



GCERF

Global Community Engagement
and Resilience Fund

Governing Board
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GCERF Country Strategy for Investment in the Philippines

Contents

- Overview3
- GCERF Positioning4
 - Country Alignment and Coordination6
- Proposed Approaches8
 - Demographic Focus8
 - Geographic Focus10
 - Guiding Principles12
 - Leveraging the Role of Women and Gender Dynamics in Prevention and Interventions...13
 - Priority Programming Areas13
- Funding14
- Operational Implications.....15
- Potential Risks and Mitigation Strategies15
- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)15
- Annex 2: Risk Analysis16
 - Programmatic Risks16
- Institutional Risks for the GCERF Secretariat.....17
 - Contextual Risks17
 - Security Risks17
 - Financial Risks18
 - Fiduciary Risks18
 - Reputational Risks19

Overview

In August 2018, the GCERF Governing Board approved a request by the Government of the Philippines to become a GCERF partner country. GCERF was requested to support the government in addressing the risk of radicalisation to violent extremism, with a focus on prevention and supporting the vital role of local communities.

This GCERF Country Strategy for Investment in the Philippines is based on: needs identified in the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism – Philippines (NAP P/CVE-Philippines)¹; a third-party Country Needs Assessment (CNA)², which was commissioned by GCERF; consultations with the Philippines Country Support Mechanism (CSM), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) initiative for a quick CNA in all regional offices, and other key actors in the Philippines, including local representatives of GCERF donors. During a first round of funding, GCERF will build on its experience funding preventing violent extremism (PVE) activities, adapted to the context of the Philippines. The focus for investment will be:

WHO:

- Youth and children (in-school and out-of-school)
- Youth support networks (communities; women; families, including mothers; academic and learning institutions; religious leaders and scholars, including those who studied abroad; and traditional leaders)
- Social media users vulnerable to radicalisation to violent extremism (VE)

WHERE:

- Areas in Mindanao vulnerable to VE
- Areas identified as vulnerable to VE in other parts of the country (e.g. parts of mainland Luzon, such as Metro Manila)

WHAT:

Grantees will propose activities in line with GCERF's four priority leverage points to address drivers of VE (social cohesion, community agency, equal access to opportunities, and sense of purpose) in the following ways:

- **building tolerance**, where violent extremists recruit the marginalised;
- **community agency**, where violent extremists exploit governance challenges;
- **positive social and economic alternatives** to what VE groups claim to offer;
- **critical thinking and life skills** as protection against VE recruitment.

¹ The NAP P/CVE-Philippines is currently in draft form and has been shared with GCERF for internal use only.

² Between December 2018 and January 2019, GCERF commissioned The Stabilisation Network (TSN) to conduct a Country Needs Assessment (CNA) to guide GCERF's investment strategy and engagement in the Philippines.

HOW:

Channels through which grantees reach individuals vulnerable to recruitment and radicalisation to VE may include: building PVE capacity among local authorities and institutions and reinforcing trust between communities and local authorities; working through social media engagement; working with religious leaders and opinion leaders; and working with students and teachers, first in registered madrasas (with the aim to later also reach unregistered madrasas) to protect them from the influence of foreign violent extremists.

GCERF Positioning

GCERF's engagement in the Philippines begins at a strategic moment in time for PVE in the Philippines for the following reasons:

- The Philippines has seen an upsurge of violent extremist activity in recent years,³ coinciding with several local armed groups pledging allegiance to transnational violent extremist movements. The number of deaths in the Philippines associated with violent extremism has now overtaken the number of deaths associated with rebellion, according to International Alert's 2018 report.⁴ Based on information from the Global Terrorism Index (2018),⁵ the collapse of ISIL in Iraq and Syria has moved the group's activities elsewhere, especially to the Maghreb and Sahel regions and to Southeast Asia, particularly the Philippines. In Southeast Asia, the Philippines and Myanmar recorded the highest number of deaths from terrorism since 2002. Within the global rating, the Philippines is ranked 10th among the countries most impacted by terrorism. In the same year, the Philippines recorded the highest number of deaths from terrorism in more than a decade, with a total of 326 fatalities – 18 percent higher than the previous year.
- There is positive momentum from the Government of the Philippines on PVE, characterised by a move away from a security-focused approach to VE and towards a more preventative approach. Since his election in 2016, President Rodrigo Duterte has made the peace process in Mindanao a priority and is seen as being more

