

ZERO EXTREME POVERTY^{PH}2030

ZEP 2030 coalition members shared and discussed how they can scale up their impact at the ZEP 2030 General Assembly at the Unilab Bayanihan Center.



Eradicating extreme poverty at the beginning of family life

Benjamin D. Abadiano - President, Assisi Development Foundation
Lead Secretariat (2015-2018), Zero Extreme Poverty Philippines 2030

Extreme poverty is one of the Philippines' biggest roadblocks to sustainable, equitable, and inclusive development, and a better quality of life. With over a fifth of the country's population living in extreme poverty, there are millions of individuals and families with inadequate or no livelihoods, or who lack access to basic social services, or who suffer from natural disasters, and armed conflict.

At Zero Extreme Poverty Philippines 2030 (ZEP), we recognize that improving the overall wellbeing of the family is a strong foundation on which to build sustained prosperity. We believe that for as long as we work together, we can achieve long-term solutions to extreme poverty.

Since 2015, we have successfully leveraged the expertise of our partners in health, education, livelihood, agriculture and fisheries, environment, housing and shelter, and partnerships for indigenous peoples in achieving social justice to act on different issues surrounding extreme poverty. We collaborate closely with local stakeholders, some of them taking the lead on the ground as local conveners to facilitate the long process of partnership and convergence building.

ZERO EXTREME POVERTY PH2030

Through Family and Community Visioning (FCV) workshops, we work with the communities to uncover and articulate their specific needs. These workshops have been eye-opening for us, as these workshops have helped us understand the barriers that keep communities and families from achieving their goals and aspirations. The FCV workshops have also been instrumental in helping us tailor-fit our interventions and in engaging families and community leaders. Moreover, it has allowed us to plan interventions at a crucial stage: the beginning and early stages of family life.

Our partners have introduced capacity-building for health workers on the First 1,000 Days of Life, making sure that mothers breastfeed their infants, and provide young children with proper nutrition to combat stunting and malnutrition. This is supported by treatment packages for diseases such as diarrhea, and skin diseases and by feeding programs for children. We have also organized Ugnayan kay Nanay, Ugnayan sa Barangay sessions and the Family Academy program, where we help mothers learn more about self-care during pregnancy and facility-based childbirth. Parents and caregivers receive training on parenting toddlers and school-aged children.

We are also committed to supporting the needs of young children as they complete their basic education and develop skills that would help them fulfill their potential. This year, we have also supported over 400 elementary and high school students and 92 scholars from indigenous peoples' communities and implemented five Early Childhood Development Programs.

We supplement these health and education programs with livelihood and agriculture programs such as Business and Garden in a Box, funding and technical assistance support for agricultural communities, and microfinance. We provided funding to coffee- and coconut-growing communities to support their current crops, training on Good Agricultural Practices, and training for coconut farmers on growing alternative crops such as banana.

We helped communities start their own social enterprises through increasing their agricultural production, selection of premium high yielding crops, protecting natural resources, building processing centers, strengthening ancestral domain claims for the indigenous peoples, and devising marketing strategies to make their products more marketable.



Moreover, we have piloted housing and shelter projects in Albay, specifically in the municipalities of Pio Duran, Jovellar, and Rapu-rapu, and in Oriental Mindoro, specifically in the municipalities of Naujan, Baco, Victoria, and San Teodoro. Working with families in these areas allowed us to identify that their goal is to attain decent, affordable, and durable housing in thriving communities, respectful of culture and nature.

We believe that the family approach, which addresses different aspects of daily life of those living in extreme poverty, will help targeted families break the cycle of poverty by intervening at multiple points. This enables individuals, families, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations to come together to map out problems, explore solutions, and target beneficiaries. This allows everyone to allocate resources efficiently, and deliver services and more effectively.

Getting the buy-in of different stakeholders to allow us to bring what we can offer to communities was not a simple feat. Even getting the communities to reach clarity on what they want and need to become self-sufficient entailed ZEP to exhaust all possible means to equip them. We want them to build their own capabilities to help their families and unite their communities on a single goal of eradicating extreme poverty. Mobilizing, streamlining, and managing shared knowledge and resources with our vast network, though effective, didn't come easy for all our members. Amidst all the challenges, we believe that we were able to take a step further to right direction on the common cause that we are all fighting for.

Focusing our efforts and resources on the basic unit of the society has helped ZEP meet important milestones. We keep fueling our advocacy with the desire to work together on helping one million families be self-sufficient, we are on track on eliminating extreme poverty. We can help set Filipino families onto a new path for a better, healthier, and more secure future.

ZEP 2030's Livelihood cluster provides infrastructure support for farmers nationwide. Without proper processing centers, elevating the quality of produce can be challenging, as with the experience of the coffee farmer in this photo, who is trying to sun-dry coffee beans in a makeshift area.



