FAITH AND DEVELOPMENT IN FOCUS

PHILIPPINES

Supported by the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development
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WORLD FAITHS DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE
BERKLEY CENTER FOR RELIGION, PEACE & WORLD AFFAIRS
ABOUT THE WORLD FAITHS DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE

The World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) is a not-for-profit organization working at the intersection of religion and global development. Housed within the Berkley Center in Washington, DC, WFDD documents the work of faith-inspired organizations and explores the importance of religious ideas and actors in development contexts. WFDD supports dialogue among religious and development communities and promotes innovative partnerships, at national and international levels, with the goal of contributing to positive and inclusive development outcomes.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ON RELIGION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (PARD)

PARD brings together governmental and intergovernmental entities with diverse civil society organizations and faith-based organizations, to engage the social capital and capacities vested in diverse faith communities for sustainable development and humanitarian assistance in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. PARD aims at greater and institutionalized communication and coordination between secular and non-secular actors, while fostering collaboration of its members as well as promoting cooperation with existing networks and initiatives. The partnership focuses on joint activities in the following areas of engagement: knowledge exchange, capacity building, and joint advocacy. PARD is supported by an international secretariat located in Bonn and Berlin in Germany and hosted by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The secretariat is financed by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

BMZ has commissioned and is funding WFDD and GIZ to produce this report as one issue in a series of publications on Nigeria, Tanzania, the Philippines, and Myanmar.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The principal author of the report is Cameron Pulley. Substantial inputs were provided by Katherine Marshall, Micah Musser, and Luisa Banchoff. The consultation meeting on January 16, 2019 included the following participants: Fr. Michael Agliardo, S.J., visiting scholar, Department of Sociology, Santa Clara University; Anna Bantug-Herrera, associate director, Washington DC Office, Asia Foundation; Nell Bolton, senior technical advisor for justice and peacebuilding, Catholic Relief Services; David Buckley, associate professor of political science/Chair in Politics, Science, & Religion, University of Louisville; Hank Hendrickson, executive director, US-Philippines Society; Jerome Herradura, finance and administration officer, Asian Development Bank; Steve Heyneman, professor emeritus of international education policy, Vanderbilt University; Christina Lee, associate professor, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Princeton University; Albert Santoli, president, Asia America Initiative; and Erwin Tiongson, professor, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University. Field work in the Philippines (Manila, Davao City, and Cagayan de Oro) included 40 formal interviews and many further informal consultations.

WFDD is grateful to everyone who participated in this study as their contributions form the foundation of this report. Without those who shared their experiences, knowledge, and insights, this report would not have been possible.

Photographs in this report were taken by Cameron Pulley or sourced from Flickr. Photo credit is given in individual captions.

Cover Photo Credit: UN Migration Agency (IOM), Photo by: Katia Maria Davalos-Gutierrez
The inspiration for “Faith and Development in Focus: Philippines” originates from a recognition that religious institutions are and have always been, at least for the past 500 years, fundamental to the development process in the Philippines. The Philippines is characterized by extraordinarily high religiosity and diversity. Across countless religious groups, there is the near universal expectation that religion must be a force actively working towards the alleviation of suffering, the promotion of justice, and the longevity of peace. The practical approach and scale at which religious actors embrace the ambition to fulfill these societal expectations distinguishes the Philippines as a unique development context, one demanding careful analysis of how religious and secular development agendas are not simply interlinked, but intertwined.

PaRD and GIZ have supported a series of four country case study reports in partnership with WFDD, of which the Philippines is one. Based upon substantial primary and secondary research in the form of expert interviews and an in-depth literature review, this report endeavors to provide a comprehensive yet accessible overview of the religious landscape in the Philippines in relation to its practical participation in the social development process. It is the goal of WFDD and its partners that this report contribute to inspiring collaboration among religious, faith-inspired, and secular development institutions in the Philippines. Cooperative engagement between these actors is not only beneficial towards, but necessary for, inclusive development. This report aims to expand and improve understanding of the Philippine development context by shedding light on a complex intersectional topic for which there are no simple answers or narratives.

A major factor that separates the Philippine experience from comparable cases is the depth and degree to which religious and secular institutions are and have always been interconnected. This interconnectedness can at times manifest as interdependency. Religious and faith-inspired civil society organizations are integral to the development process in the Philippines through the specialized work they do and the high credibility they often have among the people they serve. In certain cases, they are the implementing partners of large multilateral and bilateral aid organizations because they have the highest capacity and widest reach in the Philippines pertaining to particular development sub-fields. Furthermore, despite the enshrinement of the separation of church and state in the Constitution, they commonly fill in gaps engendered by the limitations of government capacity and reach. In tandem with the high religiosity among Filipinos, the cumulatively quasi-state facility of religious and faith-inspired civil society organizations enables them to proactively impact policy and development priorities through their powerful direct advocacy and ability to hasten or stagnate program implementation.

This influence is visible, for example, in the preservation of the morally absolute language of the Catholic Church on abortion in the Constitution or obstructions of the government mandate of ensuring universal access to modern family planning. It is also visible in the shifts of authority to come with the formation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, which will be able to control a greater proportion of its tax revenue and its regional development agenda than any other region in the Philippines. Still, in approaching the objective of this report, WFDD has conscientiously aimed to avoid the tendency in the literature to essentialize the Philippine religious landscape as a national Catholic majority with a regionally significant Muslim minority. Religious minorities lesser
known by the international community are often just as operationally active in development in the Philippines. To present a holistic overview of faith and development in the Philippines, these groups must be equitably represented with respect to their globally higher-profile counterparts.