³ Conflict Alert 2018: *'The magnitude of violence was brought about by the convergence of violent extremism and illicit drug-related killings that led to more deaths per incident of violence in 2017 than at any time in the past seven years.'*

⁴ Guns, Drugs, and Extremism: Bangsamoro's New Wars, Conflict Alert 2018: International Alert Philippines: Implications

⁵ <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2018/12/Global-Terrorism-Index-2018-1.pdf>

committed to resolving the problems of the Moros⁶ than previous leaders.⁷ Through its investments in local communities at risk, GCERF will support this move towards a prevention approach.

- The Bangsamoro plebiscite,⁸ on 21 January 2019, was a key moment in the decades-long peace process in Mindanao. GCERF-funded grants will support the Bangsamoro transition by engaging: local governance; traditional leadership; community security; madrasas; and traditional leaders; and the newly formed Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which will be governed by the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) until a permanent government is elected in 2022.
- A National Action Plan for P/CVE in the Philippines (NAP P/CVE-Philippines) is currently being drafted and is expected to be launched in 2019. GCERF funding will contribute to the practical implementation of this plan at the local level.
- In the Philippines, the major threats of violence are posed by groups pledging allegiance to transnational violent extremist movements and, to a lesser extent, by communist violent extremists. Although there is an overlap in the drivers of recruitment and radicalisation to violence among both groups, GCERF will not specifically focus on communist violent extremism, as this violence is highly politicised and in the full-blown conflict phase; therefore, stakeholders consulted judged it to be less susceptible to the sort of prevention activities which GCERF supports. The CNA (p1) concludes that “historical grievances, weak rule of law, poor service delivery, and a multiplicity of rival groups – including many that are aligned to ISIL – make Muslim Mindanao the greater of the two challenges.”⁹
- The CNA also indicates that much more donor-funded programming is needed at the Local Government Unit (LGU) level in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao such

⁶ **Definition of Moro.** 1: a member of any of several Muslim peoples of the southern **Philippines**. [Moro | Definition of Moro by Merriam-Webster https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Moro](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Moro)

⁷ See : Rodrigo Duterte; Redressing the Historical Injustice against the Bangsamoro speech at opening of BTC, Feb 27, 2017 and <https://www.cfr.org/blog/duterte-peacemaker>

⁸A two-part plebiscite was held across the territorial jurisdiction of the Bangsamoro region of Mindanao in the southern Philippines on 21 January and 6 February 2019. The plebiscite approved the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) or Republic Act 11054, which repealed the act that created the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) to create a new political region called the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)

⁹ According to a study of recent violent incidents, Mindanao is where “arguably the highest intensity and concentration of armed encounters occurred in Southeast Asia.” See ‘Research on Youth Vulnerability to violent Extremism in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao’, Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG), Manila, 2017.

as Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur. Local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), and religious organisations demonstrate willingness and suitability for PVE programming but likely have limited capacity for comprehensive design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), coordination and compliance reporting. GCERF's approach to grant management and capacity building would contribute to meeting these needs.

For more information on context analysis and current dynamics in PVE, see the CNA.

Country Alignment and Coordination

The Government of the Philippines has already established, and will lead, the Philippines Country Support Mechanism (CSM), a multi-stakeholder platform for coordination of GCERF funding. This will provide a useful tool to align various governmental actors, particularly the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Anti-Terrorism Council Project Management Center (ATC-PMC), and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) around the same table, thus encouraging separate departments to work together.

GCERF will support the CSM in its functions and aims to participate in the twice-yearly donor coordination meetings on PVE organised by the Australian and American embassies. GCERF will align and evaluate its support with Government of Philippines priorities and coordinate with key actors in the PVE field in the Philippines, including alignment with the draft NAP P/CVE-Philippines. GCERF's community-led approach is particularly well adapted to support both the main objective and also the specific objectives 2, 3, and 4 of the NAP P/CVE-Philippines. The draft NAP P/CVE- Philippines identifies the following vulnerable populations (or "sectors"), the majority of which align well with GCERF's experience and emphasis on building community engagement and resilience and funding community-led activities:

