



World Vision

One for Children

Cash Assistance Program

For Families Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic





IN March 2020, the Philippines faced one of its toughest challenges yet: the Coronavirus Disease 2019, more popularly known as “COVID-19”. Declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a global pandemic, the disease rapidly spread in the months that followed, bringing the confirmed cases to over 30,000 in the country by June 2020.

In a bid to prevent further spread of the virus, the government initially enforced the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), affecting the livelihood of many Filipinos, especially the poorest and most vulnerable families.

30,000
COVID-19 CASES
By June 2020

As a humanitarian organisation working with and for the most vulnerable sectors, World Vision immediately responded to assist affected communities through various interventions.

Among its efforts to respond to the pandemic were:



Providing hygiene kits for families and producing advocacy communication materials on COVID-19 prevention.



Distributing life-saving essentials to affected households.



Assisting children and families impacted by COVID-19 through initiatives touching on child protection and education.



Providing cash assistance to poor families whose livelihoods were affected.

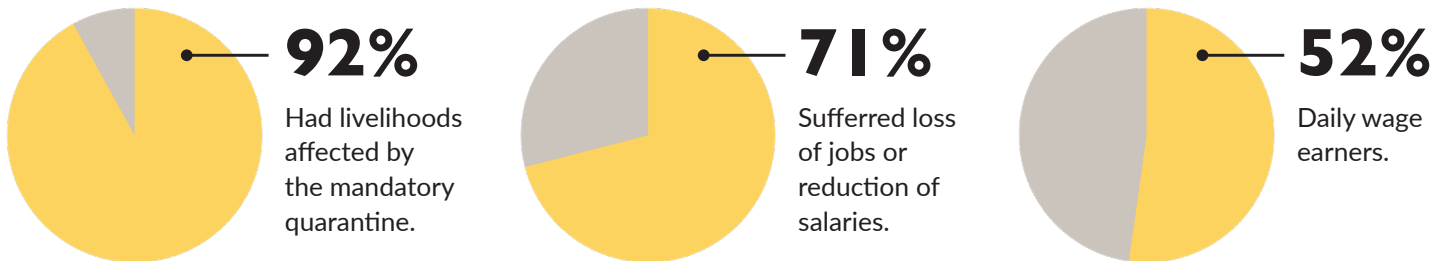


Supporting the challenged health capacities of the government by providing needed health supplies.

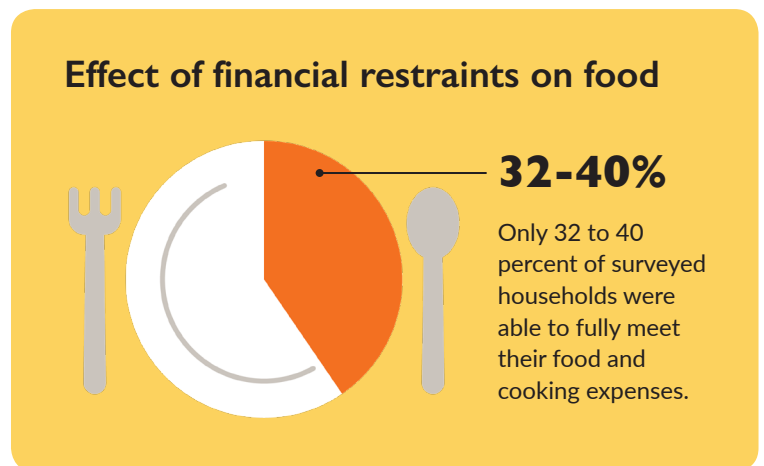


Rapid assessment results

In a rapid assessment conducted by World Vision in May 2020:



As a result of the financial restraints brought about by the ECQ, only 32 to 40 percent of the surveyed households say that they were able to fully meet their food and cooking expenses. Most families, especially those who have lost their sources of income, relied on government aid (ayuda) for their daily sustenance.



“ We recognize that many of our kababayans, especially in the rural setting, are daily-wage earners who now have little or no income because of the ECQ. While it is beneficial to distribute in-kind relief goods, we know that cash is also essential at this time so they can prioritize and give them decision rights to address their needs”

Ajab-Aram Macapagat, Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs Director, World Vision

Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) Program

Recognising the need to augment government support to vulnerable families, World Vision started its distribution of cash assistance under its Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) program.

TARGET

15,000 Families

To receive P1,000 each

Php 15 million total

This program aims to help the “poorest of the poor” in select provinces, whose livelihoods were disrupted by the ECQ due to COVID-19. UCT is meant to support the most vulnerable families to fulfill basic necessities for themselves, especially their children. This includes food, proper nutrition, and other needs, and to mitigate risks against covid 19- infection.

