



Food and Agriculture Organization  
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## STRENGTHENING THE YOUTH'S PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE TOWARDS ACHIEVING FOOD AND NUTRITION

July 2025

SDGs:



2  
ZERO  
HUNGER



8  
DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH

Country:

The Philippines

Project Code:

TCP/PHI/3905

FAO Contribution:

USD 200 000

Duration:

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Contact Info:

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### Implementing Partner

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Agrarian Reform (MAFAR).

### Beneficiaries

Youth organizations, MAFAR.

### Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

#### CPF 2018-2024

Outcome 1: Improved nutrition for all.



### BACKGROUND

In the Philippines, agriculture is one of the sectors in which youth has a vital role to perform in ensuring that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 (“End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”) is achieved. However, the ageing population of farmers in the country has been a concern of the government’s. In particular, the Department of Agriculture (DA) has sounded the alarm that the country may suffer from a “critical” shortage of farmers in just 12 years due to declining employment in the agriculture sector, worsened by aging farmers. Based on Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data, the number of employed Filipinos in the agriculture sector sank to a 24-year low in 2018 at 9.998 million, the lowest since 1995.

In the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), a publication report of the PSA indicated BARMM as one of the regions that increased in the number of workers employed in the agriculture sector with 697 000 persons. However, on the contrary, the same publication reported that BARMM exhibited the biggest decreasing proportion of agricultural employment to the region’s total employment, at 57.8 percent in 2019. The lack of opportunities and decent jobs in the rural areas compel the youth to migrate to cities, further threatening the carrying capacity and food security thresholds of urban centres.

In this context, through several consultations conducted by FAO Philippines in some areas in BARMM, the lack of knowledge on the concepts of food security, nutrition and agriculture technologies have been identified as the areas where youth do not have much experience. In addition, in most agriculture universities in the country the introduction of modern technologies, and opportunities for agribusiness or entrepreneurship are very limited. These technical gaps needed to be addressed to encourage youth's interest in agriculture. Against this background, the project aimed to strengthen capacities among rural youth groups for sustained contribution to food systems and to ensure food security and nutrition in the region, through improved access to relevant educational and training opportunities.

### IMPACT

The project contributed to employment and entrepreneurship for rural youth by offering hands-on agribusiness training. Many participants developed business plans and started their own vegetable farming ventures, increasing economic opportunities in their communities. The project provided knowledge and resources that will enable young farmers to produce nutritious food sustainably, directly impacting their communities' access to adequate food. These results will contribute towards achieving SDG targets related to food security, sustainable agriculture, decent work, and economic growth.

### ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The project successfully addressed knowledge gaps and significantly enhanced skills development among the young beneficiary farmers. It effectively promoted youth engagement in agriculture by integrating a capacity-building programme, policy development and value chain research.

A training needs assessment was undertaken to identify and address the specific needs of young farmers. Following this, the beneficiary youths received specialized training on food systems, food security and nutrition, covering the fundamentals of sustainable food systems, the importance of balanced diets, and innovative approaches to addressing food security challenges in their communities. Business plan development was incorporated into the Junior Farmer Field School (JFFS) sessions. Each organization planted a specific vegetable commodity in their area, and their business plans were based on the crops they cultivated.

The training provided practical experience in agribusiness planning, equipping the young farmers with essential skills for entrepreneurial success in the agricultural sector. In addition, a training manual was developed, based on the findings of the training needs assessment, covering various critical aspects of vegetable production and addressing key challenges and opportunities for junior farmers.

An action planning workshop at the municipal level was organized for the youths, focusing on policy advocacy, community mobilization and project development, to enhance their engagement in agricultural initiatives.

Research in aquaculture adopted a youth-sensitive approach to explore livelihood opportunities in tilapia and seaweed farming within BARMM. The research aimed to identify opportunities for youth engagement in aquaculture, focusing on value chain improvements, market access, and production efficiencies. In addition, a transdisciplinary study was prepared on the value chain of tilapia and seaweed, which produced recommendations, and will be submitted to MAFAR Fisheries Services for further action.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

Major project milestones were met, including the JFFS capacity-building programme, a value chain study on aquaculture, and an action planning workshop for youth engagement in agriculture. However, some outputs were only partially completed. For example, the Provincial Action Plan for youth in agriculture was developed, but has not yet been fully validated for regional integration. Additionally, training modules were developed and delivered. However, further refinements of the modules are needed to better align them with local conditions. The distribution of inputs was not achieved, as procurement was not completed before the end of the project.