- Community
- Persons Deprived of Liberty with Terrorism-Related Cases (PDL with TRC) in Jails and Violent Extremist Offenders (VEOs) in Prisons
- Religious leaders
- Learning Institutions (Schools, Colleges, Universities, and Madrasa)
- Social media users
- Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)

In addition, the following groups emerged as priorities in discussions with the CSM:

- Religious leaders and scholars, including those who studied abroad
- Traditional leaders

The CNA indicates that the current environment for PVE in the Philippines is marked by fragmented programming and a policy environment in flux due to both national-level politics and developments in the peace process in the former Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), now the BARMM. If the NAP P/CVE-Philippines eventually becomes policy, it should provide a unifying framework for all stakeholders – governments, NGOs, international NGOs (INGOs), international organisations (IOs), and donors.

Existing Programmes

In order to avoid duplication, international donors (governments, IOs and multilateral organisations) have produced for their own internal use a comprehensive table of international donor-funded counterterrorism (CT), and P/CVE activities. GCERF has taken this into account in directing its own proposed funding, which is intended to be complementary. The following list is in no way exhaustive but provides examples of some of the activities currently funded:

- **Australia:** funding for community cohesion and resilience through the Asia Foundation, International Alert, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, and Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG).
- **European Union (EU):** funding for PVE-related community resilience and online counter-narratives, government capacity building, law enforcement, and community-led initiatives.
- **Switzerland:** funding for community work in Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) camps – social committees and curriculum for social workers, and social work with families vulnerable to VE.
- **United States:** funding for governance and internally displaced people (IDPs), out-of-school youth, orphans, education (including government schools, universities, and madrasas), and umbrella grants to large NGOs to provide sub-grants for CVE projects.
- **New Zealand:** support to strengthen resilience of vulnerable groups and communities, including funding for INGOs working with communities in Metro Manila and Mindanao.
- **UNDP:** support for the development of the NAP P/CVE-Philippines.

Proposed Approaches

GCERF will rely on its experience in managing PVE grants and building capacity of community-level actors to design and implement PVE programming in sensitive contexts, and adapt it to the Philippine context.

Demographic Focus

GCERF grantees will engage with the following demographic groups identified¹⁰ as particularly vulnerable to VE:

- **Youth – both in-school and out-of-school** youth (OSY) ages 18 and below who are targets of VE recruiters, with the ultimate goal of addressing youth vulnerability to radicalisation to VE, and empowering those who can have a positive influence on them.
- **Youth support networks** (communities, women, families, including mothers, learning institutions, religious leaders and scholars, including those who studied abroad, and traditional leaders).

Within the broader category of “community”, the focus will be on youth because of their increased vulnerability to recruitment and radicalisation to VE due to their specific financial, social, and political challenge and conditions (see CNA, for more details). This may include both students, and youth who are out of school or unemployed. The CNA (p8) highlights that youth living in camps after the destruction of the town of Marawi are particularly vulnerable.¹¹

The emphasis of the draft NAP P/CVE-Philippines on community aligns well with GCERF’s aim to help communities build awareness and knowledge of the signs and negative consequences of VE, as well as on the potential options for how to respond to such signs. It is also in line with GCERF funding of initiatives that engage the community in a cohesive way and support the development of locally led strategies to promote peace and conflict transformation, and that provide members of the community with constructive alternatives.¹² The CNA (p27) highlights civic engagement as a source of resilience: reinforcing trust between communities and local authorities (e.g. by creating platforms for expression and dialogue, and ensuring that youth and other community members have a

¹⁰ These particular groups emerged as priorities in discussions with the CSM, the donor community, and other key actors. They align with priorities in the draft NAP P/CVE-Philippines and are susceptible to GCERF’s approach.

¹¹ One Year after Marawi siege: Benar News 16 October 2018.

¹² For more details of how GCERF works with communities see: in GCERF’s “Strategy to Engage Communities and Address the Drivers of Violent Extremism (2017-2020)”

voice to express any frustrations). This will be an important area for GCERF grantees to support because many of the drivers of VE identified in the CNA relate back to political grievances, whether with the national government or local authorities, underdevelopment of public services, or weak governance/rule of law. The CNA also recommends harnessing the principal of “*kasisiyapa*” (cooperation and mutual concern) in Maranao (of Marawi) culture, as a way to prevent families from being divided by radicalisation to VE¹³.

