

BACKGROUND

For years, the Philippines have struggled with violent extremist and separatist groups in the south of the country. A long-running movement for independence led to the formation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) following peace talks and negotiations between the central government and separatist groups. While this is a step forward for peace, violent extremist groups, including local groups inspired by ISIS, continue to operate and recruit members.

The Philippines became a GCERF partner country* in 2018. To date, GCERF has invested USD 10.1 million in the country. An investment of USD 5.3 million grant operations supporting six local civil society organisations (CSOs) has ended on 31 December 2025. It supported the active involvement of civil society organisations in the implementation of the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism - Philippines (NAP P/CVE-Philippines). New grant operations totaling USD 1.67 million, supporting two CSOs, commenced on 1 February 2026. A further grant of USD 0.84 million is expected to be signed by 31 March 2026, bringing the portfolio's total investment for 2026-2028 to USD 2.51 million.

GCERF pioneers a unique model of investment designed to promote a whole-of-society approach and to ensure the sustainability of our programmes. Under this model, in each partner country, we support national governments in establishing a steering committee called the Country Support Mechanism (CSM).

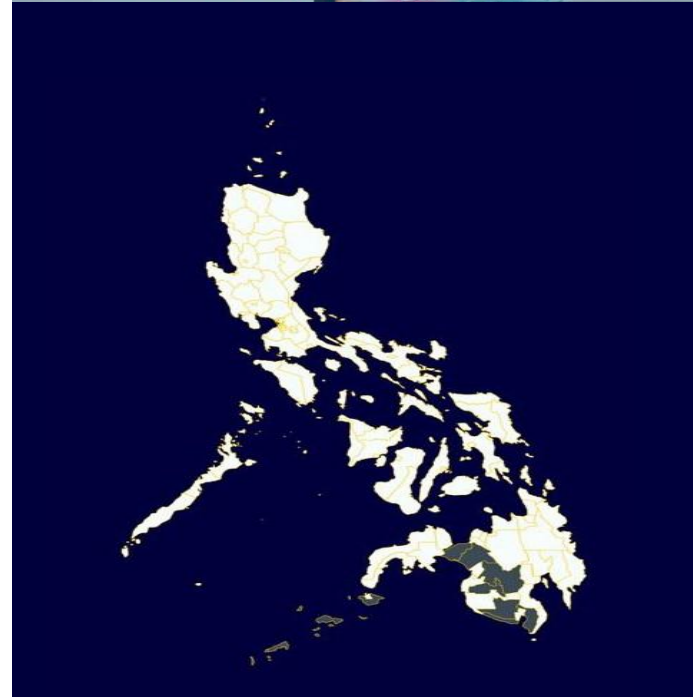
In the Philippines, the CSM is chaired by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and brings together relevant government agencies, civil society organisations, and donor representatives to provide strategic direction for the programmes, ensure results, and progressively inherit ownership of funding community-level efforts to prevent violent extremism.

GCERF'S INVESTMENT STRATEGY IN THE PHILIPPINES

GCERF's investment strategy outlines a comprehensive approach to addressing the drivers of violent extremism and guides civil society organisations in designing their programmes. Based on GCERF's needs assessment and stakeholder consultations conducted in connection with the 2019-2022 and 2023-2025 investment strategies, the 2026-2028 strategy has identified five main drivers of violent extremism in the Philippines:

1. Identity-based Conflict and Political Rivalry
2. Climate-Induced Displacement and Fragility
3. Youth Marginalisation and Radical Influences
4. Governance Gaps and Fragile Institutions
5. Historical Grievances and Perceived Injustices

*Partner countries are those in which GCERF funds civil society organisations to implement initiatives aimed at preventing violent extremism.



WHERE

- Mindanao (Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao - BARMM: Maguindanao del Norte, Maguindanao del Sur, Lanao del Sur)
- SGAs in North Cotabato, Sulu, Lanao del Norte, South Cotabato, Sarangani

WHO

- Returnees, former fighters and their families (male and female)
- Children outside or at risk of dropping out of school including IDPs (14-18)
- Un- or under-employed Youth including IDPs (young women and men between 19 and 35)
- Religious, Indigenous and Community Leaders (male and female)
- Governance Actors (Local Authorities, Security and Justice Actors, male and female)

CURRENT GRANTS



<p>IMPLEMENTED BY</p> <p>Principal Recipient: Mahintana Foundation, Inc (MFI)</p> <p>Sub-recipients: Kasilak, OND, MDFI, TLDFI</p>	<p>PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES</p> <p>Governance actors and community leaders strengthen community governance, cohesion, community trust and protection mechanisms reducing the VE vulnerability of the isolated and underserved communities.</p> <p>Returnees, victims, and at-risk youth improve social reintegration and economic resilience making it difficult for VE groups to exploit them</p> <p>The roles of women and girls in local, religious, Indigenous, youth, and child-led groups help increase community participation in peacebuilding, education, and the prevention of violent extremism.</p>	
<p>AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION</p>	<p>GRANT AMOUNT</p>	<p>PERIOD OF THE GRANT</p>
<p>Banga and Tupi, South Cotabato; Kiamba, Sarangani and Lake Sebu, South Cotabato; Alabel and Malapatan, Sarangani; Tboli, South Cotabato ; Polomolok, South Cotabato for Mahintana; Polomolok, South Cotabato</p>	<p>USD 736,000</p>	<p>01 February 2026 – 30 June 2028</p>

