

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. USD 4.8 million active grants are currently supporting six local civil society organisations (CSOs). The investment supports 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).

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 address the drivers of violent extremism and guides civil society organisations in designing their programmes. According to GCERF's needs assessment and consultations with relevant stakeholders, there are three main drivers of violent extremism in the Philippines:

1. Unaddressed historical grievances and frustration with the government
2. Cultural and geographical divide among tri-people communities
3. Socio-economic vulnerability due to lack of literacy, economic opportunity and sense of purpose



WHERE

- Metro Manila
- Mindanao (Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao – BARMM, Sulu, Lanao del Norte, South Cotabato, and Sarangani)

WHO

- Children outside or at risk of dropping out of school (14–18)
- Un- or under-employed Youth (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)

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

CURRENT GRANTS



IMPLEMENTED BY		PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS) Sub-recipients: IMAN, KFPDAI, GMWI, TFI, LCRWOI		Local governance stakeholders and the private sector have collaborated for strengthening community development, good governance, and peaceful settlement of grievances at the Barangay level in BARMM. Community stakeholders have improved capacities and access to opportunities adopted relevant skills for economic opportunities for livelihoods improvement.	
AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		\$ GRANT AMOUNT	PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Cotabato BARMM-SGA, Maguindanao, Tawi Tawi, Sulu, Basilan		USD 998,179	January 2023 – December 2025

IMPLEMENTED BY		PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID) Sub-recipients: UNYPAD, KFI, TLWOI, BALAOD		Affected communities have improved knowledge and capabilities for peaceful conflict resolution, community participation, advocacy and claims, and peacebuilding. Civil society groups have increased collaboration for advocacy on community priorities' agenda. Local and national state authorities integrate community solutions and proposals to its peace policies, mechanisms and programs.	
AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		\$ GRANT AMOUNT	PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Metro Manila		USD 998,000	January 2023 – December 2025






IMPLEMENTED BY		PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: Mahintana Foundation, Inc (MFI) Sub-recipients: Kasilak, OND, MDFI, TLDFI		Tri-people have increased participation in local governance (including education) and peace promotion actions Governmental bodies (LGUs, Councils and Security Forces) have increased understanding of culture of peace. Vulnerable communities have increased access to livelihoods support and skills Sensitise security actors about R&R and coordinate R&R and PVE efforts	
AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		\$ GRANT AMOUNT	PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Banga and Tupi, Lake Sebu and Klamba, Tboli, Alabel and Malapatan, Polomolok		USD 998,000	January 2023 – December 2025






IMPLEMENTED BY		PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy, Inc. (PCID) Sub-recipients: CLRG		Local Knowledge Partner Mapping and capacity building on data management Third-Party Monitoring exercises and evaluations Research generation for policy and practice	
AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		\$ GRANT AMOUNT	PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Manila, Mindanao		USD 363,889	January 2024 – September 2026

CURRENT GRANTS



 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
<p>Principal Recipient: Teach Peace Build Peace Movement (TPBPM)</p> <p>Sub-recipients: AMYL, GYAO</p>		<p>Security forces and local authorities have improved capacity on inclusive governance and leadership, conflict transformation and peaceful communication</p> <p>Education stakeholders and institutions adopt peace education strategies and are re-accredited to the Department of Education</p> <p>Socio-economically disadvantaged groups have access to, and adopt peaceful transitional justice solutions</p>	
 AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		 GRANT AMOUNT	 PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Lanao del Sur, Metro Manila, Maguindanao		USD 700,000	January 2023 – December 2025

 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
<p>Principal Recipient: Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services (IDEALS), Inc.</p> <p>Sub-recipients: Ateneo de Davao University – Madaris Volunteer Program, Magungaya Mindanao Incorporated (MMI), Al Mujadilah Development Foundation (AMDF)</p>		<p>Communities inside and outside BARMM have increased awareness of peace-oriented Bangsamoro narratives</p> <p>Young people inside and outside BARMM have increased engagement in peace and non-violence initiatives</p> <p>Community actors (businesses and individual youth) in BARMM improve leadership skills by utilizing skills and leveraging partnerships</p> <p>Bangsamoro communities in selected conflict-affected and GIDA areas in BARMM have increased access to platforms to voice PVE and post-conflict concerns to duty bearers</p>	
 AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		 GRANT AMOUNT	 PERIOD OF THE GRANT
BARMM Island Provinces (Lanao, Maguindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan), Metro Manila, Metro Cebu, and Metro Davao		USD 893,288	July 2023 – December 2025

 IMPLEMENTED BY		 PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
<p>Principal Recipient: Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits, Inc. (ECOWEB)</p> <p>Sub-recipients: Iligan City Confederation of Madaris and Maahad Associations (ICOMMAS), Senator Ninoy Aquino College Foundation, Inc. (SNACFI), Thuma Ko Kapaginged Service Inc. (THUMA)</p>		<p>Vulnerable Bangsamoro youth and local community members outside BARMM have increased skills and livelihood opportunities</p> <p>Identified Torils and Madrasahs outside BARMM have improved access to resources and technical support to meet Department of Education standards</p>	
 AREA OF IMPLEMENTATION		 GRANT AMOUNT	 PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Iligan City		USD 561,812.00	August 2023 – December 2025

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 till September 2025

16

grants in six years to 50 civil-society organisations, including principal and sub-recipients

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 promote peaceful conflict resolution at the community level

10,753

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

15,086

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

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.