In line with the NAP P/CVE-Philippines, GCERF recognises the important role of religious leaders and their potential for both positive and negative¹⁴ influence. On the advice of key informants, in order to avoid stigmatisation and politicisation, these leaders will be engaged as change agents to reach vulnerable youth in their communities, rather than as a demographic group in their own right.

Key informants¹⁵ recognised that while learning institutions (schools, colleges, universities, and madrasas) can be a venue for violent extremists to negatively influence the minds of young people¹⁶, they can also be important proponents of PVE. Key informants described two tiers of recruitment in learning institutions: in universities, where recruitment is more sophisticated with an internet component; and in unregistered madrasas, among illiterate students through human contact.

¹³ An influential respondent in Marawi mentioned *kasisiyapa* as an important resiliency: “*The most effective way communities say to prevent VE is simply through ‘kasisiyapa’ or looking out for, and being concerned for each other in the community. If everyone would care enough for their own family members and neighbours they would immediately be able to stop the ideology of VE from branching out and causing disastrous consequences.*”

¹⁴ During the Marawi siege, religious leaders were accused of ambivalence towards the Maute Group, who perpetrated the attack. There are an estimated 5,000 religious schools in the Philippines, of whom only 1,500 are registered. Unregistered religious schools are considered particularly susceptible to the influence of foreign violent extremists. The CNA (p13) found that “*the role of radical preachers (ustadz) in forming and leading VE cells, employing extremist teachings and recruiting Islamic education institutions, is one of the most dominant features of contemporary VE in the Philippines*”.

¹⁵ “Key informants” refers to people, including CSM members, government representatives, and members of the donor community, consulted during the preparation of this strategy.

¹⁶ IAG found that “[y]outh respondents affirmed the presence of recruiters of VE groups in their community who drove people to being radicalized. Many respondents explained that they knew recruiters and that these were active in local educational institutions (Madaris) and in mosques after the Friday prayers.” See ‘Research on Youth Vulnerability to Violent Extremism in the ARRM’, IAG, City of Cotabato, 2017.

It is also claimed that Mindanao State University, near Marawi, was used by the Maute Group as a recruiting ground for violent extremists.

- **Social media users vulnerable to VE**

In 2018, the Philippines had over 50 million internet users and over 40 million social media users.¹⁷ For the third year in a row, Filipinos spent the longest amount of time on social media worldwide, averaging nearly four hours per day.¹⁸ Videos were circulated on social media during and after the Marawi siege¹⁹ to capture global attention and call for international support.

A Muslim community leader from Marawi, quoted in the CNA (p22) supports this focus on a wider, virtual population vulnerable to VE, or those who are introduced to online content through in-person contact: *“In some far and rather remote areas in the provinces and in some torils and madrasas in such places – these are where recruitment easily takes places as they can do training here as well. But to generalise that all Islamic institutions to be responsible for violent extremism is wrong. Now that there is technological advancements such as cell phones and social media, recruitment can happen just about anywhere nowadays”.*

Geographic Focus

GCERF grantees will engage in the following geographic areas identified²⁰ as particularly vulnerable to VE:

- **Areas in Mindanao vulnerable to VE**

In alignment with the NAP P/CVE-Philippines, GCERF’s first geographic focus will be Mindanao, concentrating on those areas identified as most vulnerable to VE, particularly transnational VE. VE in the former ARMM (now the BARMM) was inspired both by historical local grievances and by ISIL, but also has a strong family/clan dimension. Clan rivalries and

¹⁷ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/221179/internet-users-philippines/>

¹⁸ <https://wearesocial.com/blog/2018/01/global-digital-report-2018>

¹⁹ Fighters from the ISIL-affiliated Abu Sayyaf and Maute groups laid siege to the city of Marawi in May 2017, prompting months of heavy combat that prompted hundreds of thousands to flee and left more than 1,000 dead. The siege was triggered when the military tried to arrest top ISIL leader Isnilon Hapilon. The capture of Marawi led to the longest siege by armed fighters in the Philippines. On October 16, government troops stormed a hideout, killing both Hapilon and Maute group leader Omar Maute. The next day, President Duterte declared the city “liberated” even as sporadic fighting continued.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/10/happened-marawi-171029085314348.html>

