

2021-22 PHILIPPINES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT

The COVID-19 Development Response Plan for the Philippines has been extended through 2022-23. In 2022-23, the Program will continue to support a prosperous, stable and resilient Philippines, including: rapid response to immediate health needs; fostering safe, inclusive and cohesive communities; boosting economic recovery efforts; and assisting shield vulnerable socioeconomic groups from the impacts of disasters.

Program Budget	2021-22 Budget Estimate \$m*
Bilateral	63.4
Regional	4.5
Global	7.0
Other Govt. Departments	4.1
Total ODA	79.0



*Actual expenditure is expected to be available in early 2023. Due to rounding, totals may not match the sum of components.

Our development program to the Philippines contributes towards achieving the following Sustainable Development Goals:



The 2021-22 Philippines Program Progress Report summarises progress with implementation of the Australia – Philippines COVID-19 Development Response Plan and highlights program results.


CONTEXT

In Southeast Asia, the Philippines had one of the most acute COVID-19 outbreaks in the region. As of August 2022, there were over 3.8 million confirmed cases, over 61,000 deaths, and 66 per cent of the population were fully vaccinated. Whilst the Philippines has achieved significant primary series vaccination coverage, delayed paediatric and booster rollouts, sluggish demand generation and gaps in cold chain delivery have limited the achievement of national vaccination targets.

In 2021, the Philippines returned to average economic growth rates of around 6 per cent (unlike many of its neighbours), but the **economic rebound is uneven and not resulting in a commensurate reduction in poverty, which was aggravated by pandemic impacts** (18.1 per cent or 19.99 million Filipinos were living in poverty in 2021 compared to 17.67 per cent in 2018). GDP growth in 2021 was 5.7 per cent, compared to -9.5 per cent in 2020. However, the immediate challenges of rising inflation and inequality are likely to continue to have a dampening effect on economic activities. Food insecurity is increasing, with the incomes of 3.9 per cent of Filipino families found inadequate to meet basic food needs in 2021. While job creation accelerated in 2021, these were largely low-quality occupations in retail and service sectors.

The Philippines is among the most vulnerable countries in the world to natural hazards and climate impacts. High risks of climate change-induced disasters aggravated by inefficient humanitarian response capability and poor quality of community infrastructure are affecting economic growth, and place vulnerable communities in a constant state of recovery, pushing more into poverty.

The **Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's (BARMM) population continues to be impacted by ongoing cycles of conflict, fledgling governance and institutions, poverty and mass displacement.** Security efforts are undermined



by terrorist groups who manipulate dissatisfaction; the community's lack of confidence in those governing; poor service delivery, geographical isolation, and an overloaded judicial system.

Stalled and poor-quality education and skills training constrains the ability of the Philippines to leverage its significant 'youth bulge', which is vital for improved productivity, and leaving it underprepared for the impacts of digitisation and automation on the workforce.

While the Philippines is the highest-ranking country in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in global gender rankings, this belies problems in effectively tackling **gender inequality**, with significant gender gaps in education and health, labour force participation, and wages, exacerbated by pandemic lockdowns and school closures. The pandemic resulted in a significant rise (44 per cent) in unpaid care work for Filipino women (over 2020-21), heightened risks of gender-based violence, soaring rates of teenage pregnancy, online sexual abuse and exploitation, and sustained under-representation of women in political and economic life. Women from vulnerable sectors (i.e., minority and indigenous groups, single parents, women with disabilities, women working in informal sectors, and women in armed conflict, etc.) disproportionately suffer from multiple and overlapping disadvantages. Despite constitutional guarantees and progressive laws on women's rights, enforcement remains weak and sporadic.

AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Australia's development program supported the Philippine Government to manage and recover from COVID-19, with a focus on strengthening health security, maintaining stability and promoting economic recovery. In 2021-22, Australia had 11 active development investments, which adapted to respond to the pandemic context and Philippine government priorities, while still making progress towards long-term outcomes. Reviews and investment performance ratings reflected a high performing program making strong progress in improving development indicators in the Philippines.

