



Preventing Violent Extremism: MINDANAO, PHILIPPINES APRIL 2016

impl. project works with local communities to collect and analyze data, assess the root causes of community problems, and facilitate community-driven development programming.

The recent backward slide is not surprising: the grievances of the local population that fuel drivers to radicalization have been increasing.

Listening to what communities have to say through good-faith data collection has proven a key tool in promoting stability through development.

impl. project has been working in Barira, Philippines to prevent violent extremism in local communities susceptible to recruitment by the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters and rogue elements of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, some of which have recently pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Individuals radicalize through a range of ideological, psychological, and community-based motivations, ranging from a search for identity and personal agency, to peer pressure, to feelings of political oppression.

Our in-depth data collection in Barira—where few organizations are able to collect information—showed that the local population had significant concerns related to their livelihoods. The greater their concern for their economic situation, the more likely parents were to pull children out of school to work on the failing family farm.

Those young adults grew up without the hope of a fulfilling livelihood—particularly because those community members who do complete college tend to move out of the community, leaving those left behind feeling lost.

The young men look for an escape through cheap and easily accessed methamphetamines. They get addicted, start stealing livestock to feed their addiction, and demonstrate their willingness to break the law. At that point, many young men are approached and offered a choice: join the local, warlord-funded militia who will provide them with more meth, or else join what is now an ISIL aspirant, which can help them feel redeemed and hopeful for martyrdom. Both may seem like better options than a life of tedious labor and poverty.

The community itself has suffered from governance and policing problems as well. The police, under-resourced and under orders not to patrol Barira due to a clan feud, neglect the community. Without further means to secure themselves, it is difficult for the community to resist the presence of informal security forces.

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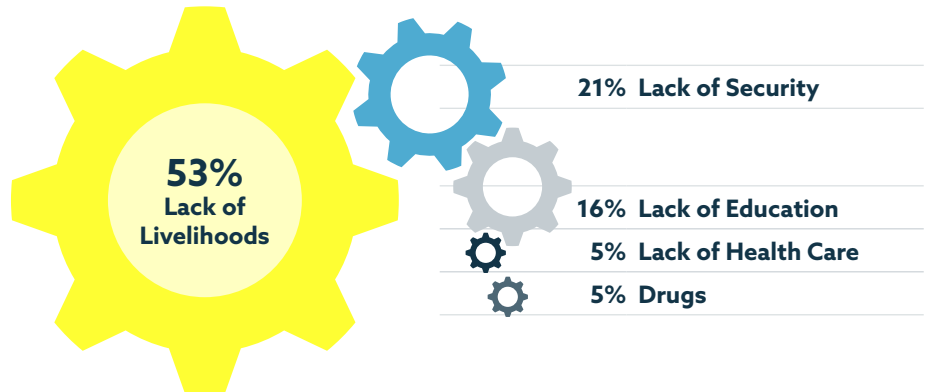
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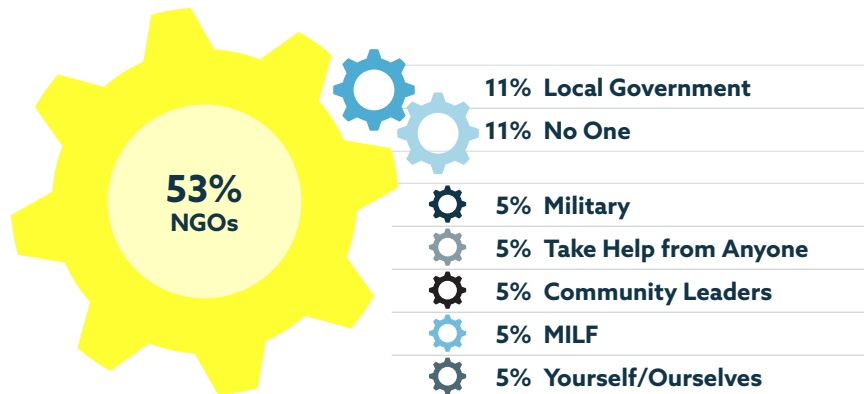
What We Found

- 53% of community members said livelihoods were their main concern and 21% cited security concerns due to the criminality of drug-addicted youth
- Focus groups pointed to the lack of security and the criminality of drug-addicted youth as their main governance grievances
- Upon *impl. project's* investigation, the local police had not conducted a single patrol in this community in the previous month
- Given years of neglect and ambivalence from the government, the communities now primarily trust non-profits to help them address their challenges

Biggest problem facing your community?



Who can solve your problems?



By gathering data on community members' grievances, and then working hand-in-hand with the community to understand and validate the underlying problems, impl. project was able to pinpoint the governance, security, and livelihoods breakdowns that are driving violence and radicalization in Barira.

Implications for Policymakers

Community Concern	Possible Violence Prevention Method	Leaders in Programming Intervention
Lack of security	Community policing to ensure police and the local community have a cooperative relationship	Local police, local civilian government, mediators, and local community members
Uncertain livelihoods	An agricultural co-op and skills-building to ensure long-term economic opportunities	Community members, business leaders, impact investors, non-profit mentors, local civilian government
Drug addiction	Back to school GED program for out-of-school youth, drug demand reduction, rehabilitation for addicts	Medical community, non-profit counselors, local civilian government