



Renewable Energy Access for off-grid Communities and Households

# REACH NEWSLETTER

CLEAN ENERGY FOR A RESILIENT WORLD



## Power within REACH

**“Using solar power is good because it helps us during power outages. Generators also tend to go bust easily. Sometimes it takes at least three weeks**

**before electricity is restored.** When that happens, people go back to using kerosene lamps. If there were mistakes in the past, we need to do better this time, for instance, have rules for monthly payment and strive hard to pay to make it sustainable.”

**GRACE LUNA**  
CEPA President and former BAPA official, Brgy. Kauswagan, Biri, Northern Samar

Access to energy is both a necessity and a privilege. The availability of energy sources is one of the many factors that can alleviate poverty, improve the standard of living, and contribute to visible economic growth. In the Philippines, an estimated of 2.3 million households (HHs) remain with no access to electricity. This number includes off-grid communities in some areas in Northern Samar where households not only struggle for energy access but are also vulnerable to natural disasters.

With this, the global initiative of UN Sustainable Energy for All and the Philippine Energy Plan 2012–2040 of the Philippine’s Department of Energy (DOE), call to promote renewable energy (RE) for climate change adaptation and mitigation in the Philippines. In response, 10 municipalities in Northern Samar will benefit from the Renewable Energy Access for off-grid Communities and Households (REACH) project starting in 2020. This three-year project will contribute to the implementation of the DOE’s objective to reach 100% electrification in the country. The REACH Project is funded by the European Union and is implemented by three



Funded by the European Union



ENTREPRENEURS du Monde



Malteser International  
Order of Malta Worldwide Relief



consortium partners: People in Need (PIN), Entrepreneurs du Monde (EdM), and Malteser International (MI).

The consortium has varying deliverables in the project. Output 1, implemented by EdM and PIN, focuses on increasing the demand and access of off-grid & under-electrified HHs RE. Output 2, on the other hand, allows off-grid & under-electrified HHs and businesses to gain and improve access to income-generating activities & sustainable livelihood opportunities through RE technologies and systems. Next, Output 3 enables off-grid & under-electrified HHs and communities to benefit from enhanced social welfare services & living conditions through the use of RE technology. Finally, Output 4 centers on increasing the capacities of local and national stakeholders to manage, maintain, promote and disseminate RE.

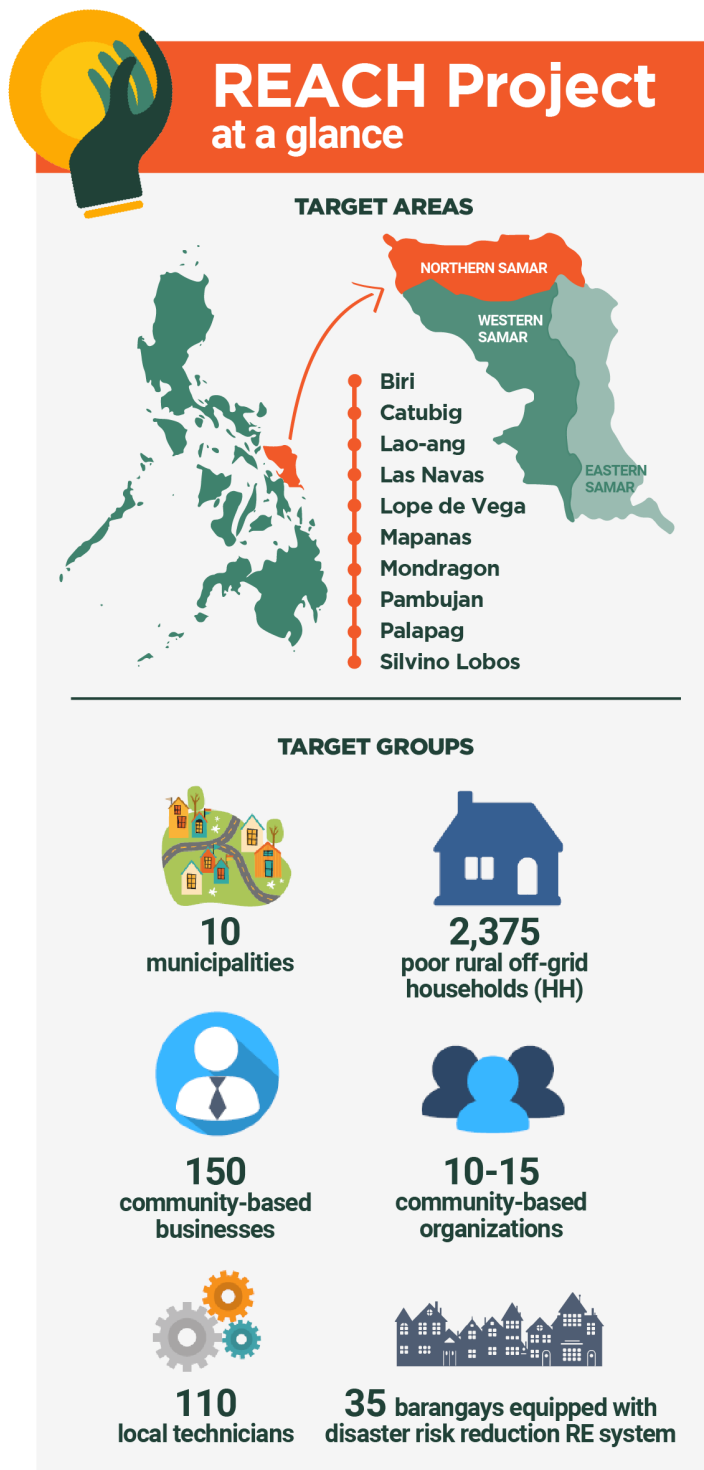
The advocacy campaigns, business fora and other REACH events aim to promote innovative RE technology uses and to stimulate investment from government and private sector sources. Aside from that, dissemination of best practices and lessons learned on off-grid electrification will be taken into account from experience sharing sessions and exposure visits.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the REACH project and its implementing organizations are now starting to fulfill its promise towards sustained economic progress in Northern Samar with the use of RE.