Health security

Australia's health-related assistance aimed to improve the capacity of the Philippine Government to respond to health needs that arose from, or were exacerbated by, COVID-19. Assistance included provision of **200 oxygen concentrators; delivery of over 2.1 million COVID-19 vaccine doses** and associated logistical support; health systems strengthening; mental health, psychosocial support and protection services to vulnerable groups, especially in the BARMM.


Our support included funding UNFPA to support prioritisation of marginalised groups with risks of COVID-19 infections by **implementing a vaccination drive for homeless individuals and gender-based violence survivors**, reaching 1,260 individuals.

Australia supported the Philippine Government to build its **mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services to assist Filipinos to cope with the impacts of the pandemic**. We supported the Department of Health to generate data for policy making; develop strategic documents, such as the National MHPSS Monitoring and Evaluation Framework; standardising national guidelines on media protocols and online support platforms on MHPSS matters; and improving the capacity of local government units, service providers, professional volunteers, and health workers.

Australia funded the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) to facilitate **health outreach programs to villages to deliver essential immunisation and health and nutrition counselling services in armed conflict municipalities** in the BARMM.

Stability

Australia supports social cohesion and political stability in the Philippines by strengthening governance, addressing child exploitation and gender-based violence, building disaster risk reduction capacity, improving the quality of education and contributing to peacebuilding efforts in the BARMM. In 2021-22 Australia supported the **delivery of the Abu Sayyaf Group Reintegration Program to 325 participants** and their families, providing psychosocial support, including trauma healing, and skills to develop livelihoods, especially in agriculture. In the BARMM, Australia's support for communities without schools, including indigenous communities, **led to increased BARMM government investment in education service delivery, and construction of school buildings in these areas**. We also supported the Philippine Commission on Elections to implement **COVID-safe and accessible 2022 elections** and protect the institution's integrity in the long-term.



Australia supports resilient systems in the Philippines by improving disaster preparedness, resilience and response efforts, strengthening maritime and regional security, supporting marine environment initiatives, supporting social protection programs, and enhancing agricultural productivity through research. In December 2021, **Australia provided emergency humanitarian support of \$5 million to over 2.6 million people affected by super Typhoon (Rai) Odette.**

Australia supported the **migration of 12,901 digital court records to a new case management system**, the Sandiganbayan (special public sector corruption court), which enabled online trials to be conducted during the pandemic.

Across all our areas of work, Australia prioritises gender, disability and social inclusion. In 2021-22, **Australia supported the Supreme Court to draft the Bench Book for Family Courts, and the Implementing Rules and Regulations for the Family Courts Act.** The Bench Book, which was approved by Congress in April 2022, will promote best practice and consistency in judicial decision-making and court experiences for women and child victims. **Australia supported technical papers and stakeholder consultations to inform the drafting of a comprehensive anti-online sexual abuse and exploitation of children bill**, which was approved by the Senate in May 2021 and House of Representatives in February 2022. Australia contributed to improving the Philippine National Police's approach to at-risk children with the development of a **Child Protection Policy**. This includes the allocation of safe spaces for children in 1,824 police station across the country. Australia also supported the Philippine government to enhance its response to gender-based violence by integrating this with the national emergency hotline.

Economic recovery

To support economic recovery efforts, Australia has worked innovatively with key partners to strengthen policies and institutions and advance inclusive economic growth, to reduced poverty, inequality, improved living standards for many Filipinos.

Working with the World Bank, UNICEF and the Asian Development Bank, we supported a number of initiatives that are contributing to economic recovery through strengthening social protection systems (e.g., implementation of national ID, deployment of COVID vaccines, targeting system for cash transfers etc.). Our partnership with the International Monetary Fund saw Australia provide technical support to improve economic governance and the planning and development of public infrastructure. Australia's support provided **global expertise to complete a feasibility study for a hydropower rehabilitation project** and support for **capacity building to the private sector**, such as Philippine microfinance institutions CARD and BankO, to create inclusive finance products and services to micro, small and medium size enterprises (MSMEs).