²⁰ These particular geographic areas emerged as priorities in discussions with the CSM, the donor community, and other key actors. They align with priorities in the draft NAP P/CVE-Philippines and are susceptible to GCERF’s approach.

communal feuds (*rido*)²¹ are common, and key informants explained that many join VE groups in Mindanao for self-protection or for personal/clan gains rather than ideology – although ideology sometimes comes later.²² Foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) use the Philippines, and particularly Mindanao, as a training ground because the more remote areas are seen as a space with little government presence or influence that is easy to access because of its porous borders.²³

In 2017, the Marawi siege put the Philippines on the world map as a rallying cry to violent extremists. Martial law imposed during the siege is seen by many to have had a net benefit on reducing violence in general, but there is a difference in opinion concerning the liberation of Marawi: Some perceive that the city was destroyed by terrorists and liberated by the government, whereas others find fault with the government. Reconstruction is behind schedule, plagued by corruption and issues such as accusations that planners are failing to respect traditional burial grounds, which risk fueling grievances that can be exploited by violent extremists to gain support. ISIL use these grievances to recruit new members.

The degree of acceptance of the results of the plebiscites in Mindanao will significantly impact the future of the population of Mindanao. On 21 January and 6 February 2019, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), as well as Cotabato City, ratified the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) and agreed to join the BARMM that the law created. As expected, the province of Sulu and the City of Isabela rejected inclusion in the new Bangsamoro region²⁴, resulting in separate parcels of territory. In the past, Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) have rejected negotiations. There is fear that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) will use the BARMM as a launching pad to expand their territory. During colonisation, Muslims were pushed back into Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao, and may now want to expand and reclaim territory. The decommissioning of MILF fighters could lead to splinter groups fighting in the jungle.

²¹ *Rido* is a type of conflict characterized by sporadic outbursts of retaliatory violence between families and kinship groups as well as between communities. www.ateneo.edu/ateneopress/.../rido-clan-feuding-and-conflict-management-mindanao

²² See: 'Youth and Violent Extremism in Mindanao, Philippines, A mixed-methods design for testing assumptions about drivers of extremism'; contractor DAI, authors Kevin Casey and David Pottebaum, August 2018.

²³ See also CNA (p12)

²⁴ The BOL, now officially called the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (OLBARMM), is the result of decades-long peace negotiations between the rebel groups in Mindanao, mainly the MILF, and the Philippine Government. <http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2018/07/24/bangsamoro-organic-law-primer-everything-you-need-to-know-bbl.html>

The CNA indicates that the BARMM government will likely emerge as a major player in PVE due to its block grant funding, local policing capacity, and anticipated capacity to partner directly with donors. Key informants have expressed consistent views that core drivers of recruitment and radicalisation to VE networks in the Philippines are based on hyperlocal grievances.

- **Areas identified as vulnerable to VE in other parts of the country**

DILG has requested GCERF to not just concentrate on the “centre of gravity” (i.e. BARMM), but also on other areas where recruits to VE may be trained: Southern Metro Manila (on mainland Luzon) was identified as an additional, if subsidiary, geographic focus, because often violent extremist offenders from Mindanao are imprisoned in Manila, and their families move to the capital to be near to their imprisoned family member. The CNA (p4) highlights that the Maute Group recruited several Balik²⁵ Islam members from Luzon, some of whom took part in the Marawi siege.²⁶ Other areas identified as being particularly vulnerable to violent extremism include the Cities of Baguio and Cavite, which are north and south of Manila, respectively.

Guiding Principles

The following principles will guide all programming:

- To promote country ownership, bringing together government, civil society, the international community, and the private sector, in support of coordination of P/CVE at national level, and the priorities identified by the Government of the Philippines;
- To mainstream gender and youth, ensuring that girls, boys, women, and men are represented in activities that meet their specific, self-identified needs;
- To mainstream the conflict sensitive peace promoting (CSPP) framework and approach to ensure culture and gender sensitivity;
- To support, and work through, Philippine national-level NGOs, and local, community-level organisations, to ensure contextualised, sustainable P/CVE programming;
- To coordinate closely with other donors and their platforms, including the donor coordination meeting, and take into account existing programmes;
- To share what does and does not work well in the Philippine context, to contribute to the national and global P/CVE community of interest;
- To ensure that the support provided is in line with good practices and recommendations of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF);

²⁵ Converts to Islam or “reverts” from other religions.

