



Background

In May 2017, the city of Marawi was besieged by militants. The five-month-long armed conflict resulted in multifaceted issues that have affected the well-being of Marawi residents, particularly children. It has displaced at least 350,000 people and affected 200,000 children, leaving them vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, deprivation, and violence.

A baseline study² was conducted by consultants of the World Vision Development Foundation and the data identified key vulnerabilities experienced by children: a high number of children and youth do not feel they live in a safe community, a high number of children are out of school due to displacement; there is low participation among children in the issues that affect their lives, as well as low awareness on child protection mechanisms, and there is a lack of systems and structures for the peace and protection of children and youth.

Against this backdrop, the Marawi Peace and Protection Project (MPPP) was implemented. It sought to contribute to the peace and protection of Marawi's children and youth against conflict and other forms of violence. Implemented a year after the Marawi crisis, the project aimed to strengthen systems and structures for peace and protection, and to empower children and youth to become agents of change. In total, the project engaged 14 schools and 11 barangays in Marawi City and two barangays in the municipality of Piagapo, Lanao del Sur, Mindanao. The project was funded by World Vision Korea.

¹ DSWD

² World Vision Development Foundation. 2018. Marawi Peace and Protection Project Baseline Report.

Project overview

PROJECT INTENDED OUTCOMES



Children and youth are empowered to enhance peaceful relationships and to protect themselves and others.



Strengthened community systems and structures for peace and protection of children and youth.

COVERED AREAS

PROVINCE OF LANAO DEL SUR, PHILIPPINES

I city, I municipality and I3 barangays

Marawi City

Barangays Basak Malutlut, Sagonsongan, Cadayonan 2, Moriatao Luksadato, Datu Saber, Sugod, Amito Marantao, Papandayan Caniogan, Paridi, Roragagus, Buadi Sacayo (Barrio Green)

Municipality of Piagapo

Barangays Bualan and Bubo



SNAPSHOT OF PROJECT REACH AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS



5,073 children and adults

participated in campaigns to raise awareness for peace education and for the safeguarding and protection of children



4,836 children and adults

can identify at least three ways to protect themselves and promote peace, through the various peace education and child protection trainings and orientations



9 schools

have child protection committees that oversee programs for the peace education and protection of children



I faith-based group

the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) of DepEd, was mobilized for the peace and protection of children



9 communities

have a functional child protection and peacebuilding mechanism

Evaluation purpose and objectives

After the two-and-a-half-year implementation of MPPP, external consultants undertook an evaluation of the project from March to April 2021. The evaluation examined to what extent MPPP met the targets articulated at the project's outset and how it contributed to children's well-being, particularly in the areas of peace and protection. Furthermore, the evaluation specifically aimed to:

- Determine the status of relevant key indicators of child well-being in the covered areas
- Assess the effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and efficiency of the project
- Deduce lessons and promising practices that can be adopted and scaled
- Provide recommendations for key actions to ensure sustainability beyond the project's life

Methods

The study employed a mixed methods approach. The analysis drew data from a survey, focus group discussions (FGDs) with children, key informant interviews, and a review of relevant documents. For comparative analysis, the evaluation data was compared with the baseline data. The evaluation team performed statistical tests to determine if the changes from the baseline values to evaluation values are significant.

survey
respondents 12
to 18 years old
Youth Healthy

Behavior Survey

heads, teachers, child leaders)

