

CHSE UMagapay: Empowering Vulnerable Communities for a Sustainable Future

Dean Ofelia C. Lariego & Mr. Joey S. Ramos

College of Health Sciences Education

Email: joeyramos@umindanao.edu.ph

SDG Focus

KEY POINTS



Purpose: Addresses health disparities in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) by delivering community-based healthcare services, advancing public health research, and developing globally competent health professionals committed to sustainable community care.



Target Beneficiaries: Residents of GIDA and other vulnerable communities, CHSE students, faculty members, and local community health leaders.



Major Activities: Community health education, diagnostic and preventive health services, public health research, student and faculty mobility, capacity-building, and biotechnology seminars.



Key Partners: DOST Balik Scientist Program, local communities, alumni, healthcare professionals, and national and international academic partners.

Key Outcomes: Improved access to essential health services in underserved communities, strengthened public health research and global academic partnerships, enhanced student & faculty competencies, and established a sustainable, community-centered healthcare model.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

CHSE UMagapay is a progressive public health and social service framework designed to address a critical systemic gap. While urban health sectors advance, Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) and vulnerable communities remain neglected and continuously afflicted by preventable illness. Anchored on being Committed to Care, this initiative transforms the University of Mindanao's College of Health Sciences Education (CHSE) into an incubator for active change, molding students into "thinkers and doers" who bridge the gap from social dilemma to sustainable practice. Implemented as a continuous, multi-year initiative (2022–2026), the project operates in three core pillars:

- **Transformative Community Extension:** Research becomes practice through direct field actions, including Pahimangno sa Panglawas (disease awareness), Protektado (maternal-child health), and diagnostic operations like fecalysis parasitic surveillance, blood typing, and sugar monitoring and more;
- **Tangible SDG Research:** A historic Balik-Scientist partnership mobilizes student researchers utilizing advanced medical concepts and explored related fields (*Drosophila* models for drug discovery), focusing public health studies on neglected communities, translating abstract SDGs into evidence-based solutions for vulnerable sectors; and
- **Mobility & Capacity Building:** Student and faculty mobility, bench-marking (such as programs both in national and international) and advanced biotechnology seminars in the field of health sciences import global healthcare concepts to optimize local competencies.

Driven by a defining culture of “People First” and a profound philosophy of being “Committed to Care”, a major milestone of Project CHSE UMagapay is its dual-impact alumni network, which spans dynamically across the country and around the world. By targeting SDG goals at all levels, the college relives its core culture and creates graduates who serve as structural pillars of public service—ultimately bridging the gap by bringing world-class

healthcare standards directly into the poorest of the poor communities. Definitive in its purpose, this initiative establishes an exit-ready strategy ensuring that once institutional intervention concludes, the empowered community possesses the sustainable capability to stand on its own.

TANGIBLE OUTCOMES

Impact to the University. CHSE Umagapay significantly elevates the University of Mindanao's (UM) institutional reputation, transforming the College of Health Sciences Education (CHSE) into a benchmark model for high-impact allied health pedagogy.

- Institutional Positioning, Partnership & Capacity Building in Health Sciences: The mobility pipeline has expanded institutional global networks. It establishes a repeatable mechanism for cross-border knowledge transfers, directly enhancing the global competencies of faculty and students.
- Research Innovation: Breaking traditional academic barriers, the historic integration of the Balik-Scientist partnership elevates UM's research profile. Moving student and faculty research into advanced medical concepts has accelerated high-level scientific output, which can result in increased peer-reviewed publications and institutional prestige.

Impact to the Community. The project directly dismantles systemic health disparities in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) and vulnerable sectors that are routinely neglected by mainstream healthcare networks.

- Measurable Health Interventions: Through Pahimangno sa Panglawas and Protektado, the project provides immediate diagnostic surveillance and clinical interventions. The execution of field fecalysis operations establishes a critical diagnostic baseline for community parasitic control. Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDT) for blood typing and blood sugar monitoring offer immediate preventive care metrics, actively reducing the local burden of communicable and non-communicable illnesses.

- Holistic Wellness (One Health): Society benefits from a safer ecosystem where health, food security, and environmental resilience intersect through targeted initiatives like tree planting and food safety education.
- The Sustainability Blueprint: Most importantly, the social impact is designed with an institutional exit strategy. By equipping local populations with health literacy and foundational diagnostic awareness, the project fosters permanent self-reliance. Once the university's active implementation stops, the community possesses the capability to stand alone.

Impact to SDGs

CHSE UMagapay translates abstract global goals into localized, measurable milestones:

- SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being): The initiative advances Target 3.3 by mitigating neglected tropical diseases via diagnostic parasitic surveillance. It drives Targets 3.1 and 3.2 by running explicit maternal-child immunization seminars, and combats non-communicable risks through field blood/sugar screenings.
- SDG 4 (Quality Education): By linking international mobility, biotechnology seminars, and hands-on clinical tracking, the project satisfies Target 4.4, providing students with advanced technical competencies for global and local health service.
- SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities): The deliberate deployment of advanced scientific and medical resources directly into marginalized communities serves to bridge the health equity gap for underserved populations.
- SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals): The project operates as a multi-stakeholder engine, seamlessly binding academic networks, national scientific programs, local student doers, and mobilized alumni to achieve permanent, decentralized community development.

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

To keep the project running, improving, and growing across the University of Mindanao (UM), the college focuses on three practical steps:

1. Keeping the Program Running (Longevity)

- a. **Integrate Public and Community Health Courses into Actual Community Extension:** Aside from field clinics and health seminars are built directly into the students' mandatory internship and clinical rotation hours, courses with public health are encourage to integrate actual community immersion. This ensures a fresh, automatic batch of student "doers" every single semester without needing extra funding.
- b. **Train Locals to Take Over:** Local community leaders are trained to do basic health screenings and tracking. Combined with ongoing mentorship from local alumni, this creates a clear exit strategy so the community can handle basic healthcare on their own when the university steps back.

2. Making It Better (Quality & Growth)

- **Digitalization:** Move from paper records to a simple digital dashboard to track community health results (like sugar levels and parasitism) over time, making data easy to read and use.
- **More Health Services:** Expand the current medical missions to include basic mental health discussions and nutrition tracking during field visits.

3. Sharing with Other UM Colleges (Replication), The project serves as a step-by-step model that other departments can easily copy in the exact same communities:

- **Engineering:** Can send their students to set up simple water filters or solar power lights in the same GIDA areas.
- **Education (Teacher Ed):** Can use the seminar format to run basic reading, writing, and childhood development classes for the families.