



Municipal Protection Profile conducted in Basilan

Al-Barka



Municipality of Al-Barka

Province of Basilan | Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)

Overview

Risk rating: **Medium**

Quick facts

The municipality of Al-Barka is located in the province of Basilan, BARMM, Philippines. It was created by virtue of the Muslim Mindanao Autonomy (MMA) Act No 191 and ratified through plebiscite on May 22, 2006. Its seat of government was in Barangay Magcawa, the most strategic and ideal site in the 16 barangays.

It is a newly-created municipality which has been separated from the Municipality of Tipo-Tipo and comprises the following barangays: Apil-apil, Bato-bato, Bucalao, Cambug, Kinukutan, Kuhon, Kuhon Lennuh, Lookbisaya, Sangkahan, Bohe-Piang, Danapah, Guinanta, Kailih, Linuan, Macalang and Magcawa. It was the brainchild of the late Congressman Ustadz Wahab M. Akbar, a three-term Governor, to create additional municipalities in which services and assistance would be dispersed directly to the beneficiaries.



The Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) of the municipality was drawn from the IRA of the mother municipality which was determined in accordance with equitable share, until such time that the IRA of the former is determined and segregated by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

It is bounded on the West by Tipo-Tipo Municipality, in the Southwest by Ungkaya Pukan Municipality, in the North by Tuburan Municipality, Northeast by Tipo-Tipo Municipality, and in the East by the Moro Gulf.



Population

20,905



Family

4,181



Income Class

5th Class



Land Area

72.58sq.km.



Barangays

16



Climate type

Tropical



Languages Spoken

Yakan, Chavacano, Tagalog

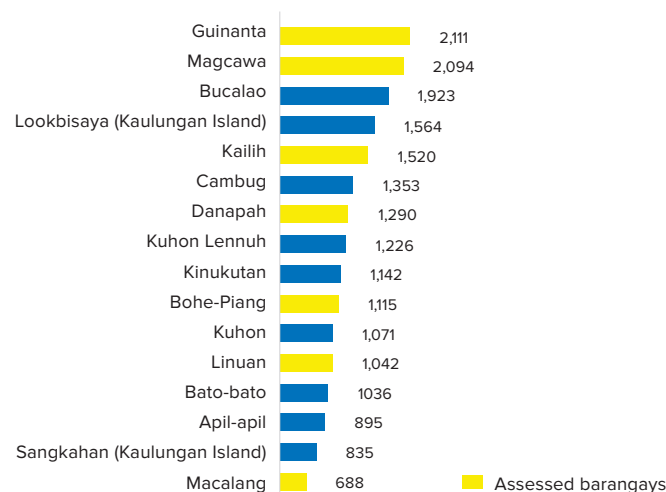
No.	Barangay	Area
1.	Bucalao	Coastal
2.	Cambug	Coastal
3.	Kailih	Agricultural
4.	Sangkahan (Kaulungan Island)	Island barangay
5.	Bohe-Piang	Agricultural
6.	Danapah	Agricultural
7.	Guinanta	Agricultural
8.	Lookbisaya	Island barangay
9.	Macalang	Agricultural
10.	Bato-Bato	Coastal
11.	Linuan	Agricultural
12.	Magcawa	Agricultural
13.	Apil-Apil	Coastal
14.	Kuhon	Agricultural
15.	Kunhon Lennyh	Agricultural
16.	Kinukutan	Coastal

Al-Barka is generally an agricultural community. It has a total land area of 7,258 hectares or around 5.26 percent of the province's land area of 137,900 hectares. Around 5,806 hectares are devoted to agriculture. Of the total barangays, nine are mainly agricultural while the remaining seven barangays are along coastal belt areas. (see table).

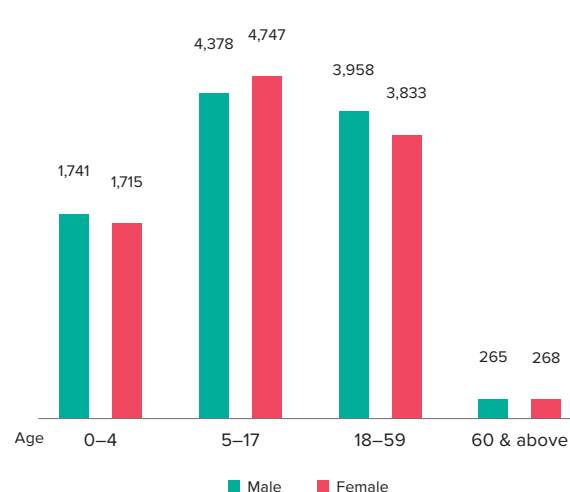
Major crops are such as; coconut, rubber, cassava, and banana contribute to the local economy. Coastal areas are dependent on fishing industry.