Aside from the expressed need of communities as basis for cash assistance, World Vision also assessed the feasibility to implement the UCT program and considered other factors like the 1) availability of credible and trusted cash delivery mechanisms or Financial

Service Providers (FSP) such as money remittance companies in the covered communities and 2) access to local markets.

Due to the current work environment and restrictions such as the prohibition of mass gathering and enforcement of physical distancing, World Vision reviewed its processes -- from the beneficiary selection process, beneficiary validation, cash payout planning to the cash distribution. This is to ensure that safety protocols are followed during the delivery of humanitarian aid. Most of the processes engaged in UCT are done remotely, online, and with limited physical contact.

With a massive humanitarian need but with meager resources, World Vision had to adopt geographical targeting and beneficiary selection process. This is to ensure that support are given to the most vulnerable communities and families needing support. Decisions at each level are guided by data and information gathered during the assessment.

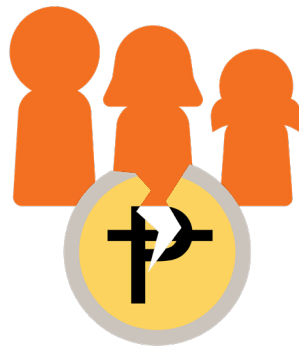


Beneficiary Selection

Upon determination of priority barangays, the individual beneficiary selection process commenced. The process for beneficiary selection was done in consultation with communities, and the beneficiaries were selected using the following criteria:



Families with children who have severe acute malnutrition (SAM) or moderately acute malnutrition (MAM)



Indigent families living in barangays that have been under quarantine/ECQ, or with existing WVDF programs.



Families with members belonging to vulnerable sectors such as senior citizens, Persons with Disabilities, single-parents, child-headed families, and members with critical illnesses.

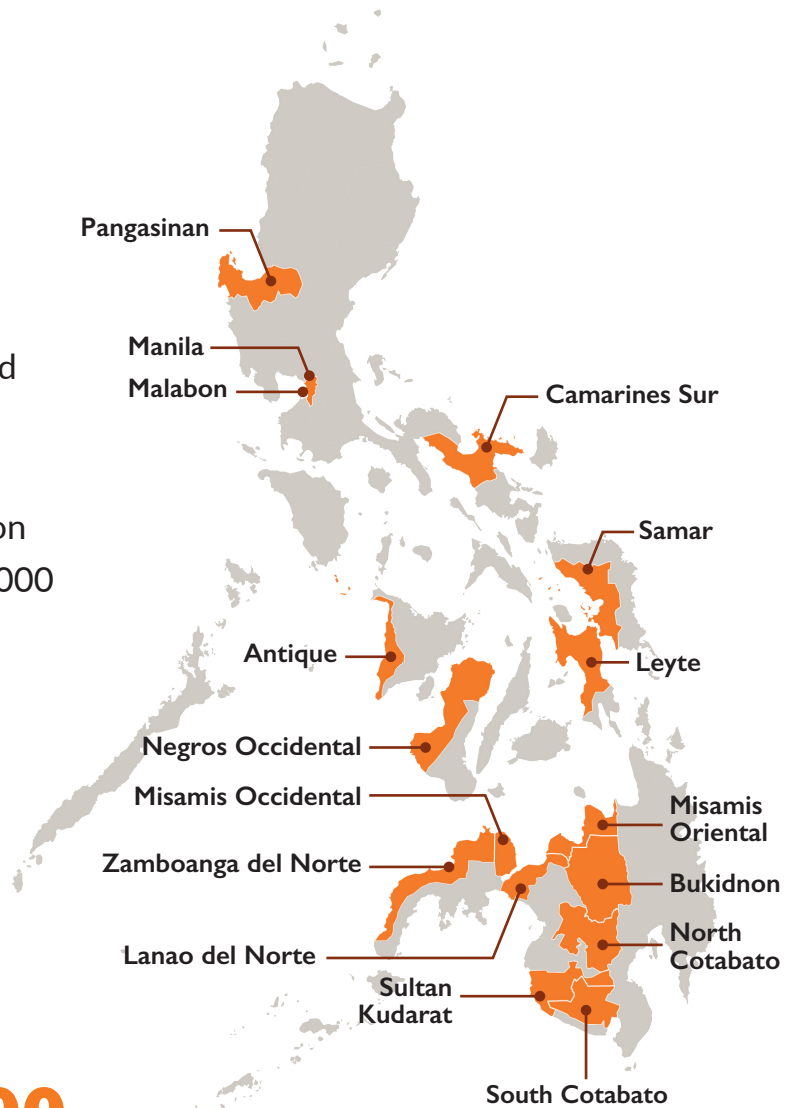
The beneficiaries were then contacted by World Vision staff and volunteers through mobile communication to confirm and validate their qualifications based on the 'vulnerability criteria' set for the beneficiaries of the UCT programming. Once validated, the names are entered in the final beneficiary list, together with some basic information needed to process the cash payout through Last Mile Mobile Solutions (LMMS) – a digital platform for beneficiary registration, information and distribution management.