## Enhancing livelihood opportunities for CBOs and CBBs

People in Need (PIN) is continuously working to support Community-based Organizations (CBOs), and Community-based Businesses (CBBs) for livelihood opportunities and productive economic activities. The CBOs are organized cooperatives and farmers groups with potential livelihood projects, while CBBs are individual and/or partnership business endeavors or small-business enterprises in the communities.

Among the livelihood projects considered in the RE assessment and designs are: solar-powered abaca and coconut processing system; solar-powered rice mill; solar-powered income-generating-projects (IGPs) for women's groups such as sewing machines, sari-sari



stores, turmeric processing equipment; and solar powered lighting and a water system for piggery, among others.

The requirements for CBOs are the following: it must be located in an off-grid or in an under-energized community, with readily available equipment to use Renewable Energy (RE) solutions, and must be an active organization doing productive activities within



Main tributary in Catubig where local residents catch banca trips in going to other barangays



the last three years, whose main crops include abaca, coconut and rice (palay). The project will support business operations. It will look into the production aspect of the CBOs to enhance productivity, and improve marketing effectivity and the development of products. On the other hand, for the CBBs, aside from being in off-grid communities, criteria include being registered under the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for a minimum of one year, and registered in the barangay with current economic activity, such as a sari-sari store with cold chain equipment and services like a freezer, refrigerators and the like.

Validation of CBOs and CBBs is ongoing in the 10 Northern Samar municipalities where REACH Project is present. CBO targets both men and women organizations. For the women’s group, beneficiaries include members of the Sustainable Livelihood Programs (SLP) found in the barangays primarily organized by the government through the Department of Social Services and Development (DSWD). In Mondragon alone, there were three SLP groups with a membership of 20 to 30 women per organization. Introduction of RE solutions to women’s organizations will facilitate and improve women’s labor participation and economic productivity, as well as enhance their influence in everyday decisions.

## Our solution, strategy

For the last five years, Entrepreneurs du Monde (EdM) has explored the lack of energy access in the Philippines – from the urban maze of Manila to the highly-remote islands of Quezon Province. Now, EdM is setting foot on the mountains of Northern Samar to light up off-grid communities in the province.

EdM, through the REACH project, is focusing on the electrification of 1,875 rural underserved and off-grid households in Northern Samar – two out of the three solutions that will be used to electrify 2,375 households across the province. Households are given either smart-grid or stand-alone systems.

For the 940 households connected with smart-grid systems, families are ensured uninterrupted power for their essential needs such as lighting, fans, mobile phone charging and TVs, as well as freezers, cooking equipment, washing machines and water pumps, without fear of brownout or blackout.

For the remaining households connected with stand-alone systems, families are autonomous in their energy consumption while accessing ownership of the system after a while. The household can choose from lighting systems with phone charging option, or add a couple more appliances like TVs, fans, or sewing machines.

Raising awareness on Renewable Energy, and more particularly on solar energy has been at the heart of EdM’s activities for the past months. EdM has started engaging with more than 500 families across the targeted municipalities.

EdM now works with these communities in building the most suitable solar product, and creating a payment mechanism to make rural poor households empowered and more resilient to adverse climate change impacts.

# REACHing off-grid communities through inclusive DRRM, RE tech solutions



Rannel Tautho and Noel Balanquit, Social Community Mobilizers, introduce Project REACH, the consortium, and Malteser International to the community in Tobgon, Silvino Lubos on September 30, 2020.

combat climate change. The organization will conduct an orientation on proper usage and maintenance of the technology as part of their effort to ensure that the project will be sustained. This will include the identification of property custodians accountable for these installed systems. They will undergo in-depth training on caring for and managing facility-based systems. Local community technicians will be trained also on the installation, repair, and maintenance of RE technologies.

RE solutions will be provided to enhance their disaster-resilience and climate change adaptation. Possible solutions include solar lighting with power systems for communication to ensure the operational continuity during and after emergencies, or solar-powered water pumps to secure access to safe and clean water, among others.

Malteser International (MI) continues to aim for disaster-resilient communities by integrating Renewable Energy (RE) technology solutions through the Renewable Energy Access to off-grid Communities and Households (REACH) Project. In partnership with People in Need and Entrepreneurs du Monde, they are joining forces to reduce the vulnerability of rural communities towards the adverse impacts of climate change through sustainable energy solutions. MI focuses on off-grid and vulnerable communities prone to disasters.

To ensure the sustainability of the project, MI will reinforce training and capacity building. REACH, through MI, will facilitate an intensive training on Inclusive Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) that targets to enhance the coping capacities of the communities and their DRRM Plans.

Improved DRRM plans will determine the appropriate RE-based technology solution to aid disaster resilience and

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**PIN:** <https://www.peopleinneed.cz>  
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