The hypothesis of this, and other country reports in the series, is that ignoring or minimizing the importance of religious factors can hinder development ambitions, strategies, and outcomes. This report finds that the fragmented nature of engagement in the Philippines not only results in redundancies and inefficiencies, but also missed opportunities for collaboration, risks of counterproductive friction between actors, and ultimately less than optimal outcomes for the population of Filipinos that depend on support to meet their basic needs. WFDD and its partners recognize that religion is complex, but reject the often-repeated idea that religion is “too complicated” to approach. We hope instead that a solid base of information—recognizing the diversity and immense cumulative impact of religious actors—will challenge the notion that there is inherent opposition between religious and secular development ambitions in the Philippines and catalyze positive collaboration.

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<td>ARMM</td>
<td>Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao</td>
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<td>BARMM</td>
<td>Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao</td>
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<td>CBCP</td>
<td>Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines</td>
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<td>CEBSI</td>
<td>Christian Era Broadcasting Service International</td>
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<td>CPP</td>
<td>Communist Party of the Philippines</td>
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<td>CPS</td>
<td>Country Partnership Strategy</td>
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<td>CFC</td>
<td>Couples for Christ</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIO</td>
<td>faith-inspired organization</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>gross domestic product</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBC</td>
<td>Eagle Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Criminal Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFI</td>
<td>Iglesia Filipina Independiente</td>
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<tr>
<td>INC</td>
<td>Iglesia Ni Cristo</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPRA</td>
<td>Indigenous Peoples Rights Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>IWGIA</td>
<td>International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs</td>
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<td>JILCW</td>
<td>Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide</td>
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<td>JW</td>
<td>Jehovah's Witnesses</td>
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<td>KJC</td>
<td>Kingdom of Jesus Christ-The Name Above Every Name</td>
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<td>KKK</td>
<td>Kahugpungan sa Katawhan alang sa Kalambuan</td>
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<td>LDS</td>
<td>Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MILF</td>
<td>Moro Islamic Liberation Front</td>
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<td>MNLF</td>
<td>Moro National Liberation Front</td>
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<td>NCCP</td>
<td>National Council of Churches in the Philippines</td>
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<td>NCMF</td>
<td>National Commission on Muslim Filipinos</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDF</td>
<td>National Democratic Front</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPA</td>
<td>New People's Army</td>
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<td>PCEC</td>
<td>Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches</td>
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<td>PDP</td>
<td>Philippine Development Plan</td>
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<td>PNP</td>
<td>Philippine National Police</td>
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<td>SDA</td>
<td>Seventh-day Adventist Church</td>
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<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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TIMELINE: KEY EVENTS IN PHILIPPINE HISTORY

~2000 BCE  Angono petroglyphs are created, the earliest known art in the Philippines. Depicting animal and human figures, it is a sacred site for the indigenous religion of the Tagalog people.

~700 CE  Earliest possible integration of ancient Butuan into Southeast Asian maritime trade routes. Archeological evidence suggests, but does not confirm, exposure to Vajrayana Buddhism from the Srivijaya Empire.

900 CE  Laguna Copperplate Inscription is created, the earliest calendar-dated text in the Philippines. It is dated by a Hindu-Buddhist lunar calendar, confirming Javanese Buddhist influence in maritime Southeast Asia.

1280  Muslim merchant Tuan Masha’ika arrives in Jolo preaching Islam. He marries the daughter of Rajah Sipad the Younger, the second ruler of Buranun Principality of Maimbung, which by 1405 had grown into the Islamic Sultanate of Sulu.

1521  Magellan arrives in Eastern Visayas and the first Catholic Mass is held at Limasawa, Southern Leyte or Masao, Butuan. Rajah Humabon of Cebu is baptized and is given the Santo Niño de Cebú as a gift. Magellan is killed by forces of Lapu-Lapu on Mactan Island.


1578  Franciscans evangelize in Southern Luzon.

1579  Catholic Diocese of Manila is established.

1581  Spanish administration formally establishes Intramuros-adjacent and Chinese-designated neighborhood of Parian, which would become the commercial center of Spanish colonial Manila. This is the clearest recognition of a pre-colonial Chinese-Filipino community that refused to convert to Catholicism.

1581  Jesuits evangelize in Rizal, Samar, and Leyte.

1588  Dominicans evangelize in Northern/Central Luzon.

1589  Franciscans establish Colegio de Santa Potenciana (defunct), the first institution for women’s formal education in the Philippines.

1590  Jesuits establish Colegio de Manila (defunct), the first institution for men’s formal education in the Philippines.

1593  Doctrina Christiana (“The Teachings of Christianity”) by Fr. Juan de Plasencia (Franciscan) is printed in Chinese, Spanish, and Tagalog at a Dominican press, the first book printed in the Philippines.
TIMELINE (cont.)

~17th century Many major revolts took place during the seventeenth century in the Philippines. The Moro struggle was ongoing, Chinese-Filipinos organize revolts in 1602 and 1662, and there were dozens of indigenous rebellions. Property rights, tax collection, and the imposition of Catholicism drove conflict.

1765 Royal Fiscal of Manila sends letter entitled “Demonstration of the Deplorably Wretched State of the Philippine Islands” to Charles III, king of Spain, advising him to abandon the colony due to the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), defensive insecurity, and financial chaos. Charles III rejects.

1767–1776 Ecclesiastical crisis occurs. The Jesuits are expelled from the Philippines and their property is confiscated. Other Catholic orders are suppressed but not expelled. Parishes are secularized (filling in colonial administrative gaps, Catholic priests had until this point acted as governors and tax collectors).

1859 Jesuits are granted return to the Philippines. They establish Ateneo de Manila and evangelize in Mindanao and Jolo.

1892–1898 The independence revolutionary organization Katipunan (KKK) is founded (1892) and precipitates the Philippine Revolution (1896–1898). Katipunan signs a Pact of Biak-na-Bato truce with Spain (1897) and establishes a revolutionary government with the Malolos Constitution (1898).

