

**“Proud of my Purok” –**  
*building stronger communities together*



## **A comprehensive approach to reduce disaster risk in which care for people and nature go hand in hand**

*The Philippines are known as “a supermarket of disasters”*



Multiple times a year, severe tropical storms and typhoons hit the Philippines. Fortunately, the population is very resilient. After each disaster, they reconstruct their lives with creative solutions. But due to climate change and increasing pressure on ecosystems, the number of natural disasters and their impact are only expected to increase.

*Destruction after Typhoon Bopha (December 2012). Bopha was the strongest tropical cyclone to ever hit the southern Philippine island of Mindanao.*

*Working together to better protect communities against disasters through preparedness & prevention*

Unfortunately we cannot prevent disastrous typhoons like the ones we have seen in recent years, but we can minimize their impact. Degradation of forests and wetlands erodes nature’s ability to regulate floods, droughts and storms. Therefore, to reduce the chance and impact of disasters, we have to address both the risks at community level as well as the effects of ecosystem degradation, contributing to these risks.

For that reason the Netherlands Red Cross, CARE and Wetlands International joined forces in 2011 to work together on strengthening and protecting vulnerable communities. By both investing in restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems as well as in disaster preparedness, we do not only save lives but also money. With every euro invested in preparedness and prevention, we can save 5-10 euro on emergency aid and recovery!

*With support from the Dutch Postcode Lottery we work together on strengthening 150 puroks on Mindanao*

The coming three years, with support from the Dutch Postcode Lottery, we will work together with the 35.000 inhabitants of 150 local communities (puroks) situated in in the Agusan river basin on disaster prevention and preparedness. The Agusan river basin is situated in Mindanao, the most southern island of the Philippines. Hundreds of thousands of people inhabit the river basin and 40% of them live below the poverty line.



### *Description of the challenges the inhabitants of the Agusan river basin are facing*

People used to live in harmony with the river. The annual floods ensured that the soil was fertile, and the marshes were filled with fish. But nowadays, the river increasingly poses a threat. Natural buffers such as forests and marshes are disappearing. Upstream, due to logging, mining and plantation development, forest cover disappears and mountain slopes are exposed to erosion. This leads to more frequent and larger landslides. Downstream, riverbeds and marshes get clogged with silt coming from



the mountains, decreasing their capacity to absorb excess water during floods. In combination with increasingly severe tropical storms and even typhoons, the lives and livelihoods of the population are at risk. Floods get worse, harvests are lost and the fish catch is under pressure, which leads to more and more vulnerability.

*Erosion upstream leads to landslides and clogging of riverbeds and marshes, decreasing their capacity to absorb excess water during floods, putting the lives and livelihoods of the population at risk (Illustration by Emmanuel Zegeling, [www.enginebranding.nl](http://www.enginebranding.nl)).*

### *Together with the puroks we identify and implement measures*

Together with the inhabitants of the puroks we assess the risks both locally and in the entire river basin, upstream and downstream. After that we identify which measures need to be taken to sustainably improve land and water use. Examples are reforestation activities and terrace building to counter erosion and improving harvests, or restoration of the marshes to improve their buffer capacity. We also help the puroks with developing evacuation plans and setting up early warning systems, to ensure that they are better prepared for the next tropical storm or typhoon. By involving the local communities themselves, but also municipal and provincial governments in every step of the process we guarantee that the measures we take are relevant and sustainable.



### *Working together on strong puroks to be proud of!*

We do not only work on strong puroks ('*Dijken van Wijken*') in The Philippines. Through the so called 'Proud of my Purok' competition we make a connection between The Philippines and The Netherlands. By participating in the competition Dutch puroks also get the chance to work on sustainably improving their neighbourhood in relation to the following themes: water, green, energy and safety. For more information: [www.dijkvaneenwijk.org](http://www.dijkvaneenwijk.org).