Providing resources, capacity-building programs towards self-sufficient living

Featured clusters: Livelihood and Agriculture and Fisheries

One of the challenges for families looking to overcome extreme poverty is securing a more sustainable form of livelihood. Due to lack of knowledge and the resources to start any form of livelihood, extremely poor families and individuals can find it difficult to secure regular work and income that would allow them to address their basic needs and become financially stable.

To address the challenges associated with extreme poverty, it is critical to ensure that families could support themselves. For ZEP, this means providing them with the resources and capacity building programs for enterprise development and growth.

“Our vision is to facilitate the access of tangible and intangible livelihood assets needed for employment and enterprise development,” said Roberto Calingo, Executive Director of the Peace and Equity Foundation (PEF),

Livelihood cluster lead at ZEP. “We’re giving families in extreme poverty the opportunity to increase their income and address the basic needs deemed crucial for them to live with dignity and security.”

Through the Livelihood cluster, ZEP worked with a vast range of communities nationwide, including: coffee-growing indigenous peoples’ communities in Benguet, Ifugao, Bukidnon, and South Cotabato; farmers making dried herbs in Palawan; coconut and cacao farmers in Davao del Norte; and farming and fishing communities in 48 barangays in 10 provinces, which include Mountain Province, Ifugao, Zambales, Sorsogon, Oriental Mindoro, Compostela Valley, Davao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Southern Leyte, and Bohol.

With a significant number of households living on less than Php 5,000 a month, it was critical for ZEP to set



up agri-financing and microfinance programs for the participating farming and fishing communities, to ensure that they would have enough capital to sustain year-round farming activities.

ZEP then focused on capacity-building, bringing in resource speakers, organizing training sessions on Good Agricultural Practices for coffee and other technical assistance programs to improve productivity, and providing inputs for farmers and fisherfolks such as planting and fishing materials, livestock, boats, fishing nets, and fish cages.

“The programs on agriculture and coastal resource management for farmers and fisherfolks create a solid base of food security for their families and communities,” said Caridad Corridor, National Coordinator for the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA), Agriculture and Fisheries cluster lead at ZEP. “We also understand the sector’s vulnerability on the impact of climate change, hence, we enroll them in our programs to strengthen their resiliency. Eventually, we envision them to scale up their practice and production to sustain their source of livelihood at any given time.”

For coconut farming communities in Davao del Norte, ZEP also introduced intercropping with cacao and banana to increase farm productivity and generate multiple sources of income for the farmers.

Over 30 community learning farms were established, with eight partners implementing diversified farming with livestock production. Over 1,000 farmers in 34 farming communities received farming inputs while over

200 fishermen in 14 coastal communities received fishing inputs.

Since launching different agriculture, fisheries, and livelihood projects across the country, ZEP has started working on social enterprise development.

To date, ZEP has introduced livelihood programs to over 900 IPs for the six coffee projects and over 150 dried herb-growing families for the creation of social enterprises, with the enterprises collectively receiving Php13.5 million in capital. The FARMFIRST project is also looking to develop products for the 48 communities covered by the program and create social enterprises to market these products.

Across the country, ZEP has also partnered with government agencies and non-governmental organizations to set up processing centers for community-based enterprises which developed products such as honey, calamansi and hibiscus concentrate, dried herbs, and anti-bacterial bath soaps.

“Our goal is to bring these different programs and the expertise of the different clusters to turn our knowledge of sustainable agriculture and fisheries into profitable, sustainable social enterprises that can serve these farming and fishing communities in the long-term,” said Corridor.

“In 2019, we hope to establish more social enterprises and bring products from these communities to the national market, ushering more Filipino families into financial security,” added Calingo.

Conservation and climate change mitigation efforts buttress nature's first line of defense

Featured clusters: Housing and Shelter, Environment, and Agriculture and Fisheries

Families huddled together in the rain with clothes sticking to their skins, drought killing off what little they've planted, floods carrying their shelter away in a strong current—these are just some of the risks that families in extreme poverty have to go through when extreme weather events hit them.

Struggling to survive extreme poverty while living with the effects of climate change is a double burden. The damage to their livelihoods, shelter, and even their health only makes the extremely poor even more vulnerable to the next typhoon or drought.

“Where we are present, ZEP complements the programs of the local government units,” said Fr. Edwin Gariguez, Executive Secretary of the CBCP– National Secretariat for Social Action (CBCP-NASSA), Housing and Shelter member at ZEP. “We collaborate with different government agencies to enact our local shelter plan where ultimately, we want to provide decent houses for extremely impoverished families with access to basic facilities like water, electricity, source of income, healthcare, education, and trade and commerce.”

With more immediate matters such as finding shelter or getting enough food taking precedence, families in extreme poverty often may not feel compelled to move away from unsustainable and even environmentally harmful practices.