1898 American victory over Spain in the Spanish–American War cedes the Philippines to the United States per the terms of the Treaty of Paris (1898).

1898 First Comity Agreement is signed between American Protestant churches, delineating geographical allotments for Protestant evangelization in the Philippines.

1901 United States suppresses the unrecognized First Philippine Republic, establishing the Insular Government of Philippine Islands (1901–1935). The Catholic Church is disestablished as an official religion. Freedom of religion is allowed, but American Protestantism is privileged and spreads rapidly.

1902 Gregorio Aglipay separates from the Catholic Church and forms Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI; Aglipayan Church), the first Philippine restorationist church.

1911 Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) builds its first church in the Philippines.

1914 Felix Y. Manalo forms Iglesia Ni Cristo (INC), which has since become the largest Philippine restorationist church.

1934 Jehovah’s Witnesses (JW) establishes their first branch office in the Philippines.

TIMELINE (cont.)

1937 Freedom of religion allows for Chinese-Buddhist Society to build Seng Guan Temple and the abbot Xingyuan arrives in 1937. Prior to this point, Buddhism is practiced only in private spaces.

1942–1945 Japan occupies the Philippines during WWII, establishing the puppet Second Philippine Republic government.

1945 The Catholic Welfare Organization (CWO) is established for wartime relief and social outreach. In 1967, it rebrands at the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), the official canonical body of the Catholic Church in the Philippines.

1946 After the defeat of the Japanese, the United States relinquishes sovereignty over the Philippines and recognizes its independence. This marked the beginning of the Third Republic, which continued the 1935 Constitution.

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1963 National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) is created, the largest mainline Protestant cooperative ministry.

1965 Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) is founded, the largest evangelical Protestant cooperative ministry.

1965 Ferdinand Marcos is elected president of the Philippines.

1967 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS; Mormon Church) establishes its first mission in the Philippines.

1968 Jabidah Massacre and its aftermath disillusion the Muslim community to Christian-dominated government. The unresolved Moro conflict is reignited and the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM) is founded. The MIM quickly collapses because its leaders have weak credibility among Moros.

1969 New People’s Army (NPA), the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), is formally organized and begins insurgency.

1972 Marcos declares martial law, dissolving the democratic process and beginning a 14-year period of severe human rights abuses. He cites the NPA “communist threat” and MIM “sectarian rebellion” as his justification.

1972 Nur Misuari separates from the MIM and forms the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which begins armed separatist insurgency.

1973 1973 Constitution passes. Its technical purpose was to create a parliamentary system, but in fact it was vehicle for Marcos to consolidate power.

1973 The National Democratic Front (NDF) is established, joining, bringing greater organization to, and fueling the communist armed insurgency.
TIMELINE (cont.)

1974 CBCP petitions Marcos to end martial law.

1976 Tripoli Agreement between the Philippine Government and MNLF is signed, establishing a ceasefire and a pathway towards greater Muslim autonomy.

1977 The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) separates from the MNLF in rejection of the Tripoli Agreement, continuing Moro armed struggle despite the GRP-MNLF brokered ceasefire.

1978 Eddie Villanueva establishes Jesus Is Lord Church (JIL), a major Pentecostal Protestant church of Philippine origin.

1981 Martial law is lifted, but Marcos authoritarianism continues.

1981 Couples for Christ (CFC) is founded as an initiative of Ang Ligaya Ng Panginoon (LNP).

1983 Previously exiled opposition figure Senator Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino Jr. is assassinated at Manila International Airport, triggering a severe economic recession and open civil disobedience.


1984 Brother Mike Velarde establishes El Shaddai, which has since become the largest Catholic charismatic movement.


1987 1987 Constitution passes and free elections are held. Office on Muslim Affairs (OMA) is founded, rebranding as the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) in 2009.

1990 Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) is officially created.

1991 Abu Sayyaf (ASG) separates from the MILF with support from international terrorist networks, ushering a new ideologically Salafi jihadist dimension to the Moro conflict.

1997 Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) passes, recognizing self-determination, ancestral domain, and other indigenous rights.

2001 People Power Revolution/EDSA II ousts Estrada and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo becomes president.
2004–2005  Arroyo wins the 2004 election over Fernando Poe Jr., who dies seven months later. 2005 “Hello Garci” scandal creates a political crisis over allegations that Arroyo orchestrated electoral fraud and a cover-up, but Arroyo allies in the House of Representatives block impeachment. Arroyo declares state of emergency in 2006 for eight days, allegedly to prevent a coup. Marcos-reminiscent justifications deteriorate her popularity.

2009  Maguindanao Massacre is the single deadliest event for journalists in world history. Arroyo declares martial law for eight days.

2012  Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012 (RH Law) passes. It is marked by extreme contention within the Catholic community and its guarantee for universal access faces implementation difficulties.

2013  Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) makes landfall in Eastern Visayas, the deadliest and costliest natural disaster in the modern Philippines.

2014  GRP-MILF Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) is signed, outlining a new pathway towards the resolution of the Moro conflict.

2015  Mamasapano Incident and its aftermath threaten to derail Moro peace process.

2015  Leadership controversy within Iglesia Ni Cristo results in the excommunication of high-level ministers. The chaotic fallout becomes a rare insight into the reality of INC power dynamics, extra-church relationships, political capital, and capacity to mobilize membership.

2016  Rodrigo Duterte is inaugurated on June 30. In a speech on July 2, he announces to a crowd, “If you know any drug addicts, go ahead and kill them yourself.” On July 3, the Philippine National Police (PNP) announces it has killed 30 alleged drug dealers since Duterte’s inauguration. Since then, there have been between 5,000 and 20,000 extrajudicial killings associated to the Philippine drug war.