The project achieved a delivery rate of over 80 percent while staying within the allocated budget. This indicates effective financial management and resource allocation, ensuring that key activities were funded as planned without significant overspending.

In terms of risk management, while some risks were anticipated and effectively addressed, the lack of timely responses to emerging challenges contributed to delays and complications during the later stages of the project. A key factor was the need to comply with local administrative protocols, such as obtaining approval from the Local Chief Executive (LCE), which involved time-consuming courtesy visits. Additionally, difficulties in coordinating meeting schedules further hindered progress and led to additional delays. To mitigate the impact of these setbacks, two no-cost extensions were requested and approved.

These extensions were primarily necessitated by delays in securing a suitable service provider for the project's capacity-building activities.

### FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

Recommended follow-up actions are outlined below.

#### Outcome

It is recommended that capacity-building programmes in Sultan Mastura, Maguindanao del Norte be strengthened through continuous engagement, as the beneficiary farmers were eager to learn and they have the potential for starting a farming community. Additional technical training and mentorship programmes should be introduced to help them transition from subsistence farming to innovative approaches of production and agribusiness.

It is advised that collaboration be fostered with local government units (LGU), Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC), MAFAR, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector to sustain and expand the initiatives.

Based on the initial results from the transdisciplinary research conducted, it is also recommended that additional capacity-building initiatives be undertaken, focused on technologies for tilapia production in Lake Buluan, Maguindanao.

#### Output 1

It is advised that additional manuals be developed to ensure their full applicability and effectiveness within the BARMM context. In addition, future steps should include implementing field validation to assess the practicality and impact of the training modules, and integrating learning tools to enhance knowledge dissemination.

#### Output 2

It is recommended that capacity-building initiatives be continued by scaling up training programmes and incorporating additional hands-on learning opportunities. Post-training support should be strengthened through mentorship programmes, and networking opportunities for youth-led agricultural enterprises. It is also advised that a follow-up assessment be conducted to evaluate the long-term impact of the trainings and that strategies be adjusted accordingly.

#### Output 3

To address the challenges faced in the development of Provincial Action Plans, it is recommended that capacity-building initiatives be implemented to strengthen youth organizations. Furthermore, more targeted action plans should be developed to enhance youth engagement in agriculture.

#### Output 4

It is recommended that the findings discussed in the study produced by the University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV) be used to enhance local farming practices, support sustainable aquaculture development, and improve the livelihoods of young farmers in the community. The report will function as a good guiding document for designing youth-led initiatives and activities in the value chain.

### SUSTAINABILITY

#### 1. Capacity development

The project strengthened youth capacities through training; however, further efforts are needed to integrate the learnings into long-term institutional frameworks. Additional mentoring and technical assistance could enhance sustainability.

Partnerships were formed with government agencies (e.g. MAFAR, BYC) and the private sector to sustain youth engagement in agriculture. These partnerships provide a foundation for continued project initiatives beyond its official completion.

Some follow-up actions, such as advanced training, structured mentorship programmes, and capacity-building initiatives, are necessary to maximize long-term impact. Strengthening collaboration mechanisms among stakeholders would further enhance sustainability.

#### 2. Gender equality

The project facilitated equal access to training activities for both men and women, ensuring balanced learning opportunities, and promoting inclusivity in agricultural capacity-building efforts. Of the participants, 41 percent were women, reflecting a significant effort to promote gender inclusivity. However, the impact on key gender equality objectives was not assessed.

#### 3. Environmental sustainability

As part of the training provided to young farmers under the JFFS programme, a strong emphasis was placed on sustainable agricultural practices to promote environmental responsibility and ensure long-term farm viability. Specifically, the young farmers received instruction in organic farming systems aimed at reducing dependence on chemical inputs; post-harvest management techniques designed to minimize losses and enhance product quality; and resource-efficient farming methods that support sustainability and resilience. By incorporating these sustainable approaches, the programme fosters resource conservation, protects biodiversity, and contributes to environmental preservation, ultimately safeguarding the health and well-being of both farmers and consumers.

