LEYTE – More than eight months after Yolanda unleashed her wrath and brought unprecedented damage to lives and property, survivors have yet to recover the quality of life they had before the calamity. But survivors have a lot to hope for as many humanitarian organizations are helping them get back on track.

ACF International, with funding from United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), has been providing emergency assistance to 10,000 affected households under the Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) project in Tacloban City, and the towns of Dagami, Julita, Pastrana, Burauen and La Paz in Leyte. Among the project beneficiaries are pregnant and lactating mothers, single parents, households with malnourished children and persons with disability whose livelihoods depend on farming devastated by Typhoon Yolanda. The amount, Php 4,370 provided for six months until August 2014, is estimated to cover the food needs of a family of five for a month. Widely-used in emergency response, the UCT was launched in the Philippines following its success in emergency situations in Africa.

Abandoned by her husband, Karen Germanes, 23, from Brgy. Rizal, Dagami town had been suffering from epileptic seizures. Without a job to support her children and continue her medication, her problem worsened after Typhoon Yolanda destroyed the family-owned coconut farm and sari-sari (variety) store. Assessments were made by ACF team and Germanes was among the thousands who qualified for the UCT project.

According to Germanes the monthly cash assistance has given her family a new lease on life, as it is momentarily providing them subsistence now that their livelihood sources are gone.

Luz Refuerzo, 55, from Burauen, Leyte, has launched a small business of selling dried fish, thanks to the cash grants from the Unconditional Cash Transfer project for vulnerable people supported by UNICEF. Refuerzo takes care of her 79-year-old paralyzed father, her 11-year-old grandson and her husband, now unemployed.

ACF Responds in Bohol

BOHOL—ACF International, the world’s leader in the fight against hunger and malnutrition, has reached over 30,000 vulnerable populations affected by the 7.2 magnitude tremor that rocked Central Visayas in 2013. The quake destroyed homes, infrastructures, livelihoods and the facilities needed for safe drinking and sanitation.

With funding from UNICEF and the European Commission-Humanitarian Aid, ACF complemented government efforts in addressing unmet needs of families in affected municipalities of Clarin, Inabanga, Maribojoc, Buenavista and Tubigon, through services that have direct connection to nutrition such as providing access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and public awareness on disaster risk management (DRM) in communities, day care centers, and schools. Among the project beneficiaries include undernourished children, pregnant and lactating mothers, persons with disability, the elders and those without access to permanent source of food and income.

ACF has expanded efforts to support communities affected by storm surges caused by Typhoon Yolanda. It will launch interventions in livelihoods recovery and rehabilitation of water facilities.
ACF and partners help rebuild Zamboanga

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Eleven months into recovery and reconstruction efforts after armed faction of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) engaged the Philippines security forces in Zamboanga on 9 September 2014, ACF International and partners continue to provide a range of essential support to complement government efforts for the 25,670 displaced people, among them 13,000 in Joaquin F. Enriquez Memorial Stadium and thousands more in other evacuation centers.

The conflict destroyed homes, infrastructures, water systems, the facilities needed for safe drinking and sanitation, and thousands lost their livelihoods.

Noting the distressing conditions of the internally displaced people in the evacuation center, Javad Amoozegar, ACF country director, emphasizes the need to focus on the wellbeing of the most vulnerable populations. “Children under five, persons with disability, pregnant and lactating women in evacuation centers, and those without permanent source of food and income especially those from poorer layers of the population are the most vulnerable in this situation, and their specific needs can be overlooked,” stresses Amoozegar.

The Zamboanga Action Plan 2014, which outlines the needs of the people affected by the crisis, highlights the very little help extended to save lives and alleviate their suffering.

Since the crisis begun, ACF, through the generous support of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), and European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), continuously provides latrines, water tanks and pipes, bathing facilities, faucets, and holds awareness sessions on disaster risk management, hygiene and sanitation training and positions nutrition intervention needed in addressing the growing cases of diarrhea and malnutrition among children under five.

“Despite the uncertainties in the evacuation center, the heads of families are determined to make a better future for their children. Their smiles and courage are inspiring. ACF and partners are here to help rebuild Zamboanga,” says Amoozegar.
Generation Nutrition
Launched in the Philippines

By DYAN AIMEE RODRIGUEZ
ACF Advocacy Coordinator

DAVAO CITY—"My son smiles again." This is the response of the mother of Josh Bustamante when asked whether the Outpatient Therapeutic Program (OTP) in Davao City is responsive. Months ago, Mrs. Bustamante did not have an inkling that her son has severe acute malnutrition (SAM). She merely noticed that Josh was thinner compared to his siblings. Josh was not fond of playing with other kids, he rarely smiled. Worse, she did not know that if left untreated, her son’s form of malnutrition could be fatal.

The project “Support to the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) Initiative of the Davao City Local Government Unit,” in partnership with UNICEF, is addressing cases of undernutrition in 182 barangays of Davao City.

Baby Josh Bustamante is just one of the 277 SAM children in Davao City who are currently undergoing community-based treatment because of this initiative. UNICEF has provided Ready-to-Use-Therapeutic Food (RUTF) for the SAM children, along with a host of private sectors supporting the intervention across Davao City through feeding programs.

Davao City Health Officer Josephine Villafuerte lauds the project, acknowledging that before there has been a lack of intervention to those who are identified as undernourished.