2017  Pro-ISIL militants begin the Battle of Marawi and Duterte declares martial law for all of Mindanao. Marawi was liberated after five months, but martial law has been continuously extended and remains ongoing.

2018  Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno is removed from office without an impeachment trial.

2019  Bangsamoro Autonomous Regional in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) is formally established, replacing the ARMM.

2019  The Philippines formally withdraws from the International Criminal Court (ICC) amidst a pending human rights case on extrajudicial killings associated with the Philippine drug war.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Philippines is a deeply religious society, and institutions and beliefs permeate social, economic, and political institutions. Religious actors are thus deeply engaged in development, from debates and ideas about directions to politics and on the ground implementation.

An important feature of the religious landscape is the dominant role of the Roman Catholic Church: A large majority (around 81%) of citizens of the Philippines are Catholics. Sunni Islam is the second largest religious community, with around 6% of the population. But the landscape is complicated by the active presence of over a hundred Christian denominations, the largest of which is Iglesia Ni Cristo. The legacies of Spanish and American colonial rule are very present factors. Four and a half centuries of Spanish rule created a deeply embedded Catholic ethos in the society, while nearly four decades of American rule instituted a now-ingrained culture of separation of church and state. A active civil society is another marked feature of the Philippines, which has more civil society organizations (CSOs) per capita than any other country in the world. Many have religious roots and are marked by religious beliefs. This plus the society’s deep religiosity accounts for the large number of active faith-inspired organizations (FIOs), many of which work towards achieving development goals.

Religious actors play politically complicated roles in Filipino society, including in shaping political transitions (for example in deposing the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship). The 1987 constitution defines explicit roles for religious leaders, including delegating democratic protective measures such as election monitoring to religious actors. High levels of confidence and trust in religious leaders and their perceived authority to comment on policy matters elevate the informal roles of religious leaders within Filipino society.

The Philippines faces significant economic and social challenges. Despite generally sustained high economic growth and consistent debt and unemployment reduction, there are pressing issues that must be addressed to ensure that economic growth is equitable and inclusive; some 22% of the population is still living below the national poverty line. The Philippine government needs to
build a more robust system of social protection mechanisms, particularly to address deep disparities. As one of the world’s most disaster-prone nations, it needs to bolster emergency preparedness. Religious actors have important experience and other assets to contribute on all these issues.

Notwithstanding high levels of interconnection between religious leaders, government bodies, secular development entities, and development partners, explicit and purposeful links with religious actors around development issues have been rare. Productive, short-term engagement between faith institutions and secular development entities often occurs after major natural disasters, which frequently occur in the Philippines. Several topics—including educational curricula and issues relating to the family, such as abortion, divorce law, LGBTQ+ treatment, availability of contraceptives, and cross-religious adoption services—generate significant conflict between faith and secular development agencies. Friction between religious and non-religious groups can also arise as a result of overlapping work.

This report highlights and contextualizes the development roles of religious actors in the Philippines, and forms part of a broader country mapping initiative designed to highlight the diverse and complex roles of religious actors in development work. The report explores religious dimensions of various development issues with a focus on actual and potential contributions of religious actors to the Philippines’s development sector. The report’s main purposes are: (a) to provide a detailed overview of the Philippines’s nuanced and dynamic religious landscape, including its numerous FIOs and interfaith networks; (b) to summarize the national development landscape today, with a focus on religious and secular organizations on the local, national, and international levels; (c) to highlight key development issues and existing faith-inspired initiatives engaging these issues; and (d) to point to key areas for further research, analysis, and action. In deepening the understanding of religious contributions to development in the Philippines, the report seeks to promote collaboration between both religious and secular actors and, in doing so, enhance the overall quality and scope of development programs in the Philippines.

Some findings include:

- Religion is a significant source of legitimacy, linked in part to a common Filipino ethos of helping others: Kapwa, a Tagalog word meaning “fellow being,” expresses the importance of helping others as a fundamental moral duty. Many religious Filipinos dedicate their lives to helping others, especially through charitable and development endeavors. This accounts in part for the remarkably large number of civil society organizations in the Philippines, many of which have marked religious inspiration and ties.
- The varied religious demographics of the Philippines, which are complex and far from static, ensure that very different voices are heard in the active debates
surrounding development and, associated with it, peacebuilding. Conflicts among communities occur but are not the norm. Despite their large majority, Catholics do not monopolize conversations about religion. Most interreligious communication is relatively free of conflict compared to other highly religious societies around the world. Much work is focused at the local level, giving rise to a rich mosaic of approaches and interventions.

- Religious organizations involved in development work often have weak transparency and accountability mechanisms, combined with a sense of moral superiority. Lack of coordination among different religious traditions is the common rule. This can undermine the work of these religious groups but, because religious credibility remains very high, problems are rarely addressed.

- Secular and religious organizations rarely coordinate effectively in working towards significant development goals. Friction can arise because coordination and communication are often poor. Religious actors argue that they are sometimes excluded from important conversations. Better development outcomes could result from better religious/secular coordination.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is often recognized in the international development community as a country with the capacity to sustain a high GDP growth rate, the ability to weather the tides of the global market and its domestic challenges with fundamentally consistent economic policy, and a large, young, enterprising workforce. However, there is well-grounded concern that such consistent growth has been insufficiently inclusive to propel reductions in high poverty rates and the Gini coefficient.