The cash payout or distribution was planned together with the Financial Service Provider (FSP), in this case, Palawan Express Money Remittance Center and the community leaders. This is a necessary step to ensure that all health minimum standards or protocols will be strictly adhered to for the safety of the beneficiaries, community leaders, and World Vision staff in the entire distribution process.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

From its implementation in May 2020, World Vision provided cash assistance to 14,255 families in NCR, Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Each household received PHP 1,000, bringing the total amount of cash assistance to PHP 14,255,000. World Vision targets to complete the distribution to 15,000 families by the end of July 2020.

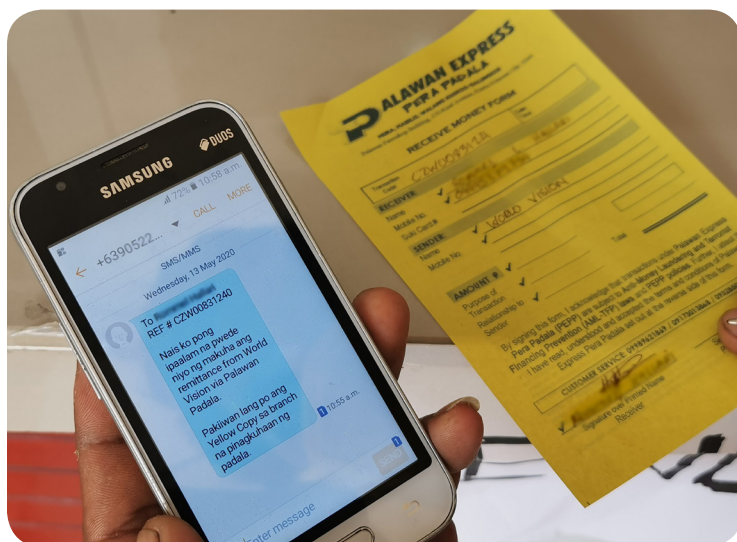
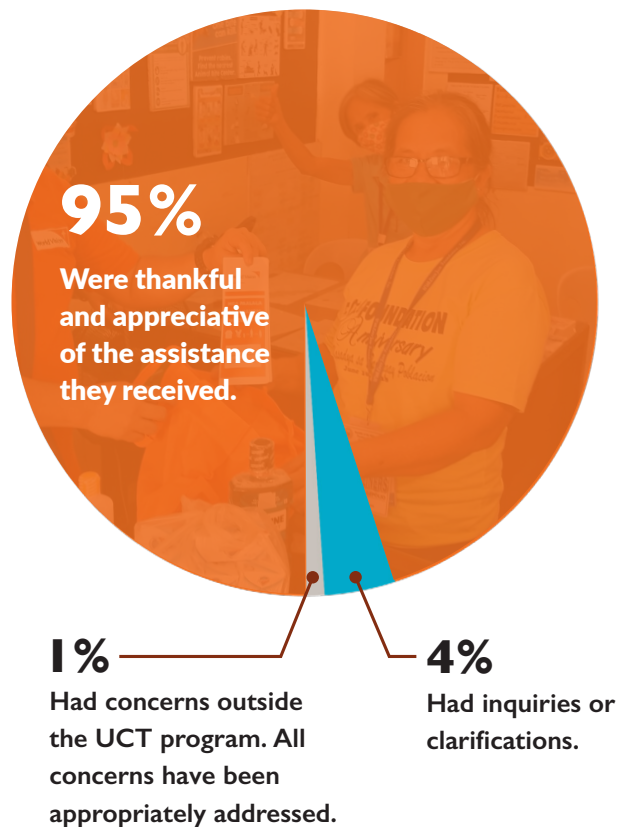


GIVING VALUE TO COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

World Vision has embedded feedback mechanisms that include feedback boxes at cash distribution points and SMS hotlines to ensure beneficiaries have safe platform to share their comments, suggestions and feedback regarding World Vision programming and help address any concerns from beneficiaries.

After the completion of the cash distribution, World Vision will conduct a post-distribution monitoring (PDM) to assess the overall program, including the usage of cash, quality of service delivered, timeliness of support, and relevance of support to the needs. This will be done through mobile survey and calls. The results of this PDM will be used to further improve future programming related to relief response and cash-based programming.

Beneficiary Feedback



GOOD PRACTICES

Use of digital and mobile technology

Due to the health and safety risks involved in the response, World Vision maximised the use of digital technology – from the verification of the beneficiaries, done completely through phone, up to the point of distribution.



