A bridge is a means of connection. The Zuellig Family Foundation “connects” with development partners in working toward improved health outcomes for the Filipinos, most especially the poor. This 2017 Bridging Partnerships report highlights fruitful collaborations that led local leaders to improve their respective local health systems.
The repeat collaboration between ZFF and USAID seeks to institutionalize the Health Leadership and Governance Program for greater development impact on health. In photo are health workers checking on a baby in a health unit in Tawi-Tawi, one of the areas under the cycle 1 of the ZFF-USAID partnership.

Continuing collaboration for greater development impact

The positive reception of local governments to Health Leadership and Governance Program (HLGP) and their corresponding investment efforts in local health system improvement suggest that there is value in institutionalizing the program within the Department of Health (DOH). The Zuellig Family Foundation (ZFF) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) saw this as a worthy pursuit to collaborate on anew.

The project is under the USAID's Global Development Alliance and will focus on the institutionalization of the HLGP at the central and regional offices of the DOH. HLGP is a joint initiative program by the DOH and ZFF to strengthen health leadership and governance capabilities of local political leaders and public health professionals.

The partnership aims to strengthen mechanisms for the improved governance of integrated service delivery networks in Regions VI, IX, X, XII, and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The project also looks into leadership and governance issues affecting the implementation of tuberculosis and family planning programs in target areas; and the development of resilient intra- and inter-regional health systems in areas affected by natural and man-made disasters.

Implementation of major program interventions such as capability-building on leadership for selected DOH central office units, regional office staff, provincial governments, and city government began in the fourth quarter of the 2017.
A shelter for mothers from far-flung areas

The Zuellig Family Foundation (ZFF) facilitated the donation of a maternal halfway home in San Felipe, Zambales whose mayor and municipal health officer were part of the Municipal Leadership and Governance Program, a training program under ZFF’s partnership with the Department of Health. The donation was made by Switzerland-based KBA-NotaSys as part of its giving back to countries it has worked with.

The inauguration of the facility was done in March 2017. Built adjacent to a birthing facility, the maternal home will serve as a temporary shelter for expecting mothers who are due to deliver. KBA-NotaSys also provided health and office equipment for the use of Rural Health Unit staff.

The home is especially important for mothers living in far-flung villages, including the indigenous Aeta people, who make up 12 percent of San Felipe’s population.

The construction of a maternal halfway home marked a shift in the corporate social responsibility activity of KBA-NotaSys, which has long been helping up-and-coming artists and disaster-struck countries. With this move KBA-NotaSys was able to support a community, a much stronger initiative than just helping a single individual.
In Salcedo, Eastern Samar a focus group discussion is held on the role of health workers in educating parents on adolescent reproductive health.

ASRH orientation for parents in Salcedo, Eastern Samar

With scant materials to orient parents on adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH), the Zuellig Family Foundation (ZFF), through the support of the US-Philippines Society (US-PS), developed orientation materials that could increase involvement of parents in reinforcing responsible behavior of adolescents toward reproductive health.

The project aims to develop and prototype orientation materials for rural health workers targeting parents of teenagers. These materials are based on the “Learning Package for Education Development” modules of the Commission on Population and will be used as part of the ASRH programs of the local government units (LGUs).

The pilot site is in Salcedo, Eastern Samar due to its sustained interest in implementing an ASRH parent-education program. Salcedo was a recipient of the US-PS-supported “Recovery Assistant Program for Pregnant and Lactating Mothers” (RAP) during the post-super typhoon Haiyan period. It also underwent a resilient health systems planning program of the United Nations Children’s Fund and ZFF. In their resiliency plans, they identified ASRH as a priority health program because records showed teenage mothers comprised 25 percent of RAP beneficiaries, and there is increasing numbers of teenage mothers in the LGU.

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Mayor Timoteo Capoquian, M.D. of Gamay, Northern Samar speaks with a pregnant woman inside the municipality's Rural Health Unit. Gamay is one of the two pilot sites of the nutrition action research project that seeks to improve nutrition of both mothers and children.

Leadership and governance in nutrition for the first 1,000 Days

The action research project of the Swiss-registered Kristian Gerhard Jebsen Foundation and the Zuellig Family Foundation (ZFF) targets key stakeholders in the municipalities of Looc in Romblon and Gamay in Northern Samar where maternal and infant deaths continue to occur, while under-5 stunting has been increasing. The aim is to form an integrated and harmonized health and nutrition program for pregnant mothers and children up to 2 years old.

Key project interventions are on leadership training and coaching for nutrition, improvement of frontline health workers' technical competencies in functionalizing integrated service delivery and referral, intensified tracking and identification of needs of pregnant women and under-2 children, and socio-behavioral change communication for nutrition.

This project is now in the midterm of its second partnership period and will run until the third quarter of 2019. Last January, the first Nutrition and Health Leadership (NutriHeal) Module was conducted for mayors and core members of the Municipal Nutrition Council. During training, leaders updated their nutrition action scorecard, which showed underlying issues of their nutrition challenges. The leadership teams then created their two-year strategic plan to address the issues.
The September policy dialogue on supply chain management in local government units was attended by representatives from the Department of Health (DOH), Food and Drug Administration, MeTA Philippines, and the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines. One of the speakers during the event was Cecilia Sison (in photo), country coordinator of MeTA Philippines.

