What are the bold actions being taken by the Government to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the Philippines?

Every year millions of people die from diseases associated with inadequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene.

Although overall access to improved water source has significantly increased to 96 percent in 2013 in the Philippines, around 56.9 percent of households still do not treat their water (Ibid) and from among those who treat their water, only 35.2 per cent use appropriate treatment methods.

To this end, the programme has developed a series of integrated safe water, sanitation and hygiene (iWash) community murals in certain regions of the country to raise awareness.

At one event, about 20 school children and their mothers were invited to design and create a community mural, with the support of a local artist knowledgeable about iWash concepts and approaches.

If every kid or person would see what is painted on the wall, they could be acquainted on what is proper hygiene, what needs to be done or where the water is coming from.

Cherrymie Tupas
Mother of one of the children in Bgy Talib, Aroroy, Masbate

We learned a lot especially on where we can use clean water; we also learned the importance of water.

April Joy Betita
Grade X in Sawang High School
Why do the above actions matter to the people in the Philippines?

With remote areas presenting challenges to communicating the importance of safe water and sanitation services, the programme saw the community murals as one of the best communication vehicles to popularize the iWaSH approach, to disseminate information on water quality, improved sanitation facilities and household technologies, and to influence behavior change at the local level.

The development of iWaSH community murals has allowed the community to work together and has created a platform for all members of the community to discuss where their water is coming from, where they use water, and what is proper hygiene, among others. Moreover, the mural has localized the iWaSH approach and has brought iWaSH to a wider audience.

The programme has also highlighted the participation of women and girls in this activity, increasing their visibility, cooperation and involvement in planning, decision-making and in the implementation of water and sanitation projects.

What SDGs have been particularly advanced through the project?

This programme focuses on a number of targets of Goal 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation.

Target 6.1: By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.

Target 6.2: By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

Target 6.3: By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.