#### 4. Technological sustainability

The project contributed to FAO's Right to Food Guidelines by enhancing food security and nutrition education among youth. It provided knowledge and resources that will enable young farmers to produce nutritious food sustainably, directly impacting their communities' access to adequate food.

The project contributed to employment and entrepreneurship for rural youth by offering hands-on agribusiness training. Many participants developed business plans and started their own vegetable farming ventures, increasing economic opportunities in their communities.

The project demonstrated sensitivity to labour conditions in the area by raising awareness and providing training on occupational safety and health issues. Challenges remain in addressing health issues and excessive working hours among youth; however, the project contributed to improving fundamental labour conditions in the community.

#### 5. Technological sustainability

The project introduced relevant agricultural technologies, including value chain frameworks and agribusiness planning. These technologies were well-aligned with local agricultural conditions and the capabilities of youth participants. Their adaptability ensures practical application, although continuous updates and refinements may be needed to address evolving challenges.

The project significantly contributed to local knowledge development through the findings of the training needs assessment and the capacity-building initiatives. It provided beneficiaries with practical skills and insights to enhance agricultural productivity and entrepreneurship. Further documentation and dissemination of good practices could strengthen long-term knowledge sharing.

Beneficiaries have demonstrated the ability to apply and replicate the knowledge gained, particularly in farming techniques and agribusiness management. However, additional technical support — especially in business development, market access and financial sustainability — is recommended to enhance long-term success and scalability.



## 6. Economical sustainability

While no additional financial resources have been mobilized, the project presents an opportunity for MAFAR to establish a knowledge hub, which had been previously envisioned as part of the initiative. This hub can serve as a valuable resource for young farmers to deepen their knowledge and skills. Moreover, it can function as a platform that amplifies youth voices in agricultural policymaking, ensuring that young people are prioritized in the sector's development agenda.



## DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ **University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV).** 2024  
*Terminal report: A Transdisciplinary Study of the Aquaculture Industry in BARMM using the Youth Sensitive Value Chain Framework.*
- ❑ **Kadtuntaya Foundation, Inc. (KFI).** 2025.  
*Junior Farmer Field School (JFFS) Final report: Empowering Youth in Agriculture Through BARMM Focused Capacity Building: Vegetable Production.*

## ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

<b>Expected Impact</b>	<b>Better enabling environment in the agriculture sector created for the youth and strengthened capacities towards a food secure and healthy Bangsamoro</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	Improved capacities among rural youth groups for sustained contribution to food systems and ensure food security and nutrition in the region and to protect youth aged 15-17 from child labour situation and improving employability among youth (aged 15-40 and older) through improved access to relevant educational and training opportunities		
	<b>Indicator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of youth groups supported through implementation.</li> <li>- Number of policies developed for youth in agriculture.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Baseline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5</li> <li>- 2</li> </ul>	
	<b>End Target</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10</li> <li>- 5</li> </ul>	
	<b>Comments and follow-up action to be taken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maguindanao province has the highest number of registered youth in BARMM, which served as the basis for selecting project beneficiaries. In collaboration with MAFAR regional and provincial offices, two municipalities were chosen, one from Maguindanao del Norte (Sultan Mastura) and one from Maguindanao del Sur (Datu Paglas).</li> <li>- To address the needs of youth farmers, capacity-building activities were delivered.</li> <li>- The project successfully provided capacity-building initiatives on vegetable production to 300 young farmers from ten youth organizations, who completed the JFFS on vegetable production through the service provider Kadtuntaya Foundation, Inc. (KFI). Theoretical and hands-on applications were conducted. Notably, some participants have replicated what they learned on their own farms, demonstrating the programme's effectiveness in fostering self-sufficiency and entrepreneurship among young farmers, specifically in Sultan Mastura.</li> <li>- Research on the aquaculture value chain in BARMM, using a youth-sensitive approach, was conducted in Maguindanao (tilapia) and Tawi-Tawi (seaweed). The research aimed to identify opportunities for youth engagement in aquaculture, focusing on value chain improvements, market access, and production efficiencies. In addition, a transdisciplinary study was prepared on the value chain of tilapia and seaweed, which produced recommendations, and will be submitted to MAFAR Fisheries Services for further action.</li> </ul>	
<b>Output 1</b>	Strengthening the capacity of agriculture stakeholders to design Training modules for youth in Agriculture on sustainable agriculture, decent employment, food security, farming technologies for youth in school and for out- of-school youth are developed, enhanced and localized in the BARMM context		
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
	Number of training modules developed/enhanced.	4	Partially
<b>Baseline</b>	2		
<b>Comments</b>	The training needs assessment provided insights into the specific needs of youth farmers. The development of training modules were developed based on the results of the assessment. Additional consultation with stakeholders and field validation should be conducted to enhance the effectiveness of the contents.		
<b>Activity 1.1</b>	Validation of Existing Training Needs Assessment conducted		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
	<b>Comments</b>	FAO conducted a training needs assessment to evaluate the primary requirements of youth organizations in agriculture. Representatives from various organizations actively participated in this assessment, which utilized focus group discussions (FGDs) to gather detailed insights into the needs of youth in their respective communities. The assessment was conducted by the service provider KFI as part of their preliminary activities. Results of the assessments led to the development of modules on vegetable production that were used during the JFFS. The module also included business planning and agriprenurship as part of the sessions.	