Ethnic Origin/ Language/Dialect. The Municipality of Albarka is predominantly composed of the Yakan-speaking group. About 13,175 or 76.65 percent of the population speaks the Yakan dialect followed distantly by Samals with 2,248 or 13.08 percent and the Tausugs with 1,766 or 10.27 percent of the population.

Population¹ by barangay



Population¹ by sex and age group



1 2015 Census of Population, Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)

The table below shows the population of barangays in Al-Barka that were assessed for the MPP.

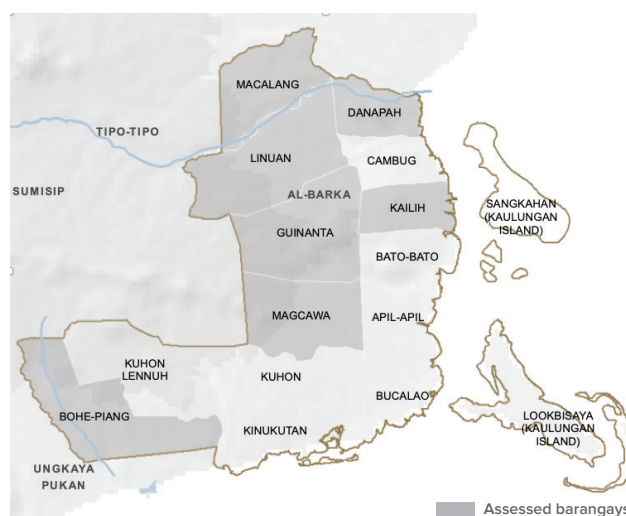
Barangay	No. of HH	No. of Families	No. of Person	No. of Male	No. of Female	No. of Children	No. of Adults	No. of Elders
Bohe-Piang	223	250	1,115	435	680	649	446	20
Danapah	258	390	1,560	757	803	874	647	39
Guinanta	422	422	2,111	1,023	1,088	1,038	873	200
Kailih	304	354	1,520	737	783	916	578	26
Linuan	208	297	1,560	757	803	940	594	26
Macalang	138	158	790	383	407	474	274	42
Magcawa	419	419	2,094	1,005	1,089	1,110	963	21
TOTAL	1,972	2,290	10,750	5,097	5,653	6,001	4,375	374

Protection Profiled Barangays

Profiling was conducted in the seven most vulnerable barangays in the municipality of Al-Barka. This was done through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) involving different sectors such as men, women, community leaders, elderlys and children. In total there were 7 FGDs conducted and 37 KIIs.

The information shows that protection risks and the vulnerability of Al-Barka municipality can be medium to high due to the continuing armed confrontation between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in different parts of the island, which often results in displacement, destruction of civilian properties and death among the civilians population including women and young children.

Displacements in the locality are usually short but frequent, extending up to 90 days where humanitarian and government agencies are rarely present. Hence, displaced populations have very limited access to regular basic social services and physical and legal protection. The poor operation of protection mechanisms such as Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) Desk, Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) and Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (BDRRMC) exposed affected families. This is apart



from the unavailability of mechanisms to track and systematically monitor the displaced populations in various locations which results to the presence of unrecognized IDPs. The unavailability of a permanent evacuation center and the absence of emergency

plans also resulted in affected populations’ difficulty in deciding where they should go. BDRRMC has poor early warning systems and plans to prevent and/or minimize the effects of violent conflict. Similarly, the capacities of the members of BCPC and VAWC require attention to ensure that all the protection issues of vulnerable groups will be catered to, particularly those of elderly, people with disabilities, and women and child protection cases.

With communities being repeatedly displaced without immediate or effective assistance from the local authorities and humanitarian actors, a culture of silence among affected population and mistrust has been developed. This situation is further aggravated by the lack of system in monitoring and tracking the movement of the displaced population, which often results in lack of access to the government and humanitarian support.

If these issues will remain unresolved or will not be minimized through the local authorities’ initiatives, protection risks will increase to high as recurring displacements continue to

threaten the lives of innocent civilians. This may result in loss or damage of properties and livelihoods. Likewise, this may contribute to high poverty rates among the affected population, economic crisis, malnutrition and illness, high rate of illiteracy and other forms of protection issues including gender-based violence and child protection cases.