Australia's support for women's economic empowerment in the Philippines financed the **expansion of 28 women small and medium enterprises (SMEs)** across the country, **employing 2,128 individuals**, half of which were women. Through a partnership with the Macquarie Group Foundation, we provided support to **13 women SMEs and sustained 1,068 jobs** during the pandemic. Australia's partnership with the **Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (PBCWE)** supports improved workplace gender equality. Currently, PBCWE has **27 member companies representing around 320,000 employees.**

Australia's education assistance to the Philippines supported development and provision of **guidebooks for teachers on facilitating blended learning and in creating a safe learning environment at home and in school.** Australia supported **19 research and development projects through the Alumni Grants Scheme, benefiting at least 60,000 individuals**, including **support for a project on investigating the effects of COVID-19 on pregnant women** which provided early findings to guide health providers on managing the virus for this vulnerable population.

ANNEX 1: PROGRESS AGAINST COVID-19 DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE PLAN RESULTS INDICATORS

Health Security

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Evidence of strengthened health systems for (a) importing, procuring medical equipment and supplies; (b) healthcare waste management in government hospitals	727 pregnant and lactating women accessed health services and were vaccinated with Tetanus & Diphtheria Vaccine. 3,877 children under 5 years old accessed basic health services and received vaccination. Funded experts to develop a COVID-19 waste management guide and provide training to healthcare workers for the safe collection, storage and disposal of contaminated materials and infectious waste.
Evidence that (and number of): teachers (and schools) improve access to training and materials to promote inclusive, context-specific, COVID-safe hygiene to students and parents; hospitals, community health centres (CHCs), and testing laboratories improve access to health and testing equipment, gender sensitive triage and isolation facilities, and supplies	Trained teachers, school health personnel and parents in 90 schools in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) to provide mental health and psychosocial support for children. Provided access to training and materials for 2,476 teachers (483 male and 1,993 female) to promote COVID-safe hygiene practices to students and parents in 60 pilot schools and 10 learning centres.
Number of vulnerable women, men, girls, and boys provided with accessible emergency assistance in conflict and crisis situations	Provided relief assistance to 240,823 persons, including 123,336 women and girls and 421 persons with disabilities affected by disasters and other emergencies.
Evidence that the Philippine Department of Health (DOH) and other key national Philippine Government agencies allocate resources for implementation of 'minimum initial service package for sexual and reproductive health (SRH) in emergencies, including appropriate gender-based violence (GBV) protections	Supported the Department of Health to implement the 'Minimum Initial Service Package for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Emergencies', including the development of a leadership course to institutionalise it within the local governments of Catanduanes, Laguna, and Maguindanao. Delivered 'Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies' training for 130 key officials from the BARMM's Ministry of Social Services and Development and the Ministry of Health to help propose policy/program solutions to existing gaps in GBV service delivery.

Stability

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Number of Filipino men and women reached with new or improved social protection programs, particularly vulnerable people	Provided support for cash transfers and improved social protection services in remote communities for 29,649 people.
Evidence of strengthened social protection systems, including improved targeting of the most vulnerable, and greater use of digital payment mechanisms	Supported digital innovations, such as the completion of an integrated electronic case management system allowing better monitoring of the well-being of beneficiaries.