<p>IMPLEMENTED BY</p> <p>Principal Recipient: Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy, Inc. (PCID)</p> <p>Sub-recipients: CLRG</p>	<p>PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES</p> <p>Local Knowledge Partner</p> <p>Mapping and capacity building on data management</p> <p>Third-Party Monitoring exercises and evaluations</p> <p>Research generation for policy and practice</p>	
<p>AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION</p>	<p>GRANT AMOUNT</p>	<p>PERIOD OF THE GRANT</p>
<p>Manila, Mindanao</p>	<p>USD 319,023</p>	<p>January 2024 – June 2026</p>

<p>IMPLEMENTED BY</p> <p>Principal Recipient: Teach Peace Build Peace Movement (TPBPM)</p> <p>Sub-recipients: AMYL, GYAO</p>	<p>PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES</p> <p>Government and community institutions adopt coordinated, gender-responsive, and trauma-informed care reintegration and peace education systems, resulting in stronger governance support, increased trust in justice and reconciliation mechanisms, and more reliable pathways for grievance redress and sustainable reintegration.</p> <p>Returnees, youth, women, and families develop stronger emotional resilience, positive identity, and stable livelihood and coping capacities, supported by safe learning environments, family support structures, and accessible psychosocial services, reducing vulnerability to stress, conflict, and harmful influence.</p> <p>Youth, women, and returnees (/former combatants) gain empowered identities through formal and non-formal peace education, as well as creative and digital peace-driven pathways that provide purpose, belonging, and recognition - transforming former combatants into positive agents of change and enabling them to use their influence to promote peace, counter recruitment narratives, and strengthen community resilience.</p>	
<p>AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION</p>	<p>GRANT AMOUNT</p>	<p>PERIOD OF THE GRANT</p>
<p>Lanao del Sur (Balindong and Binidayan municipalities), Maguindanao del Sur (Datu Anggal Midtimbang, Datu Hoffer Ampatuan, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Mamasapano, Talayan, Shariff Aguak, Shariff Saydona Mustapha municipalities), Maguindanao del Norte (Sultan Kudarat – Camp Darapangan, Barira – Camp Abubakar), Marawi City</p>	<p>USD 936,000</p>	<p>01 February 2026 – 30 June 2028</p>

STORY OF CHANGE

From Displacement to Determination: The Revival of Ma'ahad Lucsadato Madrasah

In the conflict-ridden town of Munai, Lanao del Norte, Ma'ahad Lucsadato stood as a silent witness to repeated displacements and lost hopes. Established by the Luksadatu clan in the early 2000s, the madrasah struggled to survive amid armed clashes, unstable support, and limited resources.

That changed with the arrival of the Madaris for Peace and Resilience (MPR) Project, implemented by ECOWEB with support from GCERF, and in partnership with SNACF, ICOMMAS, and THUMA. For Ustad Abdulhalim Rashid, the madrasah's administrator, this was a long-awaited turning point. The madrasah received not just equipment like computers and printers, but also training in administration, pedagogy, and financial literacy.

Soon, the community saw results. The school expanded to serve over 200 students, doubled from before, and began operating as a semi-private institution offering classes up to Grade 8. A livelihood project on a printing shop producing uniforms and IDs, was launched to support school operations.

What truly set the program apart was its hands-on, grassroots approach. For the first time, the madrasah felt seen, supported, and empowered - not merely instructed. Parents became more involved, students came from neighbouring barangays, and the ustadz embraced their roles not only as educators but also as project stewards.

The transformation of Ma'ahad Lucsadato is more than institutional. It is personal, communal, and generational. Once caught in cycles of conflict and evacuation, this school now symbolises resilience, dignity, and the power of locally rooted solutions.

The madrasah is no longer just a classroom. It's a home for peacebuilding and a beacon of what community-led development can achieve, even in the hardest of places.

“We may have more work now, but we are grateful. We talk, we solve problems together. And we enjoy building something that's truly ours”

Ustad Rashid, Teacher Ma'ahad Lucsadato
Madrasah



*Presentation of the Madrasah Improvement Plan (MIP) at Baloi LDN.
Source: Ecoweb*

KEY RESULTS

Cumulative from 2019 until June 2025

15,000

mentors, teachers, parents, journalists, government authorities, religious leaders, returnees, women and youth have been trained in conflict sensitivity, conflict resolution and detecting early signs of radicalisation

10,750

individuals including farmers, small and medium enterprises and madrasah-based organisations benefited from livelihood support, skills training, and market access initiatives, strengthening economic resilience and reducing vulnerability to violent extremism

636

Marawi IDPs and community members were engaged in legal awareness, dispute resolution, and dialogue efforts that strengthened their access to justice, support claims processes, and promoted peaceful conflict resolution at the community level

GCERF'S VALUE PROPOSITION

GCERF'S UNIQUE MODEL OF INVESTMENT PRIORITISES:

Community-ownership and localisation: We invest in trusted grassroots civil society organisations that prioritise the needs and grievances of communities most affected by violent extremism. Many of these organisations have never received international funding before.

Sustainability: Our programmes involve all groups of society and strengthens trust between government, civil society and community members to build stronger, more resilient societies. This ensures that initiatives and structures continue to be relevant and effective.

Robust monitoring and evaluation processes: Our multi-layered monitoring and evaluation system, operating locally and globally, provides continuous feedback on programme effectiveness, identifies areas for improvement, and ensures objectives are consistently met.

Knowledge sharing: Our global network of civil society organisations working on PVE facilitates the exchange of good practices and lessons learned, fostering collaboration and enhancing the effectiveness of interventions. We also share our experiences through our participation in various conferences, publishing of articles and research papers in reputed journals to advance the understanding of PVE.

Capacity strengthening: We strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations to manage large-scale grants and implement effective initiatives, while also enhancing government capacity to develop comprehensive, holistic strategies to prevent violent extremism.



GCERF
Preventing Violent Extremism
and Terrorism

Find out more about becoming an investor, our work, and the collective impact we make at:
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