

Occidental Mindoro Philippines

Positive changes are happening in Occidental Mindoro. Learn more about how we are supporting children's and girls' rights through our collaborative, equality-driven work.

Plan International has been a proud partner of communities in Occidental Mindoro since 2006.

Between 2008 and 2019, there were 45 recorded tropical cyclones in Occidental Mindoro. Three major typhoons and the COVID-19 pandemic set off an economic crisis, significantly disrupted education and destroyed homes for our partners in the region.

Today, an ongoing drought has heavily impacted the region, particularly those who were already living in poverty. With your help, 13 community organisations have been formed to address risk factors. These volunteers have coordinated the distribution of solar-powered fans and drinking water containers, as well as planting climate-resilient trees. 509 residents are building more financial resilience through Savings and Loans groups.

"I've learnt so much about broadcasting, script-writing, public speaking and local issues."

– Angel (17)



Nearly 41% of residents are under 18 years of age.

Impact in Numbers

516

young people practised disaster response

1,306

students received food aid

894

parents discussed child nutrition

Finding My Voice



NAME:

Aisle

AGE:

16 years old

DREAMS TO BE:

A nurse

“The Youth Peer Educators programme helped me discover another side of myself. I never imagined I could do something like this.”



Meet Aisle

Like many girls in Occidental Mindoro, Aisle is optimistic about achieving her goals and building a strong future.

Aisle always thought of herself as shy and introverted. Though she struggled at times with feeling lonely, she assumed isolation was just her nature – until she joined Plan’s Youth Peer Educators programme.

Building Confidence

When Aisle’s parents left her community to work overseas, she moved in with her aunt. Though the two developed a powerful and close relationship, the home was intensely quiet, and Aisle often found herself feeling isolated. At times, unfamiliar faces or encounters with strangers would overwhelm Aisle, making her cry.

In 2023, Aisle became involved with Plan International’s Youth Peer Educator (YPE) programme, which helps young people – and particularly young women like Aisle – build confidence through practising leadership skills and public speaking. That year’s YPE focused on an initiative called ‘Learn and Stay Protected.’

I Can Do Anything

Through YPE, Aisle and her fellow volunteers became peer educators about topics like gender-based violence, reproductive rights and child marriage. Becoming a peer educator was transformative for Aisle. ‘I’m good at things I never thought I could do, like public speaking,’ she tells us.

Realising this new skill set helped Aisle feel empowered to branch out. She imagines a future as a nurse, and currently works with young people who have dropped out of school.



Aisle (third from the right) leads a workshop.

We Work With 4,067 Sponsored Children In Occidental Mindoro

Projects That Support Lasting Change

Knowledge Is Power

Students in Occidental Mindoro are falling behind in reading.

When we asked community members to help us figure out the cause, they identified a number of factors, including poverty, absenteeism and child seasonal labour. We also discussed the critical issue of adolescent sexual and reproductive health, including unplanned pregnancies.

The Girls Challenge Grants (GCG) programme views reading as a children's rights issue: when students become unmotivated in school, the risk of them dropping out or falling behind raises significantly. Through peer coaching and mentoring, we are working with 56 at-risk students in Occidental Mindoro between Grades 4 and 10. Today, more than a quarter of those students (26%) have shown improvement in their reading and comprehension skills. We have also organised three Girls Challenge Grants groups to act as peer educators about sexual health and rights, reaching 257 young people and 105 parents.



As part of GCG, students work together to build confidence in their reading skills.

362

**Community members
discussed sexual health**



An orientation session for peer educators.

Breaking the Silence

There were 688 reported cases of teen pregnancy in Occidental Mindoro in 2023.

Limited information about sexual and reproductive health can have life-threatening consequences: for one example, 11 new HIV/AIDS cases were reported in a single month in early 2023. We are working with community members of all ages to break the silence around sexual health, raising awareness about issues like ensuring access to menstrual hygiene products during natural disasters, preventing sexually transmitted infections and consent.

56 local teachers and 93 young people took part in training workshops about educating community members about reproductive health and rights, reaching 681 people. The lesson plans for both teachers and peer educators are comprehensive, non-discriminatory and gender-inclusive, so that young people can make informed decisions about their bodies, partners and futures.



Sandara tells us, 'I learnt a lot in the sexual health class at my school.'

"I didn't know much about sexual health before. I think it's very important for young people to learn about this."

– Sandra (17)

You're Supporting a More Equal Future



Jhenna is a scriptwriter for the children's radio programme.

Together, we're working to create a more just world.

A recent shake-up in local school management has meant that fewer directors are trained in natural disaster preparedness. We will continue to work with local leaders to ensure that schools remain safe for all students and teachers in the event of severe weather.

14% of young children in Occidental Mindoro have stunted growth due to malnutrition. We will continue our work with local parents to share information about nutrition, touching on immunisation and breastfeeding.

We will also ensure that local health care providers have the resources to provide medical attention to families experiencing food shortages.

Message from Plan Staff

"One of the most fulfilling aspects of my role is working with community members, listening to their needs and creating solutions together. I've been with Plan International for 13 years, and my main source of inspiration is the resilience and determination of the people we serve. Their stories and hope keep my passion alive."



Jojema C. Vitug,
Programme
Officer,
Occidental
Mindoro

The Plan Effect

Sponsored children are at the centre of everything we do, and they help plan our programmes based on what's important to them. Sponsors' donations are a gateway into a community. This helps build trust and credibility to attract even more funds from new sources. This makes more sustainable programmes possible in sponsorship communities. This powerful synergy is something we call The Plan Effect.

Progress in Numbers

173

**dads are taking
on more active
roles at home**

5,465

**students have
new school
supplies**

1,893

**families received
food vouchers**

278

**families received
financial aid**