²⁶ IPAC: ‘Post/Marawi Lessons from Detained Extremists in the Philippines’, (p7)

- To strengthen the management and P/CVE capacity of grantees to improve their chance of sustainability after GCERF funding, and support them to become P/CVE experts;
- To engage, where possible, with the private sector and seek out social entrepreneurs who can facilitate innovative P/CVE approaches, if aligned with GCERF's values;
- To ensure that grantees use a non-judgemental and non-stigmatising approach; and
- To follow Do No Harm²⁷ principles to identify potential negative consequences, take steps to prevent them whenever possible, and propose corrective actions when necessary.

Leveraging the Role of Women and Gender Dynamics in Prevention and Interventions

While most terrorist leaders and operatives are men and boys, women's and girls' involvement is complex and nuanced, as they are both victims and perpetrators of violent extremism – and play an important, and often influential, role in prevention.

New programming will strive to offer more equal opportunities to women to make their own choices in the identification of needs.

It will be crucial for GCERF to work with women-led and women-focused organisations, and to create partnerships with women's organisations, in order to leverage the unique role of women in preventing violent extremism in communities and helping identify and off-ramp those who have already radicalised.

Key informants emphasised the need for more research on how to engage women in PVE in the Philippines in a nuanced way, rather than treating them as a homogeneous demographic. GCERF-supported grantees will engage with: young women vulnerable to VE; female social media users vulnerable to VE; women as influential actors in the PVE space; women as interveners to support off-ramping; and women as community leaders.

Priority Programming Areas

GCERF will support communities to prioritise four leverage points to address drivers of violent extremism, as defined in GCERF's "Strategy to Engage Communities and Address the Drivers of Violent Extremism (2017–2020)":

Building Tolerance *where violent extremists recruit the marginalised*

GCERF enhances community members' sense of belonging to an inclusive, constructive, and positive group that does not resort to violence, where different ideas, ideologies, and

²⁷ <http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/do-no-harm-local-capacities-for-peace-project/>

identities are embraced and incorporated. Based on GCERF's experience in other countries, potential activities will include intercommunal, interfaith, and intergenerational dialogues, and engaging members of the community through cultural and sporting events, as positive alternatives for vulnerable individuals.

Community Agency *where violent extremists exploit governance challenges*

GCERF's support strengthens communities to peacefully mobilise, organise, and represent their own interests, to facilitate more effective dialogue between state authorities and local communities. A potential activity is engaging local authorities, which was identified as a key factor to ensure that the voice of community members was heard by local leaders. Engagement between grantees and the national government is foreseen, for example, in the form of dialogue forums.

Positive Social and Economic Alternatives *to what violent extremists claim to offer*

GCERF's support lifts barriers that limit access to social and economic opportunities, and enables more community members to access opportunities that provide alternative pathways out of radicalisation. For example, madrasa students could be provided with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills (including training on the responsible use of social media), which are not traditionally offered in the madrasa education curriculum, and marketable livelihood skills should be included as a cross-cutting theme in PVE interventions.

Critical Thinking and Life Skills *as protection against violent extremist recruitment*

GCERF helps individuals become more resilient to recruitment and radicalisation to violent extremism through a stronger and more positive sense of self. Initiatives provide individuals with confidence, critical thinking, and other life skills that enhance their sense of self-worth and resilience to violent extremist agendas. Engaging young men and women in preventing violent extremism through leadership training contributes to re-establishing meaning in their lives, thus increasing their resilience to violent extremism.

Funding

The level of available funding will define programme priorities. GCERF proposes to commence funding grantees with approximately USD 3 million. As further funding is raised, this will be invested in additional activities to deepen GCERF's impact.

