

The R.R.M.. program

“Rapid Response Mechanism”

in Western Mindanao

Brief introduction of the program :

The objective of the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) program is to provide rapid needs assessments to the Humanitarian Community and to deliver an integrated assistance package to populations made vulnerable by displacement, internal conflict, and/or natural disasters in Western of Mindanao (including ARMM)

The RRM consists in the provision of Non-Food Items (NFI), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Shelter, Protection and Nutrition assistance to affected and/or displaced, returning, and host populations.

The RRM will be led in close collaboration with the national and international humanitarian community and with the municipal, provincial and regional governments.



About ACTED

Since 1993, as the second French NGO, ACTED has been committed to immediate humanitarian relief to support those in urgent need and protect people’s dignity, while co-creating longer term opportunities for sustainable growth and fulfilling people’s potential.

ACTED implements more than 420 projects a year reaching 11 million beneficiaries in 35 countries, with a budget of 190 million euros (EUR). We have 400 international staff and 4200 national staff in our teams.

ACTED in the Philippines

ACTED has been operational in the Philippines since 2012. Moving forward in 2016, through early recovery and into longer term rehabilitation, ACTED is focusing its programs on Water, Hygiene and Sanitation, Shelter, Food Security and Livelihoods sectors.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) will continue to be mainstreamed across all our interventions. It includes all activities and measures which can be taken up before, during and after a disaster - with the purpose to avoid it, reduce its impact or recover from its losses while Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD).

ACTED’s efforts to build resilience in the Philippines aim at contributing to a sustainable reduction in vulnerability through increased capacity of local populations, governments and other actors; improved ability to identify, address and reduce risk, and improved social and economic conditions of vulnerable populations.

Since 2014, **ACTED supported more than 1,2 millions people in the Philippines** in terms of emergency assistance, rehabilitation and development operations.

Past and current partners in the Philippines include:

- UN Agencies (UNDP, WFP, UNICEF, IOM)
- American Government (OFDA)
- French Government (AESN, Centre de Crise and Agence Française de Développement)
- British Government (DFID)
- Private Donors (Shelter Box, SWS, Alstom Foundation)



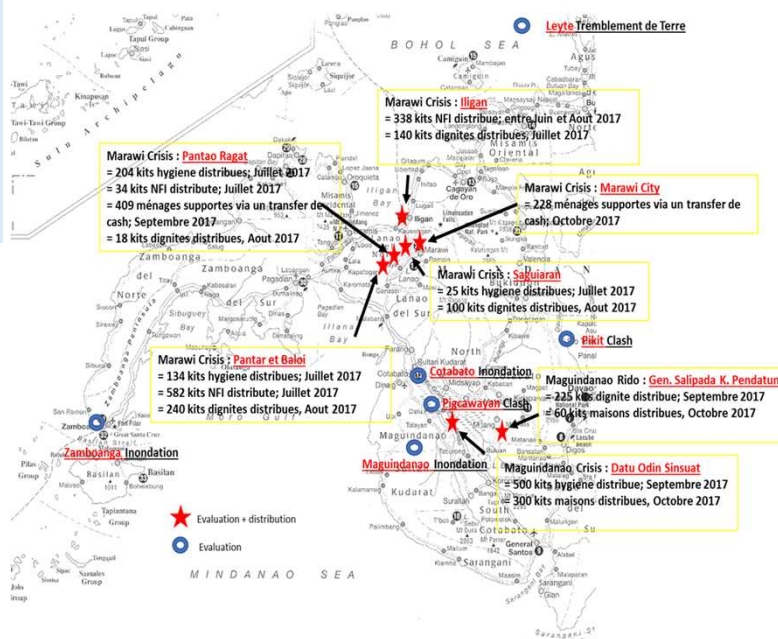
Mindanao, a region affected by civil conflict

Increasing number of IDPs

In 2017, the situation considerably deteriorated, particularly in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), with more than 1.2 million IDPs recorded by both government agencies and the International Community. This is a record number for the last decade in the Philippines. Please find below ACTED's IDP data base, based on official reports from Governmental or UN Agencies.

Mindanao :

- ✓ Population = 24 million (last census in 2015)
- ✓ 6 main ethnic groups
- ✓ More than 70% of the population of Mindanao adhere to Christianity
- ✓ Since 2012 over 6 million cases of individual displacements were recorded in Mindanao. Many communities have faced recurring displacements over the years.



