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# ► ILO-Japan Water and Sanitation Project

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## Water for jobs, peace and schooling

*Schoolchildren stand to benefit from an ILO project that aims to promote peace and create jobs in a previously conflict-ridden region of the Philippines.*

MAGUINDANAO, Philippines (ILO News) - The class has started but half of the students are not there. Outside, in the garden of the Timanan Central Elementary School in Maguindanao, children aged 5-12 form a long queue leading up to a lone standpipe. Each are carrying a plastic container or a watering can. The path is muddy and slippery from water that spills from buckets that are too heavy for the children to carry.

This the only source of water that they have to wash their hands and flush the toilet.



Water collected will be used for handwashing and flushing the toilet manually in school. (Photo © ILO/M. Rimando)



Students line up to fetch water from the only source at the Timanan Central Elementary School. (Photo © ILO/M. Rimando)

"I have to fetch water every day. I feel so tired. Sometimes I can't eat anything during the break as I have to fetch water," said 12-year old Charles Tarala.

"I can't start my science class because my students have to fetch water in the morning, and during breaktime in the afternoon," said teacher, Larlyn Alquisar. "We have no water connection inside the classroom or in the toilets, and have only one source of water in school."

Timanan Central Elementary School is in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in southern Philippines - a region that was riven by conflict for decades.



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Established in March 2019, BARMM is one of the poorest regions in the country and faces numerous challenges, including the need for access to safe and reliable water supplies.

Once, the school ran out of water and the students were unable to use the toilet. The lack of sanitation also affects the school in other ways.

"We used to pick vegetables from our school garden and give to our students to add to their packed lunch. We cannot grow vegetables in school anymore, and we do not have enough water for cooking. The low water supply affected not just the school but also nearby communities who depend on our water tank as a source," Alquiser explained.

The ILO and the Government of Japan are partnering to improve water and sanitation services in the region. The project "Improvement of Water Supply Equipment Management Capacity for the Establishment of Peace in Mindanao", will engage local communities to develop, build, operate and maintain water and sanitation facilities.

Returning combatants, vulnerable youth, indigenous peoples, displaced men and women and those vulnerable to conflict, among others, will be trained as community contractors.

As a result, around 1,800 jobs will be created and almost 12,000 households and schools like Central Elementary will benefit from improved water supplies.

"Interventions in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region are meant to create jobs, while promoting decent work and reducing poverty. Access to safe and reliable water supplies is a basic need and is critical in developing a healthy, educated and productive workforce. It is also crucial to peace and security," said Khalid Hassan, Director of the ILO Country Office for the Philippines.

The project builds on ILO work in the Philippines in the areas of crisis recovery and prevention, skills development and employment creation, especially for vulnerable groups. It is aligned to Goal 6 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals on clean water and sanitation, Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, and Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

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