

Maguindanao Philippines

Positive changes are happening in Maguindanao del Norte. Learn more about how we're supporting children and girls' rights through our collaborative, equality-driven work.

Plan International has been a proud partner of communities in Maguindanao del Norte since 2016.

Like many parts of the Philippines, Maguindanao del Norte is vulnerable to the effects of climate change, particularly floods and typhoons. In 2022, Maguindanao del Norte was especially hard-hit by what the locals called Severe Tropical Storm Paeng, which devastated the landscape and caused 31 casualties.

Throughout the year, heat waves and El Nino with flooding have impacted local farmers and schools, with a transition often to online classes. With your help, 1,095 residents in Maguindanao del Norte are better prepared for natural disasters with the help of simulation drills. Additionally, 440 local leaders are developing new municipal strategies to increase community resilience during severe weather events.

"I've learnt so much about broadcasting, scriptwriting, public speaking and local issues."
— Angel (17)



More than 52% of the population here is under 18.

Impact in Numbers

15,000

families learned about disaster readiness

43

schools have been fixed up

1,362

children know more about safety

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 Maguindanao, 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 6,788 Sponsored Children In Maguindanao

Projects That Support Lasting Change

Learners to Leaders

The Girls' Challenge Grants programme provides intensive mentorship and leadership opportunities for a selected group of young women.

Today, 53 girls and young women in Maguindanao have benefited from the Girls' Challenge Grants (GCG) programme, which focuses on educating young women about their rights, empowering them to become advocates in their communities and supporting them as they develop ambitious plans for their futures.

Most recently, GCG focused on children's rights, conflict transformation and conflict resolution. 11 participants learned about educational activities to practise effective communication, negotiation and mediation, which they then brought into their schools and communities. Some girls even spoke to their local governments, practising their public speaking skills to share information about girls' rights issues in their communities.



The GCG project kicked off with workshops about conflict resolution and communication.

11

girls have become confident advocates



7,692 students received 'school-in-a-box' kits for a strong start to the school year.



Brithney (age 17) is one of 163 trained peer educators in Maguindanao.

Tradition Meets Equality

We're working to bridge tradition and girls' rights with collaboration and sensitivity.

Though child marriage has been linked to long-term negative effects, such as dangerous early pregnancies and school dropouts, it is a deeply entrenched part of traditional and cultural norms in Maguindanao. What does it look like to advocate for girls' rights while also respecting the importance of local cultural practices and traditions?

As part of our efforts to empower girls and women, keep girls in school and end the stigma around menstruation, we're taking a collaborative, multifaceted approach toward greater gender equality in Maguindanao. We've partnered with 44 teachers to keep a close eye on students at risk of dropping out, equipping 7,692 students with additional school supplies along the way. 163 young people – including 105 girls – have become peer educators, where they facilitate important conversations with their friends about girls' rights.

"Being a peer educator has really helped my communication skills. I'd love to do more activities like this."

– Brithney (17) from Maguindanao

You're Supporting a More Equal Future



1,025 parents nationwide now have more information about early childhood nutrition.

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

- We will continue to create empowering spaces for young people to talk about and advocate for their rights.
- We will collaborate with local schools to create culturally sensitive sexual health education programmes for young people.
- As part of our work to support increased safety online for young people, we will coordinate workshops about cybersecurity and online abuse.

Due to an armed conflict between the government and armed groups, and between feuding clans, the security situation in the area remains fragile. Therefore, it is currently not possible to conduct sponsor visits in Maguindanao.

Message from Plan Staff

"This past year has brought more opportunities for collaboration with the shared goal of empowering children, particularly girls. Despite the challenges we may have faced, I'm proud to share the significant achievements we've made together."



Michael Anthony B. Cruz,
Programme Unit
Manager,
Maguindanao

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

2,048

**residents
volunteered to fix
up schools**

128

**young people now
have vocational
skills**

660

**people discussed
sexual health and
rights**

163

**youth peer
educators trained**