Western Mindanao:

- Zamboanga Peninsula = 3.5 M people
- Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao = 3.5 M people
- Presence of at least 70 identified rebel groups among which Abu Sayyaf, BIFF, Maute group....
- The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people and, since 2000, displaced 6 million people, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC).

The expansion and regular attacks of ISIS affiliated groups such as Abu Sayyaf, Maute group or BIFF (Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters), Ansar Al-Khiifah (AKP) and Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM) caused massive displacement across several locations in ARMM. Ambushes lead to street fights and warfare activities. Moreover, the South-East Asia and other foreign ISIS fighters from Syria increased the military expertise and capacity of those groups, resulting notably in important fights such as the ones witnessed in Marawi City (which caused displacement of more than 400,000 people since May 2017) or in Maguindanao province (more than 80,000 people displaced since March 2017).

Worryingly, the objectives of Islamic groups in the Philippines are starting to move away from criminality to focus on the control of territories. Indeed, regarding the security situation, criminal activities are being replaced by warfare activities which further impacts the local population, resulting in an increase of the number of IDPs, a longer displacement duration, and an exacerbation of their vulnerability. This change is likely caused by the return of the sub regional fighters who went to Syria/Iraq for training, and the arrival of fighters from the Middle-East who are unifying and training the Mindanao Islamic group under the umbrella of Abu Sayyaf's leader. Mindanao is a perfect strategic location in South East Asia because it is a crossroad of the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia. This seems to be only the beginning of a strong deterioration of the situation in Mindanao.

Rationale

Political situation

Muslim minority groups in the southern Philippines – indigenous ethnic people known collectively as Moros – have fought for self-determination for more than 40 years.

After 17 years of violence-interrupted talks, the Philippine government and the largest Muslim rebel group – the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) – agreed to end the conflict, and a final peace deal was signed in March 2014.

However, the region is a melting pot of breakaway rebel groups, pan-Asian militant Islamist groups and communist rebels rubbing shoulders with mercenary kidnap groups and clan militias. There are concerns that powerful clans who control some areas in the region could see the deal as a threat to their political influence.

Mindanao is also prey to groups known as "lost commands" - former military or insurgent units who are no longer under the control of their superiors and live off banditry and kidnapping. Regular eruptions of violence have forced millions of residents from their homes. Many return fairly quickly, only to be displaced again.

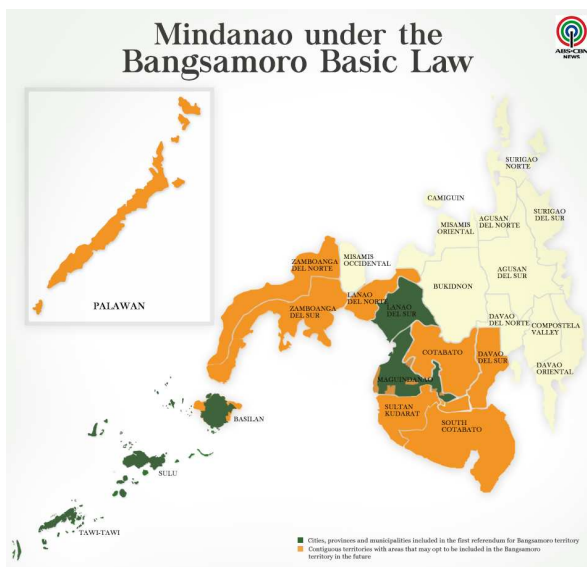


Insurgent groups

Insurgent groups operate in rural areas throughout the Philippines. The majority of attacks are directed towards the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and security forces. Due to the risk of violent insurgent attacks that exists in rural areas across the Philippines, it is highly recommended to avoid security forces' facilities and deployments, any large gatherings, demonstrations, protests, rallies or other public and political events as they may turn violent.

There are several terrorist groups operating in the Philippines that continue to pose a threat for peace and stability. These groups include New People's Army (NPA), the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and other associated groups.

Although there is hope that the 2014 comprehensive peace agreement will bring the 40 year insurgency in the south of the country to an end, extreme elements within the two main insurgent groups, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), continue to pose a security threat. A splinter group of the MILF, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), has been responsible for a number of attacks on the Philippine military and security services.