Operational Implications

Potential Risks and Mitigation Strategies

GCERF will conduct strategic risk assessments before investing in the Philippines, and will put plans in place to mitigate key risks at the programmatic, contextual, and institutional levels, which will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. See Annex 2 for a detailed risk analysis.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

GCERF recognises the complexity of M&E in the P/CVE context, and in particular programming built around prevention. In the Philippines, as elsewhere, M&E of P/CVE programming is challenging due to the lack of common indicators, as well as the limited M&E capacity in P/CVE. In Round 2, GCERF will provide PRs with: a repository of P/CVE indicators; technical capacity strengthening, guidelines, reference resources; and oversight to improve their M&E capabilities, and refine M&E techniques which will benefit the field of P/CVE globally. The Secretariat monitors and reports on progress against plans and milestones to the Board and other stakeholders. PRs and their Sub-Recipients (SRs) are responsible for monitoring implementation, and provide regular progress updates. Because of the specific security context of Mindanao and the current advice of embassies restricting travel for expatriates to many parts of Mindanao, GCERF will build into the programme design an integral system of regular third-party monitoring (TPM) involving a local/national service provider, with technical supervision by international expertise and/or the GCERF Secretariat. GCERF considers TPM to be a complementary tool to the regular and ongoing monitoring, reporting, grant management, and evaluation activities during the grant cycle, providing an independent analysis of grant progress and soliciting feedback from communities and stakeholders. At a country portfolio level, GCERF considers:

- reach and coverage of GCERF funding in communities identified for support;
- the degree to which a country portfolio addresses the drivers of violent extremism identified in the national and community needs assessments;
- the degree to which the portfolio achievements are sustained beyond GCERF funding;
- alignment and relevance of GCERF funding to the objectives of national action plans;
- usefulness of the evidence and knowledge generated and shared by GCERF.

Annex 2: Risk Analysis

Programmatic Risks

Potential Risk	Mitigation Strategies
Chosen CSOs are aligned with powerful family members/political figures and therefore are, or are perceived to be, biased.	Liaise carefully with donors in country and make sure all selection procedures are followed and documented in a transparent way. Pay special attention to this issue during the due diligence process.
The candidates for GCERF funding are funded by others and there is duplication of funding for the same reliable NGOs.	Liaise with donors in country and pay particular attention during the due diligence process to make sure that potential PRs have enough capacity and are not overstressing themselves. Encourage PRs to select less well-known but promising SRs.
Programme has harmful consequences, such as radicalisation of participants introducing the VE concept to communities where the problem did not already exist	Ensure initiatives are anchored in the priorities identified by the needs assessments, and baseline summaries, whilst also allowing flexibility for partners to adapt programmes to local realities in an evolving context. Routinely monitor outcomes and solicit feedback from partners. Encourage partner to closely monitor participant perceptions and wellbeing and whether relevant activities are being completed and relevant population groups are being reached.
Local level violence threatens security of participants or interrupts activities.	Routinely monitor and assess security threats and encourage PRs and SRs to do the same at their local level, sharing relevant updates with potential to impact on programme delivery. Ensure implementation plans consider the timing of elections and other socio-political events with the potential to cause temporary or sustained instability/programme interruption. Ensure early warning from PRs/SRs and work plan flexibility to adapt activities in the event of violence in focus communities. Capacity building for PRs on security risk management structures.
GCERF partner engagement in Mindanao is unwelcome, unhelpful or conflicts with other programmes	Conduct a comprehensive CONA. Engage with other organisations to ensure complementarity of activities in an environment already covered by many NGOs and share lessons learned.
It is not possible for GCERF to visit activities directly because project areas are designated as high risk (for instance due to high risk of kidnapping for ransom), and embassies advise against travel for expatriates.	Build a robust system of third-party monitoring (TPM) into the programme design from the beginning. Identify a reliable local/national service provider (e.g. a Mindanao-based local NGO, or network of NGOs), to carry out a regular programme of TPM under the technical supervision of international expertise and/or the GCERF Secretariat. Consider the higher risk profile of certain nationalities when making decisions concerning sending expatriates on monitoring visits to Mindanao. The Philippines CSM will likewise assist as and if necessary in monitoring through the DILG Regional Offices.

Institutional Risks for the GCERF Secretariat

Contextual Risks

Many contextual factors in the Philippines, such as political tensions and recurring natural disasters, present specific operational risks. It is unlikely that the crisis in Marawi will be resolved in the coming months; in Mindanao grantees will be working in a high-risk area, and programme participants' security will need to be prioritised. Grantees will monitor contextual developments and ensure that they have appropriate strategies in place to safeguard consortium staff and beneficiaries in the event of tensions turning to violence.

The CNA indicates that the PVE implementing environment will continue to be impacted by post-Marawi extension of martial law, imposing restrictions on movement and local coordination and engagement with partners, and by VE threats.

