

The Philippines



GCERF

Investment to date: USD 3,800,000

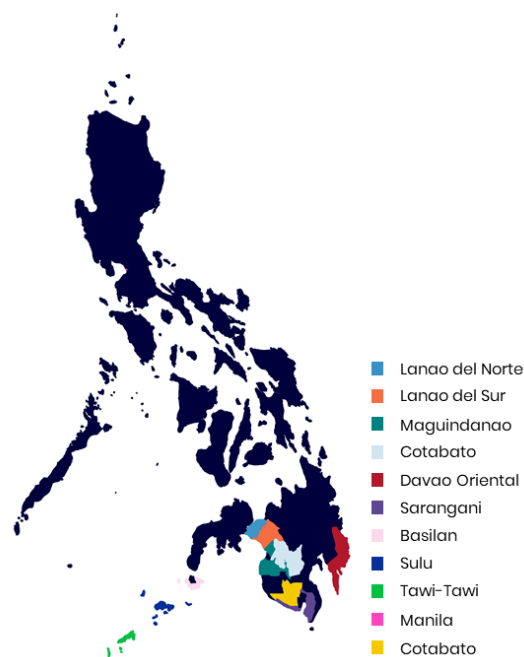
Investment started: 2019

Current investment: USD 3,800,00

Drivers of Violent Extremism in the Philippines

For years, the Philippines has 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 drivers of recruitment identified by GCERF are:

- Continued and growing discontent against the government, – especially in the BARMM
- Unresolved land conflicts among different groups
- Inequality and discrimination faced by members of the Muslim community.



Pathway to Change

GCERF has been investing in the Philippines since 2019, and the current portfolio overview can be found on the next page. GCERF works with government of the Philippines to implement its national action plan, coordinating in particular with the Department of the Interior and Local Government. We are supporting the development and implementation of the National Action Plan by investing in local organisations in extremist-affected area. Their programming focuses on addressing grievances by developing inclusive governance, improving inter-community relations, working with madaris (religious schools) and religious leaders, improving conflict resolution mechanisms, and working with particularly vulnerable children.

Programme activities include:

- Training communities and local authorities in alternative dispute resolution
- Townhall and consultative meetings to enable local authorities and communities to engage on key issues
- Establishing local advisory groups
- Capacity development for local school boards and school governing councils in conflict-affected areas
- Intercommunity dialogues to improve social cohesion
- Training and engaging volunteer teachers to improve critical thinking and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education in madaris
- Establishment of parent and alumni associations for madaris
- Working with madaris administrations to improve financial sustainability
- Creating stable support structures for vulnerable children, which includes training teachers, youth advocates, parents, community leaders, and social workers
- Establishing strategic plans for organisations of religious leaders to promote and oversee Islamic values education.

Beneficiary Quote

“Seeing the participants coming from different places, gender, age, social-class, made me realise that differences are not stumbling blocks for people in the community to peacefully co-exist.”

- Bensar, participant in Jolo Youth Peace Camp

Results

Total direct beneficiaries: 33,173
Total indirect beneficiaries: 2,223,568
Main leverage point: Social cohesion

Key Outputs:

- 16,162 participants in awareness-raising, rallies, campaigns etc.
- 3,946 local government or other relevant stakeholders trained
- 261 participants in community and interfaith, intercommunity, and intergenerational dialogues
- 152 participants in community policing, watch groups, or early warning activities
- 1,039 beneficiaries of leadership training
- 8,788 participants in town hall meetings and advocacy initiatives

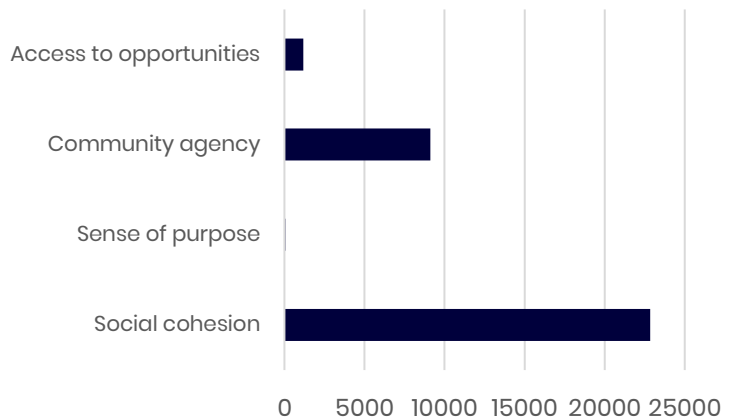


Figure 1: direct beneficiaries by focus area 2019-2021

Local Knowledge Partner

GCERF is piloting its 'local knowledge partner' structure in the Philippines, working with Innovation for Poverty Action. Local knowledge partners are locally-based, high-capacity organisations with research and data collection expertise that train GCERF's local partners in monitoring and evaluation, support data collection, and conduct research. This structure will be replicated in key GCERF portfolios.