The project believed that strengthening local peace initiatives to prevent outbreaks of violent conflict between the government security forces and the resistance movement will reduce the impacts of recurring displacement. Initiatives to enhance the capacities of local duty bearers and their communities by educating them about inherent human rights and legal protection under the law should be implemented. A grassroots reporting system that aims to broadcast any violence from the local communities in real-time should also be installed.

Communities also believed that enhancing the capacities of protection mechanisms and the BDRRMC through trainings will strengthen protection for vulnerable groups.

Protection Analysis

Nature of Violations and Threats

The profiling shows that displacement is triggered by recurring military operations and armed confrontation between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and armed groups such as Abu Sayaff Group (ASG), which often result in civilian displacement.

Communities in the locale have experienced multiple displacements from 2000 to 2017 due to AFP operations against armed groups. Focus group discussions (FGD) have experienced displacement due to other armed skirmishes between Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and the Abu Sayaff Group (ASG), as well as the ASG against the Barangay Police Action Team (BPAT) in barangay Guinanta. Based on the 2015 census, more than 2,289 families (approximately 10,750 persons) have been repeatedly affected and displaced since 2000.

In an emergency situation, the majority of the displaced population seek temporary shelter with their relatives and friends. They are known as “home-based IDPs” since there are no designated evacuation centers. Other families seek refuge in school rooms, municipal buildings, and vacant spaces. Respondents affirmed that during evacuation, fleeing families often left their houses, properties, animals and some important things like clothes, kitchen utensils, and documents.

Out of the seven barangays participated in the profiling, six barangays are still hosting displaced families. They did not return home because they:

- are afraid to go back out of fear of repeat displacement
- decided as a family to stay, often due to marriage
- established small source of income in their new area
- feel there is no value in returning to their origin, mostly due to property loss or damage

Impact and Effects of Violations

At the time of displacement, common protection issues encountered included (but were not limited to) limited access to basic services such as food, water and shelter and the risk of family separation. Female respondents also were concerned with the lack of privacy as a result of the poor management of the evacuation sites.

There is limited response from the local government units due to the absence of internal revenue allotment. The local authorities are also dependent on the assistance provided by private donors and from the provincial government unit.

School is often disrupted. School rooms or madrasahs are used as temporary evacuation centers.

Coping Mechanism of Affected Population


In the absence of evacuation centers, displaced families seek safety within their relatives or friends. Some families preferred to seek refuge in schools, municipal halls, madrasahs or shanties.

The host communities or hosting families provide support to displaced families. Some private individuals, local CSOs, other neighboring barangays and the provincial government provide assistance. Some families continue to access their farm lands despite the potential risks they may encounter.


Other than providing food assistance, the duty bearers hold advocacy programs to educate IDPs and initiate consultation meetings with IDPs to discuss their issues. There are also medical missions to monitor and ensure everybody is free from illnesses. The local leaders regularly consult the condition of these families as basis for planning and identifying protection responses.

BPATs were also activated by local authorities to monitor and protect the safety and security of IDPs during displacement. The BPATs provide regular patrolling during night and day to ensure that all IDPs are protected from different forms of abuse and violations.


Recommendations




In order to minimize the effects of conflict, strengthen the BDRRMC by establishing a community-based early warning system to facilitate exchange of real-time information between the communities and local authorities. Organize grassroots monitors as form of early warning mechanism to ensure timely updates on the situation.




Local authorities should have disaster response and preparedness plans that incorporate resources, accessibility, and evacuation plans with emphasis on PWSNs if displacement happens in their respective barangay.




Local authorities must have updated barangay profiles reflecting detailed demographic data to facilitate emergency program design and planning.




Higher authorities must have and implement monitoring mechanisms on the performance of local leaders to ensure the implementation of barangay local government programs.




Both the community and local officials need to be trained or oriented on protection and IDP rights with emphasis on United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.



Officers and members of the protection mechanism such as BCPC, VAWC Desk and BDRRMC must be trained on handling women and children protection cases in emergency situations or gender-based violence prevention and response in emergencies.



BDRRMC must be trained with focus on the making of BDRRMC and contingency plans and the process of utilizing the disaster fund to ensure readiness in providing assistance to people affected by armed conflicts or disasters.



