

Advancing small island resilience by working across sectors and boundaries in the Philippines



Photo: Jorge Ebay of UP Visayas Foundation

The Gigantes Islands, found in the municipality of Carles, is vulnerable to various hydrometeorological hazards such as typhoons, as well as socio-economic threats such as unsafe livelihood activities and a lack of access to health and birthing facilities as a result of poverty.

Through the leadership of UP Visayas Foundation and the Centre for Disaster Preparedness, *Frontline* has

contributed to enhancing the implementation of the RISE Gigantes Project, a post-Typhoon Yolanda rehabilitation intervention for the islands. The inclusive risk profiling revealed shared underlying drivers of risk across the islands, such as unsustainable tourism, illegal fishing, and an unregulated transport sector. To help Gigantes address these development issues, a Convergence Strategy was designed to develop a clear division of responsibilities among stakeholders, reduce duplication and address gaps in coverage and quality, and gauge the extent to which needs are being met collectively. One of the main outcomes has been the formation of the Island Sustainable Development Alliance Inc., an umbrella organisation of 12 community-based groups in Gigantes working together to undertake participatory risk assessments, capacity building, and natural resource management.

Embracing a collective approach paved the way for dialogues and good relationships, resource mobilisation, and shared responsibility among stakeholders. It also helped strengthen governance mechanisms, evidenced by the support of local leaders and the inclusion of key sectors in local governance processes. Diverse priorities and coordination mechanisms meant that consolidating the barangay development councils was sometimes a challenge; however, the actors were helped to see their shared aims and joint accountability, and are now clear that the benefits of convergence are worth replicating.