Humanitarian challenges

Although needs are increasing, the involvement of the International Community is decreasing. Indeed, UNHCR Philippines should phase out soon, WFP's office closed in Cotabato (regional capital of ARMM), and OCHA scaled down its activities. The alert system and humanitarian response will therefore considerably reduce despite the growing humanitarian needs. While the government is doing its best to handle the situation, it lacks the means to intervene on several fronts and different locations. With more than a million of IDPs, and given the very weak level of funding dedicated to the Philippines by international donors, ACTED and other actors in the Philippines consider it a "forgotten crisis".

Therefore, it is crucial for the international Community and donors to focus on the current situation in the Philippines and to allocate funding for the humanitarian response. This would allow for better information and humanitarian response to be provided to the affected population, which would in turn reduce the attractiveness of the offers made by armed groups to new recruits. This is a challenge that needs to be handled as soon as possible to avoid further and long-term deterioration of the situation, as well as potential spreading of the influence of armed groups in the Philippines and throughout the region.



ACTED's approach

ACTED implements the RRM approach in 10 countries all over the world, especially in the Middle East and Africa through UNICEF- or ECHO-funded programs. ACTED developed a strong expertise in this approach.

ACTED suggests to further its current "Rapid Response Mechanism System" in 2018. The RRM is already implemented since June 2017 at a small-scale level in ARMM. It is led in close collaboration with the national and international humanitarian community and with the municipal and regional governments. Given the needs, ACTED signed a global MoU with the government to support the humanitarian response via this program. This approach allows the overall humanitarian community to have a better level of information and therefore facilitate the humanitarian response from both government and INGOs. This program is considered and recognized as a real value added by the general humanitarian community (INGO, CSO, UN agencies and Governmental agencies).

1. Prepositioning of ACTED teams and relief supplies:

The RRM streamlines the analysis and response processes by pre-positioning relief supplies and pre-funding ACTED to conduct assessments and interventions in close collaboration with the municipal and provincial authorities.

With assessments teams, relief supplies and coordination and decision mechanisms already in place, a key value of the RRM is that it is sparing the time of project proposals and resource mobilization (including human, financial and logistic).

RRM assessment teams use a variety of methodologies to gather data in areas, including interviews with local authorities and households, focus group discussions, direct observation and data collection. All reports are shared within the humanitarian community by email to INGOs (via PINGON, MHT, Clusters, etc.), UN agencies Head of Office and government.

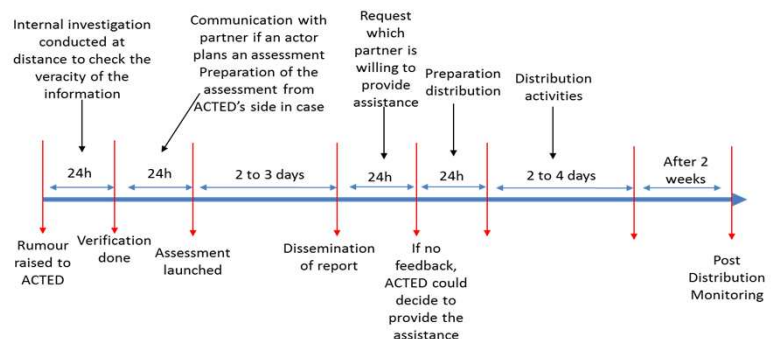
2. Vulnerability-based assessments and interventions:

Rather than using a traditional logical framework to predetermine activities, the RRM program design has launched the "vulnerability approach" for assessment and intervention. This approach consists in identifying zones of vulnerability through multi-sectorial assessments which use specific tools developed to score community vulnerability in terms of Water and Hygiene, Non Food Items, Shelter, Nutrition and Protection (via gender- and children-sensitive kits).

3. Full-time emergency response capacity :

RRM maintains full-time emergency response capacity to provide temporary shelter materials and NFIs, water and sanitation services and structures, emergency nutrition and all basic needs. The large store of pre-positioned stocks and advance financing allows ACTED to respond immediately by not having to submit individual project proposals and budgets for each proposed intervention.

A key added value of RRM remains its ability to be flexible and jumpstart a response without having to negotiate a new framework for each humanitarian crisis in Mindanao or for a major natural disaster. This approach is recognized to reduce coordination and set-up efforts. A tailored response in terms of multi sectors is initiated based on the data provided in the assessments, without the need for ACTED to submit individual proposals and budgets for each intervention.



Cross-Cutting empowerment of local authorities

Transversally to assessment and emergency humanitarian response, the program aims at building the capacity of the local/ provincial government to deal with the sudden onset of population movement linked to a conflict.

1 year project

1.5 million euros

150,000 beneficiaries



ACTED

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