Activity 1.2	Enhancement of training modules based on the Junior Farming Field School		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>Following beneficiary validation and a comprehensive training needs assessment, vegetable production was identified as the primary focus for the JFFS. The selection of commodities was based on the most relevant agricultural products in the target areas, ensuring alignment with local farming conditions and market demand.</p> <p>A training manual was developed and provided by the service provider. A total of 11 sessions covering sustainable farming practices, enhancement of market strategies, and empowering young farmers was incorporated in the JFFS training manual for vegetable production. The manual was tailored based on the findings of the training needs assessment, ensuring that it addressed key challenges and opportunities for junior farmers, and covering various critical aspects of vegetable production.</p> <p>The JFFS training modules equip young farmers with knowledge and practical skills to improve productivity, develop entrepreneurial skills, and agribusiness planning and profitability in vegetable farming. However, the training modules could be better enhanced based on the practical experiences encountered, as well as on consideration on the application of Islamic practices.</p>	
Output 2	Youth groups are capacitated on the concepts of the Food Systems, Agricultural technologies, nutrition sensitive agriculture and entrepreneurship		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of trainings conducted.	10	Partially
Baseline	0		
Comments	Capacity-building activities were conducted through the JFFS by KFI. The training focused on vegetable production and management. These sessions were completed over a four-month period, covering topics from the training needs assessment. Additional seminars and workshops organized by FAO complemented the training, providing deeper insights into food system and agricultural technologies.		
Activity 2.1	Conduct of different trainings on agreed training needs		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>Capacity-building and training seminars were conducted to improve basic knowledge on the food system, and to introduce new technologies and sustainable farming practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A total of 300 youths participated in the season-long JFFS, consisting of 12 sessions focused on vegetable production in their respective municipalities. Each municipality selected top commodities for production.</li> <li>- The youths received specialized training on food systems, food security, and nutrition, covering the fundamentals of sustainable food systems, the importance of balanced diets, and innovative approaches to addressing food security challenges in their communities.</li> <li>- The youths attended an Action Planning Workshop at the municipal level, focusing on policy advocacy, community mobilization and project development, to enhance their engagement in agricultural initiatives.</li> <li>- Participants attended the BARMM Youth Forum, where the latest agricultural technologies were showcased by farmer practitioners, including integrated farms, agrotourism farms and innovations, and the use of technologies in farming. The event also featured youth-led entrepreneurs and a Champion Youth Farmer(4-H), providing valuable learning and networking opportunities.</li> <li>- An educational farm tour was conducted for youth participants in Cotabato Province. Participants were exposed to integrated farms, cacao farming and value addition to its products, agroeco-tourism sites and best agricultural practices. This experience enriched their understanding of innovative farming techniques and sustainable agriculture models.</li> <li>- An Edible Landscape Workshop was conducted for participants in Sultan Mastura, Maguindanao del Norte. The workshop combined aesthetic, ecological and practical elements to create sustainable food sources, and integrated vegetable plants, medicinal plants, herbs, and ornamental plants into a single production system, promoting both functionality and environmental beauty.</li> </ul>	
Activity 2.2	Conduct of workshops for the development of Business Plans		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>Business plan development was incorporated into the JFFS sessions. Each organization planted a specific vegetable commodity in their area, and their business plans were based on the crops they cultivated. This initiative helped young farmers learn to develop business plans that support production planning and future agricultural ventures.</p> <p>The training provided practical experience in agribusiness planning, equipping youth with essential skills for entrepreneurial success in the agricultural sector.</p>	