Although the Philippines has cooperated with the international community and worked towards the fulfillment of global development ambitions, reaction to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among policymakers, the private sector, and the general population in the Philippines has been somewhat tepid. Skepticism about the applicability of MDGs/SDGs to the Philippines case arises above all from high perceived uncertainty around political stability and natural disasters. Since the fall of the authoritarian government of Ferdinand Marcos (1965–1986), the democratic Fifth Republic has been characterized by instability during transfers of power, major directional shifts between administrations, and the continuation of long-standing internal conflicts. Following only Vanuatu and Tonga, the Philippines is ranked as the third most vulnerable country in the world to natural disasters—specifically typhoons, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. The Philippines suffers a major natural disaster affecting millions of people and costing hundreds of millions of dollars in damage nearly every year.

The Philippines had mixed results with the Millennium Development Goals. It met its goals for universal primary education, girls’ education and women’s employment, child mortality, safe water, and basic sanitation. It fell short of its goals for poverty reduction, hunger/malnutrition, women’s parliamentary participation, maternal health, disease control, and reforestation. The Philippines now moves towards the targets set for the Sustainable Development Goals with an emphasis on the importance of good governance, well-defined implementation plans, and data monitoring for accountability. Its fundamental mechanism for realizing the SDGs is the Philippine
Development Plan (PDP) 2017–2022, which embraces a “whole-of-government/society” approach focused on improving the social fabric, reducing inequality, increasing economic opportunity, creating a business-friendly environment, and ensuring sustainability. In short, the course is set with robust plans and some significant assets, yet with qualified hopes for success given fundamental natural and governance challenges.

Largely because the principle of separation of church and state is well enshrined in the Constitution, it is atypical for explicitly religious actors and faith-inspired organizations (FIOs) to be formally recognized as implementing partners for national development agendas. In practice, the government is well aware of the influence of religion on society and political life and relies upon synergies with faith-driven civil society in its approach to development. Formal or explicit relationships between FIOs and multilateral and bilateral aid agencies supporting the Philippines to fulfill its development goals are limited. Multilateral and bilateral aid agencies tend to ignore or downplay religion as a factor in the development context relevant to their operations, where their activities center around lending or providing grants to the Philippine government. On rare occasions, usually in response to natural disaster or humanitarian crisis, these agencies may form partnerships with well-established international FIOs as a function of those organizations’ proven capacity to handle large influxes of support effectively.

The formal understanding of government-driven initiatives (whether multilateral or bilateral aid supported or not) represents only one facet of the development process in the Philippines. Although secularism is emphasized, religious factors, whether through moralism, partnerships, or synergies, are in practice of paramount importance, just below the surface in the Philippine case.

STUDY OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH THEMES

This report focuses on the Philippines as part of a country mapping project within the joint Religion and Global Development program of WFDD and the Berkley Center, supported by the International Partnership for Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project’s purpose is to analyze how faith institutions and actors are involved in development issues and explore the significance of these religious dimensions and their policy implications. Its wider goal is to inspire effective collaboration among the religious and secular institutions involved in the development process, in this instance in the Philippines, thus improving the quality of development programs.

In the case of the Philippines, a bottom-up approach to the mapping of the religious dimensions of development programs was inspired by the depth to which individual religious communities self-organize and fund their own large-scale development initiatives. Local faith-inspired civil society is exceptionally well-developed and involved
in every sector. These local faith-inspired development institutions usually operate in parallel to, not typically in formal collaboration with, international faith-inspired or secular development institutions. Policy advocacy and activism towards the stated and underlying development agendas of religious communities is an accepted and foundational part of the political process in the Philippines. Balancing and drawing attention to the various currents of faith-inspired engagement was a key principle considered in the approach of this report.

The research and dialogue pertaining to “Faith and Development in Focus: Philippines” began with a thorough literature review, culminating in a report concept note that served as the starting point of discussion for a consultation meeting in Washington, DC, in January 2019. Scholars and practitioners discussed extensively how best to approach and manage preparation of the report, emphasizing balancing recognition of historical context and contemporary challenges, the sociology of overlapping communities, and the effective organization of development issues. They also discussed the religious dimensions of development issue areas with a notable emphasis on the topics of governance, gender and development, environment, extractive industries and social justice, and the Bangsamoro peace process.

Field work in the Philippines took place between February and March of 2019. It included 40 structured interviews with faith leaders, government officials (at various levels and branches), journalists, academics, civil society organizations, and international development agencies. Special care was taken to balance perspectives considered; sampling relied upon preliminary research, local contacts, and significant networking.

The literature on religious institutions in the Philippines is expansive, but unbalanced in the sense that, for any religious community, certain sub-issues may be so overrepresented in the literature as to obfuscate the wider nature of their involvement in social development. This is observable, for example, in the cases of the Muslim community with respect to the Moro conflict or Iglesia Ni Cristo and El Shaddai with respect to alleged electioneering. Although these marquee topics may dominate public perception about a particular religious community and must be recognized, they alone typically do not adequately define the wider social function of that religious community. While keeping the piece summary-oriented and accessible to readers potentially unfamiliar with the Philippines, WFDD strives to present at baseline a more holistic narrative than would otherwise be suggested by a light reading of the literature.

Recognition of the historical intertwining of religion and development is a point of emphasis in “Faith and Development in Focus: Philippines.” The longevity of the social-moralist orientation of religious institutions, most notably the Catholic Church and the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), and high level of need facilitates a strong expectation in the Philippine public consciousness that religious actors are and should be socially active and relevant. The growth of successful relatively newer movements in the Philippine religious landscape is always dependent on the
period in which they form and their ability to prove their social value. Such is very clearly the case with Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), Iglesia Ni Cristo (INC), and the Protestant movement that have all formed and grown in the Philippines as early alternatives to the colonial Spain-associated Catholic Church. It is also the case with Couples for Christ (CFC), El Shaddai, Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide (JILCW), and Kingdom of Jesus Christ-The Name Above Every Name (KJC), all founded during and in reaction to the social chaos of martial law under Ferdinand Marcos.