ZEP's environment cluster members have an on-going convergence program, which the cluster has intended to offer since to the coalition as a model to integrate strategies in addressing extreme poverty. Called the StarTrek, the convergence program incorporates conservation and social enterprise as a way for extremely poor communities in rural areas to buy into conservation efforts to help mitigate the effects of climate change.



TREE NURTURING. Community Partners conducted on site monitoring of planted native tree species in Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape.

Under the program, families in Palawan received farming technologies, supply, and equipment, and were tasked to protect the nearby forest protection area.

“Local partner Palawan Center for Appropriate Rural Technology (PCART) introduced the communities to the carabao-plow-harrow (CPH) conservation strategy, where they provided carabaos, plows, and harrows for cultivating turmeric, ginger, rice, lagundi, tsaang gubat, and organic vegetables,” shared Oliver Agoncillo, Executive Director of the Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE), Environment cluster lead at ZEP. “In return, the beneficiaries needed to practice bio-fencing, planting trees to protect a portion of their designated protection forest. Protecting forests and the other services they provide, will increase the resilience of poor communities highly depended on these natural resources.”

Through collective efforts of various member organizations under ZEP, they have mobilized resources from different stakeholders to devise a way for families in extreme poverty to buy into conservation efforts and help mitigate the effects of climate change. Under StarTrek, families in Palawan receive farming technologies, supply, and equipment, and are tasked to protect the nearby forest protection area.

Senior High School students from Assumption College of Antipolo help the partner community propagate trees as part of the Community-Based Forest Rehabilitation initiative.



ZEP adapted the StarTrek program as a convergence approach to respond to the needs of communities for ecologically sustainable source of livelihood. Since its launch in 2012, StarTrek program has reached 46 barangays and over 1,700 households in the municipalities of Roxas, San Vicente, Taytay, Dumarán, and Puerto Princesa. The program has also been able to earmark over 30,000 hectares of land for conservation and nearly 18,000 hectares for production.

The partner communities have responded positively. The number of gold panners in the communities covered by the StarTrek program decreased by as much as 88%, while the number of charcoal makers decreased by 90%, as the program led to an increase in average annual household income, which has now increased to Php75,923 from less than Php50,000 previously.

As a result of the program, barangay councils in Palawan passed 16 resolutions opposing mining and 16 resolutions supporting watershed protection. The program also facilitated the formation of 30 People's Organizations and 22 small groups, with more than half of the groups composed of women. These groups have formed a community-managed savings and credit project, with the current net income now nearly Php56, 000.00.

"StarTrek has been a good example of how ZEP can address more than one need for families in extreme poverty. This approach has allowed local organizations and leaders to secure the long-term interest and commitment of households in protecting their environment," said Agoncillo. "The program's early success will make it easier for other organizations to introduce initiatives in health and education to address the needs of the community."

Meanwhile, through the FARMFIRST project initiated by CBCP-NASSA, ZEP organized training on Climate Change, Natural Resource and Coastal Management, and Sustainable Agriculture, with over 4,000 farmers and fisherfolk attending these training programs. The FARMFIRST project also provided exposure trips to farmers to organic farms, to encourage farmers to practice sustainable agriculture technologies.

"Climate change is one of the biggest threats to farming and fishing communities and it was only critical for us that we have projects like FARMFIRST where we combine inputs and technical assistance with training on climate change and resource management," said Caridad Corridor, National Coordinator for the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas. *Protecting the environment for the future of our children is one of ZEP 2030's objectives.* eas (PhilDHARRA), Agriculture and Fisheries cluster lead at ZEP. "We also needed to engage farmers and fisherfolk in setting up climate change mitigation measures in their communities."

As part of the climate change adaptation and mitigation component of FARMFIRST, ZEP also engaged farming and fishing communities in setting up mitigation measures, from identifying climate change-resistant crops, practicing diversified farming systems, using organic fertilizers, planting buffer strips of bamboo and shrubs near stream banks, coastal clean-ups, and mangrove rehabilitation or reforestation.

Lastly, through the partnerships with indigenous peoples, ZEP engaged IP families and communities on capacity building on environmental protection, climate change adaptation, and building resilient communities. ZEP has set up water systems and water associations in Kumiray and Culasisi to support the respective communities' resource management efforts.

For the next phase of its environment and climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives, ZEP is looking at adding seven barangays to the project, aiming to increase the annual income of the participating households by as much as 15%, and integrate abaca and coconut into the crop rotation. It is also looking to train indigenous communities on disaster risk and reduction management and agroforestry and to set up more reforestation in their respective areas covered by their ancestral domain claims.

Raising a generation of enlightened Filipino youth



Featured clusters: Health, Education, and Partnerships for Indigenous Peoples

Encouraging beneficiary communities at ZEP needed constant training and workshops for them to address their articulated needs. Allowing them to implement what they learned from the interventions includes changing their mindset to break the prevalence of poverty nationwide.