Focus group discussions with 16 child leaders to complement survey data

16

key informant interviews with key stakeholders (LGU representatives, school

Tool



Review of relevant documents, such as project reports



PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

72%

female

15 years old

average age

100%

belongs to the Maranao ethnic affiliation

6, 10, 12

grade level of majority of the survey respondents

Key evaluation findings



This section highlights the evaluation's findings on the project's contributions to the peace and protection of children in Marawi. Table I compares the evaluation values vis-à-vis the baseline and target values for various project indicators. It shows that the project was successful in meeting most of the log frame targets, key milestones, and results articulated at the outset, despite the changes in political and social contexts and the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1. Evaluation of Project Achievement in Key Indicators				
PROJECT INDICATOR	BASELINE VALUE	EVALUATION VALUE	TARGET	INTERPRETATION BASED ON STATISTICAL ANALYSIS
I. Percentage of children and youth who feel they live in a safer community	61%	72%	70%	 Target achieved Change between baseline and evaluation values is not statistically significant
2. Percentage of children or youth groups who report taking action in strengthening protection from main child protection risks in schools and communities	47%	72%	65%	 Target achieved Change between baseline and evaluation values is statistically significant
3. Percentage of children or youth groups who report taking action in strengthening peaceful relationships in schools and communities	50%	75%	65%	 Target achieved Change between baseline and evaluation values is statistically significant
4. Percentage of community members including boys and girls who feel confident that community actors will take appropriate and corrective action for child protection	56%	79%	64%	 Target achieved Change between baseline and evaluation values is statistically significant
5. Percentage of community members, including boys and girls, who report they feel safe because of the enhanced peacebuilding mechanisms in their community	17%	24%	65%	 Target was not achieved Change between baseline and evaluation values is not statistically significant

NOTE: Statistical analysis (inferential statistics) was conducted to determine if target values and evaluation values are statistically significant (therefore proving that target was achieved or not achieved), and if changes between baseline value and evaluation values are statistically significant (therefore proving that change is significant).



Promoting peace education and child protection awareness in the community

The project reached a total of 5,073 children and adults through various peace education activities and awareness campaigns for child rights and protection. The project extensively involved children and community representatives from schools and *barangays* to ensure that knowledge about peace education and child rights and protection was cascaded to other members of the community.

This was done through the establishment of peace clubs, child protection committees in schools, the integration of peace and child protection education in modular learning, trainings by youth leaders that teach fellow children and youth to be agents of change (as discussed further below), and the safeguarding and child protection orientations conducted throughout the project's life. Interviews with key informants and children revealed that these efforts have helped raise awareness about the violence and abuse that some children in Marawi experience and brought these discussions out of the shadows, in order to identify sustainable interventions needed from the local government and schools.



- Making children feel safe

As seen in Table I, the percentage of children and youth who feel they live in a safer community have increased from 61% (baseline) to 72% (evaluation). Children engaged in the evaluation shared that the installation of child-friendly spaces (like playgrounds and benches), value-based life skills training, peace education, and integration of values formation in the project activities contributed to their improved perception of safety. Furthermore, interviews with the school officials revealed that having a playground developed the students' social skills and helped them get along with other children. Most of the students do not have playground facilities in their homes or communities, so the child-friendly spaces were a timely and relevant intervention for them.

Evaluation data shows there is a need to strengthen peace-building mechanisms in order to help children feel safer. While there is a slight increase in the percentage of children— from 17% (baseline) to 24% (evaluation)—who report they feel safe because of the enhanced peacebuilding mechanisms in their community, both values were identified as within levels of "critical risk." The target of 65% for this indicator was not achieved.

Interviews with key informants revealed that the election in October 2018 posed a challenge for establishing peace-building mechanisms in the communities and schools, as some of the local leaders in the community were replaced. Furthermore, interviewees shared that the election resulted in some level of political uncertainty and affected the readiness of community-based structures, especially on the *barangay* level. Some activities, including the installation of child-friendly spaces, were delayed due to heightened security measures in Lanao areas.



Empowering children to be agents of change

Through World Vision's Empowering Children as Peacebuilders (ECAP) project model, the project positioned children and youth at the center of conflict prevention and empowered them to be agents of change, healing, and peace, both among their peers and in their communities. The project trained youth leaders in Marawi as facilitators and conducted orientations, specifically on ECAP. With guidance from their teachers and community leaders, a total of 203 children (90 boys and 113 girls) took the lead in reaching fellow children and youth, through the formation of nine peace clubs and other activities that promoted peace and child protection. These children were able to mobilize at least 1,214 children through their efforts.



children and youth taking action in strengthening child protection



baseline



children and youth taking action in strengthening peaceful relationships in schools and communities



baseline

The active engagement of children and youth has translated to concrete actions that enhance peace and child protection in the community. The survey revealed that the percentage of children and youth who report taking action in strengthening child protection increased from 47% (low capacity) before the project to 72% (high capacity) during the evaluation. Additionally, the percentage of children and youth who report taking action in strengthening peaceful relationships in schools and communities also increased from 50% (moderate capacity) to 75% (high capacity).