Simultaneously, WFDD strives to represent the contemporary social development orientation of religious communities in an accessible way that might inspire the realization of avenues for collaboration. Although religious institutions and their faith-inspired development arms are noted for their wide-reaching orientation, all have grown over time towards some level of specialization. That is, while recognizing that institutions of religious communities may maintain highly multifaceted development programs, careful analysis was conducted to understand how FIOs have grown into operative niche value. Such is the case for both local and foreign FIOs with long-term operations in the Philippines, as the crowded landscape of faith-inspired development creates an inertia that tends towards specialization.

Chapter two of the report presents a brief overview of development progress in the Philippines, focusing on successes and persistent challenges. Chapter three focuses on the religious landscape of the Philippines, emphasizing the narrative link between historical and modern social development orientations of associated religious institutions. Chapter four selects certain key development issues in the Philippines in which FIOs tend to be the most highly involved and profiles the work of certain international and local faith-inspired organizations within each area. The fifth and concluding chapter reflects on key observations gained through this study. It is greatly encouraged that throughout the report a reader refer periodically to the historical timeline presented prior to chapter one of this report, as situating specific developments in the political timeframe is vital to appreciating their significance. In the Philippines, perhaps to a greater degree than is the norm, context matters.
CHAPTER 2: DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Philippines, a middle-income Southeast Asian country, has generally sustained high economic growth, reasonably low inflation, and consistent debt and unemployment reduction over recent decades. Assuring that economic growth is equitably inclusive is one of the most pressing issues facing the Philippines, given that 21.6% of the population still lives below the national poverty line. The current period is critical for the Philippine economy; only deliberate new policy can improve the credit-to-GDP balance, increase public investment (particularly with respect to human capital and infrastructure), and maintain a business-friendly environment for domestic and foreign investment. In addressing these economic concerns, the Philippine government needs to build a more robust system of social protection mechanisms, particularly to address deep disparities. While the Philippines as a whole has experienced high economic growth, the poor often do not benefit, and thus, policy changes are needed to ensure positive growth for all.

The Philippine government set forth its latest strategy with the Philippine Development Plan, 2017–2022 (PDP). The PDP is based on three priority pillars:

1. **Enhance social fabric** by improving public trust and engagement, efficiency, and cultural sensitivity of governance.

2. **Create inequality-reducing transformation** by expanding economic opportunity, investing in human capital, and improving social protections for vulnerable communities.

3. **Increase growth potential** by actively managing the demographic transition—through universal health care, access to family planning, improved employment preparation for youth, etc.—and prioritizing science, technology, and innovation.

The PDP is consistent with the Philippines’s strategic shift from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals.
Development Goals. Although MDG results were mixed, shortcomings in key areas—poverty reduction, education, and reproductive health—drew the most attention and were attributed to a lack of programmatic cohesiveness across all involved institutions. In adjusting toward the Sustainable Development Goals through the PDP, the “whole-of-government/society” approach emphasizes the importance of good governance, well-defined implementation plans, and data monitoring for accountability.

The “whole-of-government/society” approach recognizes that the realization of development goals requires leadership and collaboration involving the government, private sector, civil society, and international partners. In the Philippines, involvement of non-governmental institutions in the development process is not only common but is, among the general populace, a minimum expectation for moral credibility. This strong cultural mandate fuels an extraordinary capacity for development activity among private sector and civil society institutions. Such high capacity also gives a much wider field of organizational actors the facility to define their own development priorities, forming partnerships only when and with whom they see fit. This creates a pluricentric, if not fragmented, landscape of development activity. Leadership and partnerships in the development landscape can be both collaborative and antagonistic. This study supports the guiding principle of the PDP: that improving the cohesiveness of development activity in the Philippines is fundamental for realizing the country’s most ambitious development aspirations.

Underlying these practical development priorities and strategies is the central development ambition for the nation, outlined by President Duterte’s Executive Order No. 5 “AmBisyon Natin 2040.” By 2040, all Filipinos will “enjoy a strongly rooted, comfortable, and secure life.” “Strongly rooted” emphasizes family and community. “Comfortable” emphasizes poverty alleviation and access to services. “Secure” emphasizes public trust, safety, and stability. At the heart of these three emphases is an idealized image of the Filipino family, which is itself the principal development imperative of the Philippines. Actively protecting and strengthening the institution of the Filipino family is seen as a precondition for any successful development strategy. AmBisyon Natin 2040 is careful to avoid alluding to religious implications, but the concept of the Filipino family and institutions with which it is traditionally associated has always had religious undertones.
PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Poverty is wide-encompassing in the Philippines and a major theme of this report, but it is too intersectional to be effectively addressed in simplistic terms. Poverty, a state of insufficiency with respect to the resources necessary to access basic needs and freedoms at a minimum standard of living, is often perpetuated in the Philippines by a cumulative lack of capacity to absorb disparate risks and vulnerabilities. A wide range of negative outcomes compound the risk factors of poverty. The poverty rate declined from 26.6% in 2006 to 21.6% in 2015; natural disasters and humanitarian crises are often cited as central in slowing the pace of progress. Poverty is uneven in the Philippines; the overall poverty incidence is 21% (2018), with great disparities among the various regions. The National Capital Region (NCR) has a poverty incidence of 6.6%, while Cordillera Administrative Region and Eastern Visayas have rates of 17.9% and 37.6%, respectively. ARMM has the highest rate of any region at 63.0%; the provinces of Sulu and Lanao del Sur are particularly burdened, both with poverty incidence over 70%.

Below are key sectors where faith-inspired engagement is particularly noteworthy, introduced briefly in alphabetical order. An analysis of each is provided in chapter four.