The BDRRMC must strengthen their relationship with MDRRMC to ensure complementary support in terms of resources and capacity in responding the needs and protection of the rights of IDPs.

Protection of women and children

Coping Mechanism of Affected Population

While the majority of respondents believed that women and children are feeling safe and secure because of the establishment of AFP camps in the area, the presence of BIAF, the active patrolling of BPAT, regular Islamic symposia initiated by religious leaders, and orientations for women and children and their families, others had expressed contradictions. They believed unlawful groups are still present in the locality and barangay-based institutions (GAD, VAWC, BCPC, BDRRMC and others) are not active or not functional.


The community will be protected if the protection mechanism is strengthened and community awareness of women and children's protection is widely conducted. The local population tends to enjoin respect for women and children's rights and combat unacceptable cultural norms that endanger and jeopardize the future of women and children.

Communities revealed that self-awareness on protection issues through informal sharing and discussion with relatives, friends and family members were part of the personal coping mechanisms of women and children. Empowering women and girls can make a difference in their lives, especially for those living in vulnerable communities with poor protection mechanisms.


During the profiling, communities revealed that community awareness sessions and symposia for women and children, posting of IEC materials and formation of women's groups were all organized and initiated by the communities. Aside from these, the active patrolling of BPAT and coordination to BIAF, AFP and PNP are ensured by the local authorities.

Recommendations


As per identified women and children protection cases, below are the following recommendations for the local authorities:




Institutionalize and strengthen protection mechanisms (Barangay VAWC Desk, BCPC, LCPC, MCAT-VAWC)




Train protection mechanism members on handling VAWC cases and gender-responsive case management training




Continuously conduct community information sessions on women's and children's protection



Develop IEC materials for community distribution



Mobilize resources for the establishment of GBV facilities (temporary shelter)



Establish stand-by funds for immediate needs of GBV/VAWC survivors (can be allocated from gender and development budget)

Persons with specific needs

Nature of Violations and Threats

Communities disclosed that 4.3 percent of the total population of profiled communities are persons with specific needs (PWSNs). These are persons with chronic illness, women at risk, pregnant or lactating mothers, elderly-headed households, solo elderlies, solo parents and persons with disabilities (PWD). On the other hand, 64 percent of the total population are indigenous people who are also considered PWSNs. These are the Yakan people that comprise the majority population of the entire municipality.

Four out of the seven profiled barangays said the government has allocated budget for vulnerable groups while the three other barangays expressed there is no budget allocated for these groups. However, five out of seven barangays disclosed there were no government projects implemented for this particular group. This result only implied the poor implementation of government programs, especially with regards to PWSNs.

The reported top most immediate need of PWSNs is humanitarian assistance followed by devices for PWDs, care mechanism for children and older persons, medical care for persons with chronic illness, psychosocial treatment and medical treatment for survivors of sexual violence.

Majority respondents disclosed that PWSNs know their rights and were able to exercise these. They also revealed that the sectors are willing to share information. On top of it, there is no discrimination of PWSNs.

The respondents believed that majority women have opportunities to voice out their opinion in the community decision-making while few other respondents do not have an idea on this issue.

Impact and Effects of Violations

Communities reported that the common immediate protection needs of PWSNs, both IDPs and non-IDPs, are basic needs such as food, medicine, potable water and clothing. For IDPs who are PSWNs, they have the special needs of facilities and services designed for their condition. Long-term protection needs are financial capital to rebuild economic activities, continued schooling for their children, livelihood assistance and pension subsidy from the government.

Communities disclosed that they have limited access to both the immediate and long-term protection needs. As a result, PWSNs are struggling to survive due to hunger, financial burden due to lack of income sources, isolation due to less participation and lowered priority for government programs.

Given the violations committed towards PWSNs, the communities ensured that the respective families have full responsibility for taking care of their family members with special needs and there is no discrimination.

Basic social services

Nature of Violations and Threats

With regards to other basic services, the community disclosed that out of the 1,972 households in the 7 profiled barangays, 1,377 households or 70 percent do not have electrical service, 1,430 households or 73 percent do not have access to safe water for drinking and 1,048 households or 53 percent do not own toilets. Some of these households may not able to access two or all of the services indicated.

All seven barangays disclosed that some members of the community have access to 4Ps and PhilHealth, SSS, Senior Citizen and Social Pension but none of the barangays have access to free birth registration.

Impact and Effects of Violations

Conflicts and multiple displacements resulted in poverty and limited government interventions, restricting access to basic social services.