While providing individuals the technical knowledge to support themselves continuously, ZEP believes that youth formation is a necessary intervention to prepare the next generation of community leaders in ensuring that the transformation is deeply ingrained and carried over to future generations.

“We initiate change through preparing the youth from disadvantaged sectors to become productive members of the community. There is a great potential to ultimately break the cycle of poverty and help uplift their families and communities,” said Norman Jiao, Executive Director of the Association of Foundations, education cluster lead at ZEP. “This requires a set of interventions that will ensure access to education, quality and relevance of education, and opportunities leading to gainful employment or self-employment.”

The same applies for indigenous peoples’ communities who have been the keepers of indigenous knowledge, culture, beliefs, and practices.

ZEP believes that by supporting the next generation of IP leaders who will provide guidance to their own communities in areas such as livelihood, health, education, environment, and social justice, IP communities would have a fighting chance to escape extreme poverty and our cultural identity would remain intact.

“Our vision is to ensure that across the Philippines, indigenous families and communities are empowered and self-sustaining,” shared Benjamin Abadiano, ZEP Lead Secretariat and Partnerships for Indigenous Peoples cluster lead. “We’re focusing on key areas such as culture-sensitive health programs, culture-based education, sustainable agriculture and food security, livelihood and social enterprise, and environment and natural resources.”

Work with IPs currently covers 23 IP areas in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, covering provinces such as Apayao, Tarlac, Mindoro, Rizal, Camarines Sur, Palawan, Aklan, Negros Occidental, Guimaras, Surigao del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Davao, and Bukidnon.

For IP communities to thrive, the first and most crucial task is to help them secure their ancestral domain, which is at the core of the IP identity. Through a partnership

ZERO EXTREME POVERTY^{PH}2030

ZEP 2030 Education cluster brought smiles and hope with the school bags and supplies distributed to children from Sitio Datal Basak, Brgy. Kablacan in Maasim, Sarangani.



between ZEP and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), training programs and workshops on land surveying, completing relevant application forms, and the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) process were organized, with cash support for transportation needs provided to IP leaders as necessary.

IP ancestral domain gives communities a space for culture-sensitive health programs. ZEP has been able to bring the Indigenous Peoples Leadership on Enterprise and Development (IP-LED) training on Leadership and Organizational Development, Ancestral Domain and Land Management, and Integrative Health. The Integrative Health training brought key stakeholders together—over 85 traditional healers, community health volunteers, municipal and city health officers, midwives, nurses, and barangay health workers developed a framework on inclusive healthcare.

Aligned with this initiative from the PIP cluster, the Health cluster also provided nutritious meals to over 500 children to distant provinces and distributed manuals on Maternal Neonatal Child Health and Nutrition.

“Across all our programs at ZEP 2030, we are mindful of the programs and the cultural and religious sensitivities that we need to consider in ensuring the wellbeing of the communities we partner with. We want to foster a harmonious collaboration with both public and private sector to improve maternal and child health, family planning, nutrition, and community health in areas we service,” said Dr. Milton Amayun, President of the International Care Ministries Foundation, health cluster lead at ZEP.

Through the Partnerships for Indigenous Peoples cluster, ZEP is also working with IP schools such as Pamulaan,

which has set up Early Childhood Development, Elementary, High School, and Tertiary Education programs in IP communities. In Pamulaan, IP youth can take up short-term training courses or full-time degrees in Social Entrepreneurship, Education, Agricultural Technology, Anthropology, and Peace Education. These courses are meant to train them to become the next generation leaders and equip them to address their communities’ changing needs.

Pamulaan also offers capability building and skills training in areas such as Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan, Peace Education and Community Building, Environment and Resource Management, Community and Organization Development, Program and Financial Management, and Leadership, Governance, and Values Formation.

ZEP aims to improve and bring more collective intervention from the coalition to work with IP communities by expanding and building a more detailed database through profiling and processing the data into an extreme poverty incidence heat map, allowing the cluster to identify priority areas and opportunities for partnerships.

“Bringing inclusive prosperity even to the remotest of communities require cooperation from different sectors, both public and private,” said Br. Armin Luistro, ZEP Co-chairperson and President of Philippine Business for Social Progress President. “At ZEP, the ultimate goal of our programs is to help families and communities become self-sufficient. This includes ensuring their wellbeing, the sustainability of their livelihood, and conservation of the environment. More than that, it is also our way of helping ensure the longevity of our heritage and pride as Filipinos.”

SPONSORS



Aboitiz Foundation, Inc.
Jollibee Group Foundation, Inc.

Association of Foundations
Megaworld Foundation, Inc.

International Care Ministries
San Miguel Foundation, Inc.