- The Philippines is among the most vulnerable countries in the world to natural disasters. Although international attention and support tends to fluctuate, work toward disaster preparedness, resilience, and relief is a constant endeavor in the Philippines.

- Civil society is exceptionally strong in the Philippines, with NGOs playing key roles in a variety of sectors. Education is a priority area for many NGOs.

- One of the most pressing development issues in the Philippines is the friction that exists between the encouraged expansion of extractive industries and the mandate to protect the environment; this issue disparately affects indigenous communities.

- With deep inequities in access and a particularly high infectious disease burden, the Philippines faces many challenges with respect to the stewardship of health. Particularly in light of the recent shift to universal health care, health as a development issue appears to be entering a major period of transition in the Philippines.

- Human trafficking, and most egregiously labor and sex trafficking, is a deeply entrenched problem in the Philippines. Approaches to providing support to Filipino survivors of human trafficking and modern-day slavery are among the most consistently and openly grounded in religious moralism.

- Gender and development (GAD) is among the most crucial, but complicated, issues to grasp in the Philippine context. Fragmentation of approach, policy, implementation, and outcomes may be more common in GAD than any other issue area in the Philippines.
Each topic was the subject of significant research and is referenced throughout the report. Several topics merit further exploration. These include: conflict and peacebuilding (with respect to the Moro conflict, CPP-NPA-NDF conflict, and rido [clan feuds]), the drug war, migration, corruption, clientelism, electioneering, political dynasties, agrarian reform, journalism, and the justice system.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS OF THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines benefits from relationships with numerous development partners. The nature and degree of engagement have fluctuated significantly over time, most often in association with major political shifts. Many multilateral and bilateral development partners have been involved since Philippine independence after World War II. While aid flows did increase marginally during the authoritarian government of Ferdinand Marcos, the collapse of his administration was marked by a massive influx of aid. Aid flows reached a high point in the early 1990s and have since declined as a long-term trend, characterized by much volatility.6

Now a middle-income country, the long-term decline in aid flows may be attributed to the positive trend of the Philippines’s consistently high economic growth, while the volatility may be connected to major challenges with corruption and political instability during transfers of power. Today, it should be recognized that the Philippines has a long road forward with respect to poverty alleviation and, in addressing those challenges, benefits from the concessional finance of multilateral and bilateral aid organizations. However, dependency on foreign aid has waned considerably. Use of government revenues and the growing partnerships between the Philippine government, private sector, civil society, and diaspora community are pivotal in assuring that the financial transition to middle-income country status (potentially soon to be upper-middle-income country status) is just and inclusive. In providing an overview of the engagement of these sectors in the development process, special attention is given to the faith dimension of involvement.

The subsequent subsections discuss international development partnerships relevant to the Philippine development context, approaching the topic through the lenses of multilateral aid, bilateral aid, and the Filipino diaspora community. FIOs, international and domestic, are discussed at length throughout the report. Though certainly international secular development non-profits, foundations, and private companies, as well as bilateral military aid, for example, play a role in the Philippine development process, these were beyond the scope of this review. Domestically-initiated activities are not the central focus of this section, though they may come into play depending on the operational model of the international partner.
Pertaining to the private sector, international companies often have corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities that are designed and implemented through their Philippine country offices. Even for international companies, CSR is largely a domestically-driven affair.

**Multilateral Aid**

The Philippine government expects the development goals it has articulated, particularly in the Philippine Development Plan, to be the baseline for collaborative efforts. In addition to the fact that multilateral development agencies have their own institutional priorities, they have been involved in the Philippines for decades, and there is a certain inertia to the support they give. Positive coordinated relationships between the Philippine government and multilateral organizations have been further developed during the Duterte administration, with multilaterals expressing support for the government’s commitment to the economic policy fundamentals that have continuously assured high annual growth, and the administration, in turn, expressing gratitude for continued partnership.

**BOX 2.1: THE PHILIPPINE PRIVATE SECTOR AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Philippine private sector plays an active role in the country’s development process, first asserting itself on a large scale during the 1970s while the authoritarian government of Ferdinand Marcos was not meeting the needs of the poor and was also perpetuating human rights abuses against them. The most visible example was the 1970 establishment of Philippine Business for Social Progress, which began with 50 business leaders setting aside 1% of their net income for poverty reduction programs. Collective trauma experienced during the Marcos administration instilled a cultural expectation in Filipinos that those in the private sector with power and access to discretionary capital had a responsibility to and should face pressure to act for the public good, beyond their direct employees. The concept of corporate citizenship, akin to CSR, thus became widespread.

Today, programmatic scale and quality aside, nearly all major corporations in the Philippines have established philanthropic social development arms. These usually take the form of outwardly secular, corporate-branded charitable foundations, such as Ayala Foundation, Henry Sy Foundation, San Miguel Foundation, and Zuellig Family Foundation. However, there are also several prominent examples of corporate social responsibility institutions that take the form of FIOs, as is the case with Operation Compassion and the Angelo King Foundation.