“Thus far, we are actually doing something to help those who are acutely malnourished,” Dr. Villafuerte said.

Mayor Rodrigo Duterte signed the executive order institutionalizing the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) in the local health systems, and approved the PhP6.5 million budget for nutrition programs during the launch of the Generation Nutrition campaign held in Davao City, attended by health and nutrition stakeholders from Davao, Leyte, Capiz, Zamboanga City, Lanao del Sur, Cotabato and the media.

As 2014 plays a key year in the negotiations on the post-2015 development framework, the Generation Nutrition campaign pushes for governments to adopt appropriate goals and targets for addressing both undernutrition and wasting as part of any future deal. The Generation Nutrition campaign brings together a diverse and growing group of civil society organizations who wish to see an end to child deaths from acute malnutrition, including the Philippines Coalition of Advocates for Nutrition Security (PhilCAN). The ‘Generation Nutrition’ campaign petition is open for signature at www.generation-nutrition.org.

“ACF encourages other local governments to do the same. Let’s come together and show global commitment to end child deaths from acute malnutrition. We believe that, with sufficient political will, this goal can be achieved by 2035,” Javad Amoozegar, reiterates the campaign’s objectives.

Sewing the future

PRESIDENT ROXAS, North Cotabato—A mother to nine children, Violeta Capunay is the only dressmaker in Lama-Lama, President Roxas town in North Cotabato.

When ACF International, with funding from Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), asked residents what they wanted as income-generating project, Violeta thought of a sewing machine. Violeta says she did not expect her wish would be granted as a sewing machine was a bit expensive, at PhP11,000 compared to other projects that ACF gave to its beneficiaries.

Since last year, Violeta already has more than 280 clients. At least 7,000 households benefited from the project “Support for the Socioeconomic Development of the Communities within Spanish Development Cooperation’s Action Zones in the Philippines.” It is implemented in the municipalities of Arakan and President Roxas in North Cotabato and Kapatagan in Lanao del Sur from late 2010 to July 2014.

Saving lives by ending open defecation

GEN. MACARTHUR, Eastern Samar—Horrors to Barangays 1 and 4 of Gen. Mac Arthur for being declared as Zero Open Defecation (ZOD) areas. The CLTS (Community Led Total Sanitation) championed by ACF and UNICEF, encourages community self-analysis of existing defecation patterns and threats, and promotes local solutions to reduce and ultimately eliminate the practice of open defecation.

After initiatives from ACF to implement the CLTS approach in Brgy 1 and 4, an external monitoring team consisting of the provincial and municipal health officers, sanitation inspectors and village officials held the ZOD assessment, and reported that 100% of the households have now latrines made from locally available materials and practicing the habits of toilet usage and proper handwashing.
Recovery Continues in the Philippines

By Eduardo de Francisco
Yolanda Response Director, ACF International

Nine months after Typhoon Yolanda claimed thousands of lives, destroyed homes and livelihoods, many families are still struggling to bounce back.

Thanks to our supporters, ACF was able to provide the critical services to the affected populations. We screened and treated severely malnourished children, provided care and psychosocial support to pregnant and lactating women, distributed food enabling them to survive a crisis, provided access to clean water and health promotion, erected safe toilets, reducing the spread of diseases in vulnerable communities, provided farmers with cash, seeds and tools to help restore their livelihoods and they can provide for their families. Behind these services and statistics are thousands of our supporters working hard to reach the affected populations.

With funding from various donors, we’re continuing our recovery efforts by scaling up our programs to some of the most vulnerable families, prioritizing persons with disability and the elderly. Many people are still struggling to get back in their lives. This next phase of our programs will reach over 200,000 people in the affected populations. We are thrilled to have partners working with us in the life-saving work, and we look forward to scaling up our efforts for greater reach and coverage. You made all these possible.

1. ACF International reached the coastal villages of Tapobanhan and Canagnaan, two remote islands on the eastern coast of Iloilo province. ACF delivered 28 tons of life-saving supplies for the disaster survivors Typhoon Yolanda. Agnes Varraine-Leca/ACF International

2. Hygiene promotion activities in barangay Binintutan in Ponentevedra municipality supported by Kindernothilfe. Daniel Burgui/ACF International

3. ACF’s nutrition activities continue as part of humanitarian and recovery response to the affected populations of Typhoon Yolanda. The photo shows Mary Garce, 27, feeding her 20-month-old daughter Mary Franz a ready to use food. Daniel Burgui/ACF International

4. ACF restored the water well destroyed by Typhoon Yolanda in San Dionisio, Iloilo. The project is supported by the European Commission - Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), implemented by a consortium of four INGOs: Save the Children, ACF International, Merlin and CARE. Daniel Burgui/ACF International

5. ACF team members, Jo-an Jagape and Danilo Beluso, talking with Mayor Milliard Villanueva of Concepcion, Iloilo province. ACF delivered 28 tons of life-saving supplies for the disaster survivors Typhoon Yolanda. Daniel Burgui/ACF International

6. Care practices and psychosocial support activities conducted by ACF staff in partnership with Kindernothilfe in the municipality of Pinat, Iloilo. Daniel Burgui/ACF International

Thanks to everyone who heeded our appeals. We are thrilled to have partners working with us in this life-saving work, and we look forward to scaling up our efforts for greater reach and coverage. You made all these possible.