<b>Output 3</b>	Strengthened programs on agri-fisheries technologies, climate change and DRR, digitalization, entrepreneurship and marketing for youth integrated in the local plans		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	- Number of approved Provincial Action Plans. - Approved Regional Action Plans.	- 2 - 1	Partially
<b>Baseline</b>	0		
<b>Comments</b>	In addition to the JFFS sessions, training sessions were conducted in two municipalities, engaging youth organizations and key stakeholders such as MAFAR and the LGU. The workshop contributed to the development of the action plans to strengthen youth participation in agriculture and entrepreneurship.		
<b>Activity 3.1</b>	Conduct of workshops for the development of Provincial Action Plans		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	Workshops were conducted among youth groups in each municipality, with participation from the MAFAR and the Local Youth Development Office (LYDO). Their input contributed to the development of the Provincial Action Plan. The organizations faced several challenges, including limited funding, which restricted the full execution of planned activities. Additionally, some youth organizations are still in the early stages of development and require further structuring to effectively participate in the planning process. To address these challenges, it is recommended that capacity-building initiatives be implemented to strengthen youth organizations. Furthermore, more targeted action plans should be developed to enhance youth engagement in agriculture.	
<b>Activity 3.2</b>	Conduct of validation workshop of the Provincial Action Plan for incorporation in the Regional plan		
	Achieved	No	
	Comments	The action plans formulated at the municipal level were endorsed at the provincial level for further validation and integration into the regional framework. Validation steps are required to ensure alignment with regional priorities. There is a need for further consultations with key stakeholders to finalize the integration process and ensure that the action plans effectively address the needs of the communities	
<b>Output 4</b>	Value chain framework for aquaculture industry developed for sustainable aquaculture technologies		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	No. of value chain framework developed.	1	Yes
<b>Baseline</b>	0		
<b>Comments</b>	A survey research study was initiated in two provinces in BARMM, focusing on value chain analysis for key aquaculture commodities: tilapia in Buluan, Maguindanao del Norte, the third-largest tilapia producer in the Philippines, and seaweed in Tawi-Tawi, the country's largest seaweed producer. This study was conducted by the service provider, UPV, based in Iloilo. The research aimed to identify opportunities for youth engagement in aquaculture, focusing on value chain improvements, market access, and production efficiencies.		
<b>Activity 4.1</b>	Conduct of a Transdisciplinary Study of the Aquaculture Industry through the Value Chain Framework		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The study, titled "A Transdisciplinary Study of the Aquaculture Industry in BARMM using the Youth-Sensitive Value Chain Framework", was successfully developed by UPV. Two sites were selected for the value chain analysis: tilapia in Buluan, Maguindanao del Norte and seaweed in Tawi-Tawi. On-site FGDs were conducted in both locations, engaging key stakeholders such as input providers, producers, processors, and traders. The service provider trained local youth residents to assist in conducting surveys and engaging with stakeholders in the tilapia and seaweed value chains. Additionally, local enumerators conducted interviews to gather comprehensive insights, which were later submitted to UPV for consolidation and analysis through online application. In addition to working with local stakeholders, the study gathered information from trading and processing stakeholders in nearby regions to gain a more holistic understanding of the aquaculture value chain. The results were validated through discussions with key stakeholders in Buluan and Tawi-Tawi to ensure accuracy and relevance. The report will be submitted together with information, education and communication (IEC) materials and shared with the main stakeholders.	

**Partnerships and Outreach**

For more information, please contact: [Reporting@fao.org](mailto:Reporting@fao.org)

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

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