Security Risks

The environment continues to be extremely high risk: most Western governments (U.S., Australia, UK, Canada, etc.) all recommend no travel to most of Mindanao. Bombing campaigns persist, clashes with security forces are common, and kidnapping for ransom (KFR) remains prevalent. Nevertheless, anecdotal evidence suggests some limited travel to Mindanao (notably the City of Cotabato) is possible by INGO/IO international staff, and embassies do undertake visits at this time to some locations. Some INGOs claim that local staff and local NGOs/CSOs have little difficulty travelling, and most remain comfortable with regional and provincial level travel. However, embassies and IOs impose heavy travel restrictions on both local and expatriate staff.

GCERF will monitor developments and make the necessary arrangements to avoid unacceptable risks, and defining with PRs the security risks that would justify suspension of activity. GCERF will ensure PRs are able to modify their work plans, giving them the flexibility to reschedule their activities as appropriate, making security the priority. The Enabling Environment Assessment²⁸ (EEA) includes a specific analysis of security implications.

While local partners are at the forefront of GCERF's intervention in country, certain security risks remain for the GCERF Secretariat staff who visit the Philippines regularly to monitor programmes and support grantees. GCERF has a number of procedures in place to minimise these risks:

²⁸ In December 2018, GCERF commissioned The Stabilisation Network (TSN) to conduct an Enabling Environment Assessment (EEA) to provide practical information to guide GCERF's engagement in the Philippines.

- GCERF contracts International SOS to provide international medical/travel security services;
- Secretariat staff check travel security and medical information via the ISOS portal prior to all field missions and receive medical and security alerts when issued; and
- GCERF has a contracted Safety and Security Officer (SSO) responsible for assessing security risks to Secretariat staff and recommending context and country-specific risk mitigation strategies. The SSO visits programming areas to carry out specific security assessments prior to new programming. Secretariat staff will avoid missions during periods when the risk of violent incidents is expected to be high, if risks cannot be sufficiently mitigated. Risk assessments will be carried out if staff visit Mindanao, to safeguard staff and beneficiaries. The risk of individuals being stigmatised or targeted due to their association with GCERF-funded PVE programmes which will be mitigated by strictly adhering to an organisation-wide communications policy which takes into account the unique risks associated with PVE work and prioritises the safety of individuals over publicity.

Financial Risks

There has been an improvement in the economy since the new government, but little trickledown effect and high inflation mean that it may not be sustainable. The Philippines was ranked 113 out of 189 economies in the World Bank's Doing Business Rating for 2018. The Philippine economy is vulnerable due to heavy reliance on tourism and workers' remittances, and high exposure to natural disasters and climate change. Disbursements will be made in local currency to reduce currency conversion risks, and transfer costs will be fully integrated into total value. For higher-risk grants, disbursements will be made quarterly rather than through larger semi-annual payments and updates on risks will be included in semi-annual and annual financial reports.

Fiduciary Risks

As with all funding, there is a risk that funds entrusted to grantees are not used for the intended purpose and/or in compliance with applicable principles and legal requirements, including through fraud and/or unreliable reporting on use of funds. GCERF applies mitigating mechanism processes embedded in its grantee selection, proposal and grant agreement development, and grant management processes. Choosing high-performing PRs will reduce fiduciary risks. GCERF's approach to grant financial management includes:

- a clear set of financial management guidelines and templates, regularly updated to respond to lessons learned and changes in the grantee environment;
- assessment of financial risks, such as risk of loss or misuse, at grantee and GCERF levels;
- processes to support PRs in the planning and management of programme budgets and cash;

- the improvement of PRs' internal control systems (including regular monitoring visits and financial examinations conducted by an external audit firm retained by GCERF).

Reputational Risks

Although the Government of the Philippines invited GCERF to work in the Philippines, GCERF does not adhere to the political agenda of any one government and will take care to maintain its reputation for neutrality and support for human rights. GCERF exercises great care in external communications, to reduce the risk of misuse or misunderstanding, and establishes common communications standards and practices with grantees. GCERF will need to reinvest significant funding to have a meaningful PVE impact in the Philippines. It is therefore essential for GCERF to retain a reputation which makes it attractive to donors wanting to invest to support PVE in the Philippines. An essential part of upholding the GCERF reputation will be ensuring that due regard is given to programme participant safety.