When unpacked during interviews, community members and youth attributed these accomplishments to the concerted efforts of the project, which facilitated the engagement of children in important decision-making platforms. For example, through peace clubs, students could meet to discuss ways to avoid conflict and conduct activities that promote peace in schools and communities. The members of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) also engaged these youth leaders as a way to incorporate their recommendations in their community's child protection plans.



Strengthening child protection structures

The comparative analysis of the baseline and evaluation conditions in the covered areas shows that before the project was implemented, communities lacked functional structures for child protection, such as the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC). As such, the project deemed it critical to improve these government-mandated structures at the *barangay* level, in parallel with school-based committees for the peace and protection of children and youth. Through the trainings conducted in collaboration with the Department of Local and Interior Government (DILG), the project engaged *barangay* representatives in strengthening child protection mechanisms to ensure the proper and effective prevention, response, and management of child protection cases.

This resulted in the crafting of enhanced plans for the development, protection, survival, and participation of children and the strengthening of BCPC in the nine barangays. Child protection committees were also organized in all covered schools, with members composed of barangay officials, school principals, faith leaders, presidents of Parent-Teacher Associations, and youth leaders. These efforts have paid off, as evaluation data shows there was an increase in the percentage of community members who feel confident that community actors will take appropriate and

corrective action for child protection, from 56% (baseline) to 79% (evaluation).



Partnering for change, advocacy, and sustainability

The evaluation identified that the multi-sectoral stakeholder engagement forged by the project is a driver for good practices. While World Vision provided the required financial and technical resources for implementing the project activities, government agencies — such as the Department of Local and Interior Government (DILG), Department of Education (DepEd), and the local government unit—provided equally important resources for the trainings and orientations conducted. For example, a representative from DILG was the resource speaker for the BCPC-strengthening orientations. Schools and community partners also offered support by providing venues and facilities for the trainings, meetings, and consultations.

Apart from government institutions, the project also partnered with faith-based groups and local, traditional leaders who play a critical role in promoting peace and child protection in the context of the Maranao community. The project partnered with the DepEd's Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) for activities related to the spiritual nurturing of children. A total of 47 local leaders (21 men and 26 women), including 15 lmams and traditional leaders, were trained and engaged in child protection issues in the community. They also identified their roles in preventing and responding to issues of abuse, violence, and insecurity.

As part of sustaining the efforts of all stakeholders, partners identified and planned ways to build on the gains started by the project and committed to protecting children and promoting peace in the community. For example, DILG will conduct periodic monitoring of BCPC to ensure that barangay officials are implementing their plans for child protection. Schools and communities also committed to sustaining their peace clubs and continuing the ECAP sessions.



Junaisah, Salwah, and Hadji are connected by a common goal: empower their fellow students in Lake Lanao to become peacebuilders. All three students were part of World Vision's Marawi Peace and Protection Project (MPPP), which aimed to strengthen systems and structures for peace and protection and to empower children and youth to become agents of peace. The two-and-a-half-year -long initiative, launched in July 2018, reached at least 1,600 boys and girls and about 400 adults, including teachers, faith leaders, and barangay leaders, through various peace and child protection promotion activities.

While facilitating peacebuilding activities look easy now for Junaisah, Salwah, and Hadji, it wasn't an overnight process for them and they knew it wouldn't be easy for other children, too. After all, they had their own stories of pain and of moving on since Marawi, the home they've always known, was caught in the armed conflict.

Junaisah, 16

I wanted so badly to finish my studies. I want to become a Sharia lawyer and I thought that dream crumbled when the siege happened. We had to move to an evacuation center for two months. For the first time in my life, I made a big decision to stay with relatives in Cagayan de Oro so I can continue with my education. That was my first time to be [sic] away from my family. I promised myself to make [sic] them proud.

