



Women-STRIVE Project

Women supporting the transformation and institutionalization of local initiatives on violent extremism

In the Philippines, while the government is struggling to curb the increasing number of COVID-19 cases, violent extremism continues to flourish. In the southern island of Mindanao, clashes between soldiers and elements of Islamic State (ISIS)-linked Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) continued in multiple provinces despite the strict quarantine measures of law enforcement authorities while non-residents believed to be affiliated with ISIS were sighted in the hinterlands of Lanao del Norte. The uncertainty of ending the COVID-19 pandemic generated a growing concern about the dynamics of violent extremism and its consequences, such as:

- *Increased recruitment during economic turndown.* As the COVID-19 pandemic is causing a global economic recession, Islamist extremists find this as a window of opportunity to recruit new members.
- *Lockdowns—opportune time for violent extremist activities.* Police field operations are hampered by travel restrictions triggered by the virus providing a window of opportunities to violent extremists to continue their activities.
- *Recruitment of extremist groups targeting women and young girls.* The trend of women involved in suicide missions and taking active roles in extremist networks are growing.
- *Misinformation amidst the pandemic.* COVID-19 topic became a fertile breeding ground for extremist narratives to spread and was used in disseminating false information regarding the deadly virus.

 **Basilan**
Municipality of Al-Barka

 **Lanao del Norte**
Municipality of Munai
Municipality of Tagoloan
Municipality of Tangcal

Responding to the growing concerns and threats of violent extremism amidst the pandemic, Nonviolent Peaceforce initiated a project called **Women-STRIVE** or **Women supporting the transformation and institutionalization of local initiatives on violent extremism** that is a women-led initiative and applies a whole-of-community approach and non-violent solutions to contribute in building community resilience against radicalization, violence, and conflict. The project is being implemented in Basilan covering 1 municipality and in Lanao del Norte with 3 municipalities. A total of 9 communities (barangays) will benefit in the implementation of community-based interventions. These include Barangays Panggao, Tamparan, and Bacayawan for Munai; Barangay Beruar for Tangcal; and Barangays Panalawan, Kiazar, and Malimbato for Tagoloan.

Women-STRIVE Project is supported by the Australian Government and implemented by Nonviolent Peaceforce in partnership with two local organizations in Basilan and Lanao del Norte, namely the Bantey Basilan, Inc. and Pakigdait, Inc. or *Pakigdait Alang Sa Pag-Amoma Sa Kalinaw*.



Project Details



Goal

Contribute in preventing and countering violent extremism through women empowerment in local peacebuilding, community-based conflict transformation and peace advocacy in communities of Lanao del Norte and Basilan.



Duration

15 May 2021 – 15 June 2022



Project participants

Institutional actors including LGU women and men officials, BIWAB leaders, school/madrasa representatives, and women CSO-leaders

Community/groups including women in conflict-affected areas, BIWAB members, youth-led organizations and intra and inter-faith groups

Families and individuals including young people, former women and men combatants and their families



PROJECT ACTIVITIES



Women-leaders trained on peace promoting governance, transformation of violent extremism, & gender-sensitive policy development

- Project coordination and sensitization to stakeholders
- Capacity building on gender and conflict-sensitive peacebuilding, peace advocacy, and transformation of violent extremism
- LGU-led participatory and multi-stakeholder consultation, planning and policy advocacy



Women and at-risk individuals in communities trained on transformation of conflict and violent extremism

- Mentoring, religious guidance, and psychosocial healing and war-to-peace mindset transition of former combatants, at-risk individuals and their families
- Capacity building on gender and culture-sensitive conflict resolution, women-led peace dialogues, civilian protection framework, GBV prevention and response, and human rights
- Establishment of citizen-oriented Early Warning-Early Response (EWER) mechanisms



Women conducted advocacy on culture of peace and non-violence

- Workshop on women-led development of IEC materials
- Community-wide education and multi-media advocacy promoting deradicalization, culture of peace and non-violence

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