Portfolio Overview as of September 2021

Partner Name	Funding since	No of CSOs	Focus populations	Key activities
Synergeia Foundation	2019	4	School boards, local councils, religious leaders, justice system staff	Improving local governance: town hall meetings, training justice staff, religious leaders & local councils, connecting local community with decision-makers
Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society	2019	6	Local councils, different faith groups, youth	Interfaith dialogues, training local councils and running planning workshops, vocational training and grants for improved livelihoods
IDEALS	2019	2	Youth, universities, local authorities	Townhall meetings with communities and local authorities, inclusion of media education in university curricula, radio programmes with local authorities, media training for youth
Initiatives for International Dialogue	2019	4	Government actors, schools, communities, IDPs, IPs	Training and lobbying governments to integrate communities and civil society into PVE work, establishing local advisory groups, training schools on PVE, awareness campaign
Al Qalam Institute	2020	1	Madaris students, teachers, parents	Improving critical thinking and STEM in madaris, connecting madaris to local communities
Mahintana Foundation	2020	5	Tri-people, religious and tribal leaders, youth, local authorities	Social cohesion among tri-people: supporting religious leaders to oversee Islamic values education, interfaith dialogues, intercultural exchanges, dialogues with local government
Teach Peace Build Peace	2020	1	Children in vulnerable areas, children with specific vulnerability factors	Putting in place structures to support vulnerable children: training youth leaders, children, parents, teachers, community leaders, and social workers

Results

Case Study: Building STEM and Educational Capacity in Madaris

Since the 2017 siege in Marawi, there has been increased scrutiny of Islamic educational schools in Philippines, known as madaris. These schools are not regulated on a national level and STEM education is often of poor quality. The 2019 Country Needs Assessment indicated that poor quality education leaves students more vulnerable to simplistic extremist narratives.

Al Qalam Institute for Islamic Identities and Dialogue at Ateneo Davao University's GCERF-funded project focuses on integrated madaris (those that use the national Department of Education's curriculum in addition to Islamic and Arabic language subjects) in selected provinces. The programme has two aims. The first is to improve critical thinking and STEM education in madaris, which it achieves by deploying volunteer teachers to madaris to carry out STEM capacity building for madaris teachers. The second is to improve governance and oversight of madaris, by creating alumni and parent councils that are involved in the running of the schools. In its first quarter, Al Qalam partnered with 19 madaris and trained 19 volunteer teachers.

Partner Spotlight: A Network Approach to Governance

Synergeia Foundation, GCERF's partner in the Philippines since 2019, has an innovative model and approach to improving governance in the Philippines, in a context where grievances against government are a key driver of violent extremism. Synergeia has created a network of mayors and governors who adopt their model of good governance (which is focused on listening to communities and ensuring that programmes are designed in a participatory way using sustainable revenue streams). They build strong connections with and between these mayors, and provide them with both financial and technical support, as well as connecting them with the private sector who can contribute resources to local communities. One mayor referred to Synergeia as an 'app store' because they are able to request the technical assistance that they need, and Synergeia will provide the tools and expertise. Synergeia then monitors the mayors using quantitative performance indicators (such as literacy rates) and celebrates their successes. In particular, mayors compete for the 'Seal of Good Education Governance', which comes with prizes sponsored by the private sector and is displayed in town halls. Synergeia works to build the capacity of mayors and governors to raise revenues sustainably, requiring them to finance increasing shares of programming as their capacity grows and providing them with technical advice about how to raise revenues. Synergeia works with a franchise model to achieve scale, providing manuals, tools, and their model for others to replicate. Through this model, they now work with 426 local governments. Using a two-way theory of change which acknowledges the importance of both top-down and bottom-up governance, they also work with communities to increase their capacity to express their needs and their willingness to hold local leaders to account.

Community Testimony

"Amidst the misconception and overgeneralisation of isolated cases that madaris institutions are breeding grounds of violent extremism the [GCERF project] **can be a platform to showcase that just like other schools, madaris produce responsible, competent, productive, and peace-loving graduates**"

– School principal in partner madaris

Promoting Peace in the Media

Mina, 19, is a student of Communication Studies at the Mindanao State University who is engaged as a change agent in IDEALS' programme. The project trained her in the role of the press in society and basic skills for community journalism and news writing, such as using reliable sources and conducting interviews. The project now engages her in its radio programme and creating media products.

"I have learned that when you are writing a news story, you have to use reliable sources," Mina shared. She underscored the importance of the radio platform set up under the project as a space where different community groups such as youth, women, and IDPs are able to amplify their voices. "This [radio programme] has become a platform for people who stand by peace and order in Marawi City and Lanao del Sur", Mina said.

GCERF

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

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