This coming April, I will be awarded Top 5 in class. I am also happy facilitating the rollout of peacebuilding training to [sic] my fellow students. It feels good that we are all moving forward as one community. We are not too young to be agents of peace.

Salwah, 15

I am usually shy, but being a peace advocate and a youth facilitator for peacebuilding activities compels me to step up. I should do it because I want our generation to be peaceloving.

I experienced the pains of Marawi crisis [sic] and it should not happen again. I am the fifth among II children. We were separated for more than eight months because there wasn't any other choice. There were questions in my mind, but I had to keep studying, even it [sic] meant I had to do it in another school with children I am not familiar with. I made it to Top 2 and I am determined to keep going so that I can be a doctor someday and be able to send my aunt and my parents to hadi (a pilgrimage to Mecca).

Hadji, 19

Creating a space where we are able to listen to our fellow students' thoughts and share our hopes for Marawi is necessary. I have so far facilitated two Empowering Children as Peacebuilders (ECAP) training [sic] in our school since World Vision trained us, student leaders, and we are seeing the results of these efforts. When the younger students know that they have Ates and Kuyas and even schoolmates to go to, to share their ideas, we foster friendship. I am proud of that and of our school that allows us to do all these.

I was not here when the armed conflict happened, but I see and feel its impact until today. My hope now is to finish my studies and be able to contribute to rebuilding this place, even if I am still studying.

READ MORE TRANSFORMATION STORIES FROM MARAWI

Recommendations

Based on evaluation data, the below are recommendations for consideration:



Involve parents and caregivers

While the project has emphasized engaging children, barangay officials, and school representatives, there is an opportunity to involve parents and caregivers. Parents and caregivers can support children and youth peace club members in mobilizing other youth and parents in the community. This would help expand discussions and widen the reach of peace and child protection in Marawi.



Influence provincial and city stakeholders

While peacebuilding remains a work in progress in Marawi, stakeholders can make sure that peacebuilding efforts are influenced by the voices of children and youth. Bringing in the experiences of communities and schools through MPPP has presented an opportunity to influence city and provincial local government units by institutionalizing and monitoring their efforts on child protection and peace education. By doing so, there is a potential to replicate these efforts in other *barangays* and areas.



Conduct community mobilization and awareness campaigns during COVID-19 pandemic

Despite limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was able to mobilize youth leaders and organize campaigns at the community level. However, the experience was a learning opportunity for understanding how community mobilization and awareness campaigns could pivot to other modes and approaches that do not put communities at potential health risks.

For example, there is an opportunity to explore conducting training sessions through a hybrid approach, which combines online and face-to-face methods. Youth leaders can conduct their trainings and sessions for fellow youth via online platforms. Despite the potential of such an approach, internet and phone connectivity must be considered, as some households have limited access.

ABOUT THE EMPOWERING CHILDREN AS PEACEBUILDERS (ECAP) PROJECT MODEL

Empowering Children as Peacebuilders (ECAP) is a World Vision project model that aims to empower children as agents of transformed relationships in their families and communities, notwithstanding differences in ethnicity, belief, tradition, culture, faith, and gender. ECAP underscores the importance of peace education in addressing issues of conflict. The following principles guide the implementation of ECAP, in communities where World Vision works on peacebuilding:

- Respond to the contextual nature of conflict and violence, particularly as experienced in the lives of children, and help create a culture of peace.
- Respect children as agents of transformation, enabling their participation in social analysis and action.
- Equip children with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and tools they need to protect themselves and others from violent conflict, and to constructively and safely engage in addressing issues of conflict and violence.
- Engage schools, families, and other actors in children's lives in order to provide the necessary and appropriate support, and to transform environments that hinder children's empowerment and participation as peacebuilders.
- Strengthen relationships of care, mutuality, and trust.
- Build inner and spiritual resources for living in harmony and hope.

Aside from these principles, World Vision upholds child participation principles to ensure the safety and protection of children, as well as equality of opportunity. **SEE MORE INFORMATION HERE.**



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