Access to water is still an issue. In every household, women and girls are usually responsible for fetching water. The nearest source of water is 20 meters away from the house and the farthest is

Recommendations



The comprehensive social protection programs for PWSNs must be developed and implemented in close collaboration with LGU through the office of social welfare and development office.



The duty bearers shall undergo trainings pertaining to PWSNs. The higher authorities must also develop monitoring mechanisms for the performance of local leaders.



The BLGU must design and implement sustainable livelihood programs (like the concept of bahay kubo) to ensure food security of the PWSN.

approximately 1 kilometer, and a majority of households do not have water at home. Sources are either dug wells or springs that need to be boiled before drinking.


The absence of electricity makes communities feel insecure, and abuse and other forms of violence occur at night. Recharging mobile phones and other devices is difficult. It also affects activities like symposia, school programs and other gatherings that require electricity.

As 53 percent of the total households do not have a toilet or latrine they choose to use a secluded area or to relieve themselves at night.


All these issues lead to increased risks faced by the identified vulnerable groups, especially women and girls because they experience the burden of doing household chores in the absence of potable water and household toilets.

Overall, communities disclosed that vulnerable groups have experienced difficulties in performing their family and social roles in absence of electricity, potable water and hygiene facilities.

Recommendations



The community suggested the improvement of water sources and to bring them nearer to households through construction of at least level II water systems in every barangay.



BLGUs must review their barangay development plans to include electrification of unserved sitios/puroks of every barangay. These may be provided through the support of local government unit and the local electric cooperative operating in the area.



BLGUs must work with department of health and public works and highway to implement communal toilet projects in their respective communities.

Safety and security


Nature of Violations and Threats

The area is a war-torn municipality due to the frequent armed encounters between AFP and non-state armed groups resulting in multiple displacements. Aside from armed confrontation, other incidents such as bombing, destruction of civilian properties, kidnapping/abduction, torture and killing of civilians also occurred in the communities.

Despite the frequent history of troubles and the continued presence of armed elements in these communities, around 57 percent of respondents believed that residents are safe. They said that these individuals are not harmful, and residents can move freely. Contrary to this, 43 percent of the respondents said they are not safe due to the following reasons:



Armed encounters/firefights



Bombings



Destruction of civilian properties



Torture of civilians



Killing of civilians



Curfew

Impact and Effects of Violations

Communities disclosed that the common effects of violations were lost or damaged civilian properties and livelihoods, killing of family members, restricted freedom of movement, feelings of insecurity, disrupted economic activities and interrupted schooling of children. Such incidents caused extreme vulnerability of the affected population, including hunger, illness and many forms of protection issues.

The communities also reported that the protection needs of the affected population were immediate humanitarian assistance, livelihood support and durable solutions to IDPs and violent conflicts.

Coping Mechanism of Affected Population

During the profiling, communities revealed that in order to minimize the negative consequences of the conflicts, an early warning system was formed to closely monitor the situation in preparation for displacement. If conflicts erupted, the affected population went to safer places in adjacent barangays where they could easily access humanitarian assistance.

To avoid unlawful killing and safety and security issues, communities listened to the local authorities' security briefings and followed all precautionary measures.

At present, the combined presence of BIAF as well as the active patrolling of the BPATs are among the mechanisms to ensure the safety and security of residents in the area.

When local disputes happen, the mechanisms in place to settle such conflicts are the following:



Barangay councils



Religious leaders



Municipal authorities



Traditional leaders



Women leaders

Recommendations



Ensure that the local leaders in coordination with the PNP, AFP and BIAF must establish BPAT posts in every *sitio/purok* since the BPATs play a great role in maintaining peace and order in the community.



Strengthen BDRRMC with emphasis on early warning system



Train local officials on conflict management and resolution as well as dialogue facilitation



Ensure that the local government supports the existing monitoring groups in the area to actively monitor peace and security.



Engage in community peace advocacy to support local peace initiatives that directly or indirectly support the wider peace initiative aimed at ending the decade-long conflict in Mindanao

Documentation

Nature of Violations and Threats

Communities disclosed that 13 percent of people (1,390 people) in the profiled barangays have no birth certificate and 10 percent of couples (1,065) had no marriage contract.

The reasons for not being able to secure civil documents are due to lack of financial resources for transportation and fees, difficulty in completing required documents, and lack of knowledge about the importance Birth and Marriage Registration.

