



Evaluation summary

# Supporting Children with Disabilities in the Philippines

THE IMPACT OF OUR “ENABLE COMMUNITIES FOR  
INCLUSION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES”  
PROJECT IN THE PHILIPPINES, 2020-2022



Above: Orson helping his son with the home rehabilitation exercises given to them by NORFIL. Prior to NORFIL'S support, his son could only sit and stand. Now he can walk slowly without assistance.

Frontpage: Orson is proud of his son and the progress he's made since doing home rehabilitation.

## **CBM Australia has supported a project that has helped children and youth with disabilities in Cebu, Ilocos Sur and Northern Samar Provinces access community services and programs.**

Implemented by NORFIL Foundation, the project team took a two-pronged approach by:

- Activating 41 local councils to take disability commitments seriously.
- Supporting children and youth with disabilities and their families to become disability advocates, ensuring they can access the services they need.

### **Local governments committed to more money and services for people with disabilities.**

Before the project began, local councils knew little about disability, including the laws protecting and promoting disability inclusion, and the council's role in disability affairs. As a result, there was little budget, programs, or services specific for people with disabilities - they were being left out.

This situation started to change when local councils started working with NORFIL Foundation.

995 council members became more aware of the laws governing people with disabilities. This included laws on budget allocations, anti-bullying, accessibility, and inclusive education.

### **32 local councils passed laws and adopted policies supporting and protecting people with disabilities.**

Establishing this awareness was an important step in being able to push councils to act on disability affairs as they will only act if there is a clear legal basis.

**“With NORFIL’s presence, people with disabilities’ voices are heard. You have raised awareness of everyone. You have urged us, the local council, to provide resources for them. We are forever thankful for the partnership.”**

**– Council member.**

The project team successfully urged councils to allocate or increase budgets for people with disabilities.

With more funds and resources allocated for people with disabilities, the project team, with support from local councils, implemented programs and services benefiting 12,250 children and youth with disabilities and their families.

**Through training, home rehabilitation programs, inclusive education, social opportunities and access to assistive devices and medical services, children and youth with disabilities have improved physically, intellectually, and socially.**

**- Evaluation finding.**

### **Education is more accessible.**

Before the project started, few children with disabilities in the area went to school. Schools were not accessible, and parents feared their children would be bullied.

After encouragement from the project team, the Department of Education agreed to train teachers across four provinces in inclusive education.

The project team provided the education centres with learning materials. They pushed for buildings to be more accessible, conducting accessibility audits in schools and supporting the construction of ramps and accessible toilets.

To get children through the door, the project team encouraged parents of children with disabilities to enrol them in special education classes, as well as regular classes.

Now, 1,001 children with disabilities are enrolled in schools. These children are thriving – learning, making friends and becoming more independent.

**Supporting children with disabilities to gain an education is not simply about dropping them off at the school gates. It's about creating an environment that is both accessible and welcoming. Only then will they be able to reach their full potential.**

### **Families advocated for their children.**

Family members started speaking out against bullying, bringing their children to medical appointments and helping them to access assistive devices and medicines.

**Families have begun letting their children play with other children in the neighborhood. They no longer fear bullying. Instead, they stand up to it.**

### **Families provided home-based rehabilitation and care**

Family members learnt how to improve their care for children with disabilities. Separate classes were held for fathers, and for siblings, recognising that everyone in a family can support a child with disability.

Parents also learnt how to implement home-based rehabilitation and education programs. By doing these programs, children learnt how to perform daily tasks, such as how to go to the toilet, how to bath, and how to clean. Their mobility and speech also improved.

Families that previously believed there was nothing that could be done for their child were happily surprised when they started seeing improvements. They became more understanding and patient.

**Before the project, Paulo's six year-old child was confined to a crib. After attending training supported by the project, Paulo started a home exercise program for his child, who is now out of the crib and beginning to stand on his own.**

**-Evaluation finding.**

## More children and youth with disabilities accessed health and community services.

2,459 children and youth were assessed at local health services where they were diagnosed, and referred for treatment: medicines, surgery, rehabilitation, and assistive devices. This opens the door to attending and participating in school.

**Agila used to be scared to walk to school because she could not see the roads properly. Her limited eyesight made learning difficult. With support from the project team, Agila was prescribed glasses. She can now see better, and her schooling has improved.**

***-Evaluation finding.***

The project team also helped 2,248 children and youth obtain their disability ID card. This card gives them access to benefits like discounts on health services, medicines, and public transport and education assistance.

## Children and youth with disabilities started to speak up.

Children and youth with disabilities got involved in training and met other children and youth like them. This helped them learn new skills and feel more confident.

Children and youth spoke with council members about their needs and rights; provided counselling and peer support to other children and youth with disabilities; attended Youth Congresses; participated in school forums; applied for jobs; and exercised their rights as citizens by registering to vote.

## Impact of COVID-19 on the project

During 2020-2021, COVID-19 lockdown measures had a significant impact on project implementation. Stay-at-home orders restricted people's mobility, bringing many project activities to a halt. Adapting to the situation, NORFIL temporarily pivoted in focus to support people in need by providing hygiene kits, distributing cash grants enabling people to purchase essential items, and turning to online platforms for training, monitoring and coordinating.