<p>Evidence of Australia enabling leaders to identify and act on reform opportunities, resulting in Philippine Government (GPH) adoption of inclusive and significant reforms that aid COVID-19 response and recovery (e.g., transport systems for enhanced worker mobility)</p>	<p>After identifying challenges and opportunities facing commuters during COVID, facilitated trainings for 350 specialists from key government entities on bike lane network planning and infrastructure design.</p> <p>The latest results of the ongoing <i>15-year Longitudinal Cohort Study on the Filipino Child</i> highlighted the issues faced by young people during COVID, including food insecurity, mental health, education, and adolescent pregnancy.</p>
<p>Number of senior Philippine Government staff implementing projects and actions that apply learning gained in Australia-supported short courses relating to COVID-19 response and recovery</p>	<p>Enhanced the capacity of 327 (56 per cent women and 44 per cent men) senior government officials through 12 short courses on digital transformation, strategic planning for national economic recovery, management of infrastructure development, and market and business intelligence.</p>
<p>Evidence that key BARMM planning, and service delivery systems are more inclusive, conflict-sensitive, and COVID-safe [e.g., education; water sanitation and hygiene (WASH); roads; GBV counselling and referral; conflict monitoring)</p>	<p>Support for education in the BARMM resulted in increased public investment and favourable policies on early grades education. In 2021, the BARMM allocated AUD850,000 to support children’s education in Australian-funded community learning centres including indigenous people’s education framework development. The BARMM has also committed to fund the construction of 10 school buildings to be completed in 2022.</p>
<p>Number of additional girls and boys enrolled in school within the BARMM region</p>	<p>Improved education access by supporting the early grade education of 2,547 girls and 2,655 boys in disadvantaged and remote communities.</p> <p>Contributed to more suitable and context-appropriate education and learning during the pandemic by developing 210 adaptive learning modality materials that were used by almost 200 schools for remote learning.</p> <p>Provided specialised learning centres to support the education of 4,310 children in communities which lacked schools. Forty-one of these children had disabilities, 752 belonged to indigenous groups, and 17 were from families displaced by conflict. Just over half of the children (52% boys and 48% girls) moved up from Kindergarten to Grade 1.</p>
<p>Number of strengthened gender-inclusive community-level conflict resolution mechanisms</p>	<p>Supported a total of 74 cases of violent clan conflict mediation (with 20 formally settled) between 2020 to 2022.</p>
<p>Number of men, women, boys, and girls in conflict situations provided with basic services and economic opportunities</p>	<p>325 recipients (up from 267 in previous year) of services including psychosocial support, agricultural and livelihood development, through the Abu Sayyaf Group Reintegration Program. This program has a family-centred approach that also involves 48 wives and 406 children, who were provided trauma-healing and livelihood support.</p>
<p>Philippines Internet Crimes Against Children (PICACC) agency is strengthened as a law enforcement hub combating online sexual exploitation of children</p>	<p>Supported the PICACC and has undertaken 181 operations resulting in 115 offenders arrested and charged, and a total of 529 victims rescued since its inception in 2019.</p>
<p>Evidence of stronger, gender sensitive, and socially inclusive child protection policies and systems for</p>	<p>Technical assistance for the drafting of the Family Courts Act’s implementing rules and regulations and an accompanying Bench Book.</p>



<p>prevention, response and reporting of online sexual exploitation of children</p>	<p>Launched on 22 April 2022, these policies help the judiciary organise more family courts and promote best practice and consistency in judicial decision-making and court experiences for women and child victims.</p> <p>Technical assistance to the Philippine National Police for the development of its first Child Protection Policy which contains standards, and guidelines for uniformed and non-uniformed personnel to ensure children feel safe and protected during rescue, investigation, and custody.</p>
<p>Number of women and girl survivors of violence receiving services such as counselling (e.g., access to safe spaces)</p>	<p>Established more than 140 violence against women and children helpdesks in three municipalities in the province of Lanao del Sur.</p> <p>Facilitated counselling and medical assistance of 53 women and girls in Marawi City.</p>
<p>Number of leaders and service providers promoting, responding to, and managing GBV issues in their community</p>	<p>Trained 120 women to become women-friendly space facilitators and to engage with the community on preventing GBV, COVID-19, and promoting sexual and reproductive health.</p> <p>Violence against women and children desk officers were trained to collect and use sex and age-disaggregated data and rapid gender assessments.</p>
<p>Evidence of research, technical advice provided by Australia improving food security and food systems' resilience to impacts of COVID-19 and other shocks</p>	<p>Conducted an assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on food systems in the Philippines which highlighted that women were impacted due to smaller cash flow and reserves and limited credit options.</p> <p>Research to help build resilience and respond to the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic to agricultural systems.</p> <p>Funded a project establishing resilient and innovative community food production systems such as vertical gardening, container gardening, square-foot gardening, and raised-bed gardening and evaluated their sustainability and efficiency.</p>