**Improving medicines supply chain management in LGUs**

A joint initiative in 2014 aimed to improve pharmaceutical management systems in the Zuellig Family Foundation’s (ZFF) 10 selected municipalities. ZFF’s partners were the Medicines Transparency Alliance (MeTA Philippines) and Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP) Cares Foundation. Succeeding courses and workshops led to the realization of gaps in medicines management cycle, particularly inadequate shelves, pallets, and racks for drug storage, and lack of personnel trained on drug counseling and dispensing, among others.

The following were the key lessons that emerged:

- Need for establishment of Drugs and Therapeutics Committee at the local level to govern medicines-related activities, and institutionalize supply chain management (SCM).
- Need for development of local policies to accelerate support on medicines procurement, donations, and disposal.
- There must be adequate storage facility with specific area, sufficient space, temperature and humidity controls, shelves, and pallets to ensure quality of medicines.
- Need for regular inventories of medicines and records keeping in storage areas.

These lessons were discussed and presented during the September policy dialogue attended by representatives from the Department of Health, Food and Drug Administration, MeTA Philippines, and the PHAP. Emphasized, too, during the dialogue were challenges of local governments in SCM and issues of transparency and ethics.

Discussions will continue through a multi-stakeholder working group for the resolution of issues raised. It will include the rollout of the SCM executive course for local chief executives trained under the Health Leadership and Governance Program, a joint health leadership program by the Department of Health and ZFF. The executive course is an enhanced version developed by the World Health Organization as part of its technical assistance to the DOH and piloted in ZFF prototype municipalities.
Developing resilient local health systems

After super typhoon Haiyan (local name: Yolanda) wreaked havoc in the Philippines, the Zuellig Family Foundation (ZFF) began its work in helping local leaders build a resilient health systems in municipalities of Samar and Eastern Samar provinces.

ZFF became an implementing partner of the United Nations Children’s Fund’s “Roll-out of Evidence-based Approach to Planning and Development of Resilient Local Health Systems,” from October 2014-December 2015. It helped Yolanda-affected municipalities develop their three-year Health Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Plans (HEPRRP), which will guide the local government units (LGUs) in strengthening their health systems before, during, and after disasters.

As an implementing partner, ZFF, together with the Department of Health-Health Emergency Management Bureau (DOH-HEMB) Region 8, and the provincial health offices of Western and Eastern Samar, facilitated the training and coaching of the municipal disaster risk reduction teams of 12 LGUs to develop their HEPRRPs. The mayors and municipal health officers were trained under the Municipal Leadership and Governance Program (MLGP), a health leadership and governance training program for municipal leaders.

A policy research was also conducted to identify the policy recommendations from the experience of selected engaged municipalities in planning for health resiliency and implementing the plan at the barangay and municipal levels. The results of the study were presented in a policy dialogue last November 10.

Key findings of the dialogue include:
1) need for harmonized disaster risk reduction management (DRRM) planning process and integration of health into the entire DRRM process;
2) need for identification of specific budgetary requirement for DRRM-H related activities;
3) adoption and rollout of Barangay Health Emergency Management Systems by DOH-HEMB to all regions, particularly LGUs that had MLGP; and
4) ensure that the province-wide Local Investments Plan for Health supports DRRM-H interventions.
Sixty-seven parents and 12 rural health workers attended the one-day orientation workshop. The participants were presented basic concepts on adolescent health, and reinforcing appropriate communication and behavior among parents and their children. The sessions elicited positive responses from the participants with recommendations to conduct the workshops to both parents and teachers in the local high schools. The modules are currently being finalized based on the prototype run results and will be disseminated in other ZFF partner areas in 2018.

**ASRH video**

To complement the parent orientation sessions on ASRH, ZFF is also developing video materials on the role of parents, guardians, and local health workers in educating adolescents about reproductive health. The video production project was made possible by the donation of Pascal Gueissaz, the chief executive officer of CareerPlus, a Swiss recruitment agency.

Three batches of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were completed in October 2017. These were participated in by government health officials, local health workers, adolescents and mothers. The videos will be used in 2018. 

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**Bridging Leadership for population management**

Under a two-year agreement, the Zuellig Family Foundation (ZFF) has been providing leadership capacity-building programs to the Commission on Population (PopCom) officials and staff to facilitate effective implementation and coordination of the Philippine Population Management Program (PPMP) strategies and programs at the central, regional and local levels. Training participants include PopCom regional directors (RDs), assistant RDs, and division chiefs.

The collaboration aims to address leadership issues and adaptive challenges. It also aims to build and sustain effective institutional arrangements and collaborative partnership between PopCom and local government units in designing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating family planning, and adolescent and population development programs at the local level.

PopCom will also enhance its performance management systems to integrate coaching and monitoring in their staff management operations.

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**Bridging Leadership to reduce poverty and inequality**

The Zuellig Family Foundation (ZFF) is participating in the coalition called Zero Extreme Poverty Movement, which is led by the Assisi Development Foundation. ZFF chairs the health cluster, which is composed of sub-clusters focusing on (1) tuberculosis treatment and control, (2) maternal and child health; and (3) nutrition. As the secretariat for the health cluster, ZFF has taken an active role in pushing for cluster members to work with local government units. The cluster will converge and focus its activities in partner areas including Puerto Princesa City, Palawan; Rapu-Rapu, Albay; and Tawi-Tawi province.