World Vision staff, volunteers and community partners were able to work efficiently, following a detailed work flow that enabled them to assist the community members while working remotely and observing physical distancing. Equipment, such as mobile phones, laptops, and internet devices, were also provided. Staff were also trained to effectively manage the huge volume of calls, inquiries, and concerns.

The organisation also made use of an innovation called the Last Mile Mobile Solutions (LMMS). LMMS is a technology solution used to record beneficiaries and help manage distribution data. This strengthens the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian service delivery. The LMMS is also helpful as a database or repository of past and existing World Vision beneficiaries to avoid duplication and for easy retrieval should they qualify again for a different program.

Strong community engagement

World Vision has long partnered and engaged with community leaders in programme implementations where it has existing presence. In this response, community leaders not only participated in response activities, but they actively involved themselves in the decision-making process, by providing information to support the community needs; and the beneficiary selection criteria and processes – to identify who to prioritise and to ensure compliance to

minimum health standards for safe, efficient, and orderly execution of cash distribution to its beneficiaries.

Having good coordination among World Vision response and field staff who constantly guided the community partners and volunteers, allowed for a seamless and efficient process flow.

Partnership with Financial Service Providers

Prepositioned partnerships with FSPs like Palawan Express Pera Padala (PEPP), was also vital in ensuring a safe, rapid, efficient and orderly cash payout process. PEPP, with branches all over the Philippines has allowed World Vision to reach its beneficiaries, even in the most remote rural areas. The long partnership of WV and PEPP has facilitated quick transfer of cash whenever it is needed.



Adherence to government guidelines on data security and health standards

World Vision strongly enforced health standard measures such as ensuring hand hygiene (hand washing station with soap and water or alcohol/sanitizer), physical distancing, wearing of mask, and avoiding/limiting mass gathering of people during the entire UCT process, in compliance with the government's quarantine guidelines to protect beneficiaries from getting infected with the virus. These changes/modifications will eventually form part of the "new normal" in the UCT process.

In relation to data security, the entire verification and distribution process relied mostly on digital technology. Following data privacy protocols, data information gathering strictly adhered to the guidelines set forth by the government agency. Basic household information were asked, with prior consent (written and/or recorded) from the beneficiaries and stored in a safe and secure database.

CHALLENGES

Difficulty in the verification process via phone

Most of the difficulties in the process are encountered during the verification process. Since this is an unprecedented emergency response, which strongly prohibits face-to-face communication, the response team had to adapt and employ the best means to implement the program. While it had ensured availability of equipment (phones, LMMS servers, etc.), recording of calls and data privacy compliance, time to complete verification takes longer time, as expected.



Language barrier



Another challenge, according to the verifiers, is the language barrier because of the limited number of staff who can match with the location of beneficiaries. The non-face-to-face set up also pose a challenge in verifying the correct spelling of names of beneficiaries and ensuring that they have the appropriate identification or supporting documents to allow them to claim at the money remittance branch assigned.

Communication via phone was also made more difficult due to poor signal from the mobile service provider, since there are beneficiaries that live in remote rural areas. Verification also takes a longer time to do, especially when the beneficiaries are not available to take the call or have no mobile phones at all.

Quarantine restrictions

Due to the restrictions on mass gatherings, the payout also takes longer because only a limited number of beneficiaries can be accommodated in the cash payout centers and need to follow a specific, assigned time to claim.



BENEFICIARIES' STORIES



Ellyn Pandic, a 24-year-old mother of two, was one of the beneficiaries from Brgy. Munoz, Siayan, Zamboanga del Norte.

Her husband is currently stranded in Manila where he works as a security guard. Due to the strict lockdown, Ellyn says her husband is unable to send money back home.

While in quarantine, Ellyn and her two children relied on crops, mostly corn, for their daily sustenance. “I plant corn and that is what I feed my children,” shares Ellyn, quickly adding that even these were not enough for her growing children, aged 5 and 2. With very little means to keep the family afloat, Ellyn is forced to solicit help from her relatives.

The same is true for the family of Maridel Cardente, a 36-year-old housewife and mother of four, also from Siayan, Zamboanga del Norte. Her husband, Renante, is a farmer.

“It was hard to sell our crops. It hasn’t rained for a while, so the harvest is few,” Maridel shares. Even with their small backyard farm, she says there are days when they barely had anything to eat.

Ellyn and Maridel are just two of the 650 beneficiary families from eight barangays in Zamboanga del Norte.

“It was very easy. There weren’t a lot of requirements. We were just asked to sign,” says Ellyn of the cash distribution. With the PHP 1,000 she received, she bought food and fruits for her children.

“This is a huge help for us,” adds Maridel, who bought 5 kilos of rice and vegetables.

“It was hard to sell our crops... this is a huge help for us.”

Maridel Cardente, Siayan, Zamboanga del Norte

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