Economic Recovery

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
<p>Evidence of Australia-funded advisory support contributing to inclusive, evidence-informed Philippine Government stimulus and economic recovery measures (e.g., credit guarantee facility; small business wage subsidy; digitisation of Philippine Government business processes; creation of one-stop shops; use of impact evaluations to inform COVID-19 response and recovery measures)</p>	<p>Provided advisory services to promote the efficient and effective delivery of the conditional cash transfer program. Improved conditions saw 29,649 individuals benefit.</p> <p>Supported the design and implementation of a livelihood program focussed on enterprise development, skills trainings, financial inclusion, and social empowerment.</p> <p>Supported the national industry board for analytics and artificial intelligence, responsible for reskilling and upskilling Filipino workers- especially those in occupations vulnerable to technological and automation displacement.</p>
<p>Evidence of Australia supporting the Philippine Government to better understand COVID-19 socio-economic impacts, including on vulnerable groups (e.g., real-time monitoring of COVID-19 socio-</p>	<p>Supported the Philippine government's evidence-based decision making on COVID-19 response and recovery efforts by enabling the completion of three surveys through the World Bank among firms, households and communities in 2021.</p>



economic impacts; industry-driven identification of workforce skill needs for economic recovery)	
Number of female entrepreneurs provided with financial and/or business development services	A total of 288 women (including five women with disabilities) directly benefitted from trainings on: branding and marketing, financial literacy, and Islamic Finance. Each female entrepreneur received \$ 2,075 worth of support through Australia's funding.

ANNEX 2: INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Investment Details	Year	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Gender Equality
Peacebuilding in Conflict-Affected Mindanao (PCAM) program Investment duration: 2014-23; Budget: \$93.2m	2022	4	5	5
	2021	4	5	5
Philippines-Australia Citizens Empowerment (PACE) program Investment duration: 2018-23; Budget: \$8.6m	2022	4	4	4
	2021	4	4	5
Philippine-Australia Scholarships & Alumni Program (AAAEP) Investment duration: 2017-25; Budget: \$31m	2022	5	5	5
	2021	5	5	5
SaferKidsPH program Investment duration: 2018-26; Budget: \$8m	2022	4	4	4
	2021	4	4	3
Coalitions for Change (CfC) Phase 2 program Investment duration: 2017-24; Budget: \$27m	2022	4	5	4
	2021	4	5	4
Education Pathways to Peace in Mindanao (Pathways) Investment duration: 2015-26; Budget: \$90.4m	2022	4	4	4
	2021	4	4	4
Sustaining Education Reform Gains (SERG) program Investment duration: 2019-23; Budget: \$5.1m	2022	5	5	4
	2021	5	5	4
Research for Inclusive Development Initiative (RIDI) Investment duration: 2019-23; Budget: \$5.5m	2022	4	3	4
	2021	5	4	5
Advancing Multilateral Partnerships for Econ Development Investment duration: 2018-23; Budget: \$25m	2022	4	4	3
	2021	4	4	3
COVID-19 Assistance and Response for Enhanced Systems Investment duration: 2020-25; Budget: \$4.9m	2022	4	4	4
	2021	n/a	n/a	n/a

HUMANITARIAN INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Investment Details	Year	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Gender Equality
Response & Recovery Assistance to the Philippines Investment duration: 2017-24; Budget: \$41.4m	2022	5	5	5
	2021	5	5	5

Definitions of rating scale:

Satisfactory (4, 5 and 6)

6 = Very good; satisfies criteria in all areas.

5 = Good; satisfies criteria in almost all areas.

4 = Adequate; on balance, satisfies criteria; does not fail in any major area.

Less than satisfactory (1, 2 and 3)

3 = Less than adequate; on balance does not satisfy criteria and/or fails in at least one major area.

2 = Poor; does not satisfy criteria in major areas.

1 = Very poor; does not satisfy criteria in many major areas.