

Cindy Prache of Lope De Vega, Northern Samar is confident that her daughter, Zia, is well equipped to take on elementary education because of her daycare experience.

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UNICEF continues to provide technical support to the government, particularly the Education Commission 2 (EDCOM 2), ECCD Council, and DepEd to evidence-based targeted reforms to expedite the delivery of quality early childhood education. Through funding from Teleperformance, the UNICEF Philippine Country Office contributed to increase access and address the development and learning loss brought about by the pandemic among children aged 3-5, especially disadvantaged children. Efforts were pursued in building the capacity of child development workers, kindergarten teachers, parents/caregivers in priority local government units (LGUs) and elementary schools and strengthening local governance and management.

RESULTS

Capacity-building of LGUs and schools in increasing access of young children to quality and inclusive early childhood education services

Enrolment rates for 3-4 years old in 6 of 11 municipalities **increased by at least 20% from 2019 levels**. These 6 municipalities had enrolment rates for 3-4 year old children ranging from 64% to 155% in school year 2023-2024. UNICEF's support to improve the quality of ECE included ensuring that services meet basic quality standards, which involve having **trained and well-compensated child development workers (CDW)**, **safe learning environments**, and **age-appropriate materials and interventions**. Parental awareness of the value of ECE and involvement in the development and learning of their young children increased through **advocacy and capacity-building initiatives**.

UNICEF is collaborating with ECCD Council, University of the Philippines Center for Women Studies Foundation Inc (UPCWSFI), and local academes in **modelling a system for competency-based professional development, retention, compensation, and hiring of CDWs in 11 municipalities and 2 cities**. Based on the competency assessment results of more than 50% of CDWs in focus areas, technical assistance plans are prepared with budget allocations as mandated by municipal Executive Orders and/or other issuances, and monthly handholding sessions are underway in these LGUs. Majority of these LGUs have supported more than half of their CDWs. To date, the CDWs serve 14,820 3-4 year old learners (7,338 boys, 7,482 girls).

UNICEF is also supporting DepEd in the piloting of the MATATAG curriculum through the development and use of the kindergarten lesson exemplars and other teaching-learning materials and advocates for strengthening the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE).



Tarangnan, Samar MSWDO Claudette Cabinalan is dedicated to ensuring that child development workers in their municipality are given all the support that they need to make learning and development for young children more conducive, as well as better retention and better benefits.

Strengthen the implementation of the early identification system (PEIRIDDDEC) for addressing the needs of young children with risks of developmental delays and disabilities

Fourteen priority municipalities and cities, including 1 LGU affected by Typhoon Odette have continued implementing the Prevention, Early Identification, Referral and Intervention of Delays, Disorder and Disabilities in Early Childhood (PEIRIDDDEC) system. The enhanced training modules for frontline service providers (Barangay Health Workers, Barangay Nutrition Scholars and CDWs), parents/caregivers, and local social welfare officers and health officers are now being finalized by ECCD Council for nationwide adoption.

Five hundred twenty-seven CDWs (505 females; 22 males) in 13 focus LGUs were provided a more in-depth understanding of the PEIRIDDDEC system with training using modules on gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI); and assessment to document children's development (Modules 2 and 4 of the Being the Best CDW/ CDT I Can Be Training of Trainers Toolkit). Since "Assessment and Reporting" were found to be one of the topics CDWs assessed themselves to be needing most assistance in, monthly handholding and on-on-one sessions are being pursued in this area using the the Teach from Home Activity Guide and Guidebook for ECCD Service Providers and Parents Managing Zero (0-) to Four (4-) Year-Old

Children with Developmental Delays and Disabilities in Early Learning Programs developed with UNICEF's support.

To **create inclusive environments for young children**, the Music and Arts Education for Disability Inclusion is being developed as part of the "Being the Best CDW" Training Module and 1000 music space kits is being procured. This initiative aims to promote social interaction **and boost the emotional well-being of children**, especially those with developmental delays and disabilities so they can have outlets for self-expression and creativity. **About 19,000 children 3-5 years old are expected to benefit from this initiative.**

Strengthening Cross-Sectoral Policy and Program Development and Coordination at the national and LGU levels

Efforts are underway to revise the Philippine Early Learning Development Standards (PELDS) for Children 0-5 years old and its expansion to cater up to 8 years old, laying the foundation for aligning ECCD and kindergarten to Grade 3 curricula, pedagogy, assessment and competency standards of CDWs and Kinder to Grade 3 teachers. This is part of the updated ECCD Strategic Plan 2030 being finalized by the ECCD Council with UNICEF's support. Additionally, UNICEF is also supporting the operationalization of the ECCD M&E and Accountability System (NEMEAS) to track progress in the achievement of committed ECCD results in the ECCD Strategic Plan 2030.

Children development workers, Marivic Sardeña and Angie Catunhay of Kalachuchi Daycar Center in Lope De Vega, Northern Samar, always take time in between activities and lessons to catch up with their young learners.




FUTURE PLANS

UNICEF and partners will continue supporting initiatives for quality and accessible ECE in the country towards development and learning recovery:

- a) develop evidence-based policies, plans, standards, assessments and advocacy;
- b) strengthen system for governance, quality assurance and accountability;
- c) modelling and up-scaling of innovations in ECE, in order to strengthen link for smooth transition of young children from home to pre-school, to kinder, to primary school; improve quality and inclusiveness of holistic ECE services;
- d) enhance early childhood education in Emergency preparedness, response and recovery.

UNICEF would like to take this opportunity to express its sincere appreciation for the funding provided by Teleperformance. This generous contribution to the learning continuity of children in the Philippines comes at a crucial time when schools are reopening to address the effects of the closure on children. We thank you for helping advance our shared commitments to protecting the rights and improving the well-being of children in the Philippines.

A photograph of a woman, Aileen Licame, standing in a classroom. She is wearing a yellow and white polo shirt and blue jeans. She is holding a large, colorful document with various illustrations and text. She is gesturing with her right hand towards the document. In the background, there are orange curtains, a laptop on a table, and a window with a white frame. The room appears to be a classroom or a meeting room.

Aileen Licame of Pagsanghan, Samar is committed to share what she has learned from UNICEF and partners, especially on PEIRIDDEEC, with fellow CDWs within and beyond her municipality.