Impact and Effects of Violations

The most affected groups having no birth certificate are the elderly, children and persons with disabilities. Common effects were inabilities to travel, go to school, to vote, to claim 4Ps and pension and inability to claim assistance. Therefore, households without birth certificates have experienced movement restriction and have been deprived of access to both government and non-government assistance.

Coping Mechanism of Affected Population

The elderly and people with disabilities will pay a service fee for anybody whom they trust to do the transaction, though it is quite expensive. For school-age children, mothers may negotiate with the principal to enrol their children while birth registration is in process. Mothers will also ask the help of local leaders, preferably the Barangay Chairman, to fast track the processing of the birth certificate.

Housing, land and property (HLP)


Nature of Violations and Threats

Communities disclosed that only 224 landowners have land titles, including those land titles used as collateral in loans made by their forefathers. Other landowners were not able to secure land titles because of lack of documentation, financial issues, or not considering it a priority. The communities also revealed that some landowners allowed any residents to use their land either for temporary residence or for farming. A majority of land was acquired through inheritance or purchase. In all profiled barangays, there are 96 individuals that are land tenants, 85 renters and 160 sharers.


Impact and Effects of Violations

All households in the seven communities had experienced displacement. The only dissimilarity is some were able to return while others chose to stay because of multiple reasons. Their properties were partly or even totally damaged, and crops were damaged as well. In either case, communities disclosed that those households greatly affected by conflicts relied on humanitarian assistance during displacement but in the absence of assistance from the local authorities, they survived on the small food stock they kept (in preparation for displacement) until the situation in their respective community was normal. If the food stock was consumed, they asked the assistance of relatives, friends and other displaced households. Upon return to their place of origin, they asked for support from local traders to finance their farming activities (often resulting in exorbitant interest and requiring sale of their produce to the trader).

Recommendations




Community awareness related to HLP must be strengthened by the LGU, including raising awareness of channels to address issues.




There must be an active focal person of this concern from the level barangay to link into municipal level. There should be a desk on HLP in the Barangay Hall to address such issue while it is still young.

Recommendations



BLGUs must provide free birth and marriage contract registration in close collaboration with municipal authorities, which will be done at sitio or purok level.



The Municipal Local Government will initiate a barangay-based regular activity to provide chances for all constituents to take advantage of government services and programs.

Information

Nature of Violations and Threats

The community wanted to be informed on protection-related information through community meetings, purok/barangay leaders, religious leaders. Mobile phones have poor signal in the entire municipality while only few families can afford to buy a radio. So, these methods are not widely used. Information is also spread through word of mouth.

Impact and Effects of Violations

On matters related to information, elderly, women, children and persons with disabilities from the remote areas have been deprived of access to information and are left behind by government assistance and programs, lack access to fast information related to security alerts, upcoming disasters and new local policies. The best way to inform these populations is through community meetings, purok leaders and religious leaders.


Coping Mechanism of Affected Population

The communities chose to be informed through community meetings, through purok/barangay leaders, through religious leaders and hearsay. But during emergency situations, in most cases the information transmitted late. Vulnerable sectors such as women, children, elderly and persons with disabilities who relied to local leaders and neighbors are most affected.

Protective Capability and Compliance

Four out of seven barangays have satisfactorily informed and educated their constituents on government programs. The dissemination of information was executed through meetings and awareness sessions and also announced during the congregational prayer every Friday. However, the barangay officials expressed they still need to be provided communication equipment in order for them transmit any information with their co-officials and residents. Cellular phone signal is very poor in the area. The remaining barangays have issues with information dissemination. Other than having poor signal, houses in these barangays are far from each other.

Recommendations



BLGUs should strengthen their BDRRM Plan and must use the disaster preparedness fund for purchasing communication equipment.

Peace Processes

Recommendations



Local authorities should hold fora, meetings and other sessions on understanding the BOL. This session will also help to manage the expectations of the communities.

SOURCES / REFERENCES:

Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

Key Informant Interviews (KII)

Secondary Data Review

- Municipal Development Plan
- Barangay Development Plan



Philippines



**Harnessed Emergency Local Protection System (HELPS)
Quick Impact Project
TURNOVER CEREMONY OF WATER SYSTEM LEVEL 2**

A project implemented by the People of Barangay Kalilih, Barangay Local Government Unit, Tiyakap Kalilintad, Inc. In coordination with Municipal Local Government Unit of Al-barka, Basilan
Funded by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

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Barangay Kalilih, Al-barka, Basilan

