered residents who are NOT qualified for the social amelioration program (SAP) of the government. They are proud people, often working long-hours at poor pay to provide for their families – now; they cannot earn an honest living.

Accessed through a wobbling footbridge, Marna is metaphorically and literally removed. Seeing the growing emergency in his community, a young leader from this area reached out to Bayanihan Mission for help thus the start of the MARNA PROJECT.

Bayanihan Mission and 423 households residing in Sitio Marna entered into a social contract. This contract represents the pledge of the households to abide by the Sitio Marna Pledge (SMP).





## A Model for COVID-19 Relief, Recovery and Reviving of Communities

# MARNA PROJECT

As long as they follow the conditions of the program, which is according to local policies to stop the spread of COVID-19, these households will have food and hygiene packs delivered to their doorsteps.

Together with the Bayanihan Mission volunteers and supportive community leaders specific needs were identified to augment only what they lack. Also, to strengthen community capacity, landlords were trained to become the health educators and supporting implementers in the community.

They understood that violating the social contract will also mean that the whole community will no longer have food supply, that they will suffer and once again go back to the chaos that it once was.

Today, Marna is still the same community with the same people hovering on below the national poverty line. The difference is they stay inside their homes. Even at midday, only community distributors/ educators and the few residents exempted because of essential work are seen in the alleys.

More than the impact of this call to stay home, Marna developed a sense of connectedness and solidarity. Even those households who did NOT sign the pledge still abided with the Home Quarantine Program. The program is already in its 7th week of providing support for Marna and part of its target is to continue the support and cover another Sitio in the weeks to come.





# **FOOD** **CAN ENSURE** **SURVIVAL;** **BUT, WHAT'S** **NEXT?**

Through the Sitio Pledge Program led by Bayanihan Mission in collaboration with Fund Life Philippines in Sitio Marna households were provided with food and other essential needs.

While basic needs were provided to the households it also became evident that there are other equally important facets that need to be addressed, which include nutrition, hygiene and medical health.

Medically speaking, giving focus to support the need for health intervention in small, secluded and overcrowded communities can be the key to stopping the spread of COVID-19 where one COVID-19 positive case can exponentially infect everyone else the moment they are allowed in the alleys.

Since this pandemic is just an add-on to a prior chronic poverty crisis, the Bayanihan Mission Medical team have anticipated the following needs to create a medical response for COVID-19 that could be potentially initiated from the smallest high risk unit in the communities.





# STOPPING COVID-19

On May 16th 120 residents responded to a voluntary COVID-19 Rapid Antibody testing, with all 120 tests coming back negative. While these results are highly encouraging and proof that the SMP program has been effective in stopping contagion, there is need to provide further access to testing for more residents.

In addition to mass testing and to stop the spread of COVID-19 the health awareness of the residents need to be increased.

Provided with the needed materials the community can set up accessible and accurate information dissemination measures according to community preference. Information materials can be produced provided along with timely and accurate health updates.

Proper hygiene should be emphasized as equally important as food. Apart from the provision of hygiene kits, there should be a behavioural change/ or improvement in the hygiene habits of each household.

Medical professionals and health educators should be provided with complete Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) and proper medical support such as thermal scanners and basic medical bags for early detection of infection and to become more effective and timely responding during emergencies.





## **Secondary Health, Child Protection Effects of Covid-19**

Once spread of infection is contained, the community can now focus on addressing the secondary health effects of COVID-19. Community needs to be provided access to nutrients dense food, water and proper meal for most vulnerable sectors. There should be available first aid kits and medication supplies available for other diseases.





# MENTAL HEALTH

Another aspect that needs to be addressed is the mental health and well-being of all individuals in the community especially for the most vulnerable sector. High risk communities need to be prioritized for a stationed registered mental health practitioner or psychiatrist to manage overall mental health cases.

The capacity of community leaders (Barangay Health Workers) should be strengthened through training like basic stress management to be able to respond to cases.

The community also needs to have access to a secured online counselling platform. And to strengthen accountability an accessible community feedback mechanism needs to be established and regular household assessment should be initiated.

The needs presented in this case study are put forward with direct engagement with community leaders. They put forward a bottom-up, people-first approach, which transfers agency and accountability to communities.

It not only provides how we can respond to COVID, but also how we can work directly with communities to give them a hand-up, not a hand out.

If we are committed to creating a better post-COVID-19 world, we should make sure we can build programs that are people-centric and gives agency to local residents so that they can be given autonomy for their own well being and futures.

As the Sitio Marna project has demonstrated, we should listen to people before attempting to tell them what they should do.



# NO CHILD SHOULD BE BORN JUST TO SURVIVE

Help us ensure every single child has a fighting chance for a safe childhood, quality education and opportunity to reach their full potential, in education and in life.

The One Bayanihan project is a COVID-19 emergency response to support the most vulnerable groups - content and images contained in this document are intended for documentation purposes only - any unauthorized use or reproduction of images is **strictly prohibited.**

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