Most corporate social responsibility foundations and FIOs focus their operations on specific sectors. The Ayala Foundation focuses its programs on education, leadership, and skills training. The mission of Operation Compassion, both a ministry and a development non-profit, is to support impoverished street children and mobilize religious networks (for example, churches, FIOs, etc.) for in-kind donation efforts in response to natural disasters. The Angelo King Foundation focuses on the purchase, rehabilitation, and/or construction of buildings either on behalf of other organizations or for the purpose of donations for civic use.
Asian Development Bank

The headquarters of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is in Manila, and it has consistently been the country’s top development assistance partner. It has lent the Philippines an average of $800 million annually over the past decade. In 2018, loans accounted for 98.7% of ADB’s total assistance; the other 1.3% came in the form of technical assistance and grants. ADB’s Country Partnership Strategy, 2018–2023 has three strategic pillars: (1) accelerate infrastructure and long-term investments, (2) promote local economic development, and (3) invest in people. ADB’s strategy for partnership in the Philippines is carefully inclusive of the development priorities expressed by the Philippine government. The focus on infrastructure investment directly reflects the priorities set by the Duterte administration’s Build, Build, Build program. The emphasis on investing in people directly reflects pillar two of the PDP, which emphasizes the development of human capital for inequality-reducing transformation. Flagship projects of ADB in the Philippines include the Malolos-Clark Railway and Deepening Civil Society Engagement for Development Effectiveness projects. With its goal to facilitate further ADB–civil society cooperation, this work does not explicitly acknowledge the faith dimensions of Philippine civil society. However, given the preeminence of faith-inspired or motivated CSOs, ADB will surely be building on the knowledge of these actors.

World Bank Group

The World Bank Group (WBG) has been involved in the Philippines since 1945, as it was one of the first countries to join the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). In 2018, the World Bank’s total lending in the Philippines was US$378 million. WBG’s Country Partnership Strategy, FY 2015–2018 had five strategic pillars: (1) transparent and accountable governance, (2) empowerment of the poor and vulnerable, (3) rapid, inclusive, and sustained economic growth, (4) resilience to climate change, environment, and disaster risk management, and (5) peace, institution building, and social and economic opportunity. Although there is certainly overlap, compared to the ADB CPS, the WBG CPS reflects the language of Philippine government development priorities considerably less. In developing a new Philippines Country Partnership Framework in 2019, WBG has been engaging in consultations with government, international development partners, CSOs, and the private sector in the Philippines. Flagship projects of WBG in the Philippines include the Improving Fiscal Management project, which is centered on national tax policy, budgeting, and asset risk management, and the Philippine Rural Development Project, which is centered on farm and fishery productivity and market access.

Bilateral Aid

Bilateral government-to-government partnerships are crucial for Philippine development. Compared to multilateral development organizations, bilateral development organizations tend to be more involved in and affected by politics. The international orientation of the Philippines is highly consequential for the geopolitical
balance of the Asia-Pacific region—this is currently most observable through the lens of the South China/West Philippine Sea dispute. It would be naive to not acknowledge the roles that foreign policy and the stewardship of strategic alliances play with respect to international aid in the Philippines. The geopolitical significance of the Philippines leads donor nations to compete with one another to create influence through aid. This does not define bilateral aid, but it is certainly a key consideration.

**China International Development Cooperation Agency**

China's international development agency, China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA, formerly known as Department of Foreign Aid of the Ministry of Commerce), has recently asserted itself as a major aid partner of the Philippines. Historically averse to Chinese influence, the Philippines has been more open to Chinese aid and investment under the Duterte administration. CIDCA has focused on infrastructure mega-projects that appear to be in line with China's wider Belt and Road Initiative.

As of 2019, only one project, totaling US$62 million, has been verifiably financed to fruition through a CIDCA loan—the Chico River Pump Irrigation Project. The project is highly controversial for two main reasons: (1) the risk of a Chinese debt trap, and (2) the Chico River and its adjacent land in Northern Luzon is the sacred ancestral domain to the Kalinga and Bontoc people (Igorot indigenous groups). The
Chico River Pump Irrigation Project notably concerns the same area of the previously proposed Chico River Dam Project (1965–1986), which the Kalinga and Bontoc people actively resisted and suffered violence to prevent; this is considered a foundational case motivating land and religious protections in the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act of 1997. In 2019, the Duterte administration also announced it would seek Chinese loans for the controversial Kaliwa Low Dam Project in Quezon Province, Luzon. If Kaliwa Low Dam is realized, it is expected that thousands of local people belonging to the Dumagat and Remontado indigenous groups will be displaced from their ancestral domain and see their sacred sites destroyed. A coalition of tribal clusters from within these groups has already petitioned for the prevention of the Kaliwa Low Dam.

**German Society for International Cooperation**

Germany’s implementing international development agency, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), focuses its programs in the Philippines largely on peace and security, environment and climate change, and economic and human development. It operates in partnership with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaubau (KfW), a state-owned development bank. GIZ’s work is particularly notable among the field of bilateral aid partners given its uniquely specialized and targeted activities in the Southern Philippines. GIZ is committed to peacebuilding, natural resource governance, and development in Mindanao, particularly in regions affected by the CPP-NPA-NDF insurgency and the Moro conflict. GIZ currently has 35 active projects in the Philippines, totaling an investment of more than €133 million.¹¹

Two GIZ-implemented conflict transformation projects in Mindanao provide significant insight into its approach in the Philippines. Civil Peace Service (CPS, 2008–2020) aims to build community capacity to promote lasting peace and engage in cooperative dialogue in partnership with local government and civil society. The objective of Strengthening Capacities on Conflict Induced Forced Displacement in Mindanao (2017–2020) is to build local institutional capacity to prepare for and respond to conflict-driven internal displacement. Both ultimately center on the idea that the most effective role GIZ can play in conflict transformation in the complex context of the Philippines is to build the capacity of local stakeholders to engage organically in peacebuilding dialogue and action.

**Japan International Cooperation Agency**

Through its international development agency, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan consistently commits more development finance to the Philippines than any other country. JICA has focused its development assistance on support for infrastructure, mostly funded through loans. Japanese aid can be relatively volatile from year to year, as a substantial portion of aid is typically tied to the acceptance of large-scale infrastructure investment projects. A minority portion of support is for technical assistance, usually pertaining to agricultural extension and disaster rehabilitation. In 2015, Japan provided approximately US$238 million in aid to the Philippines.¹²

The flagship project of JICA in the Philippines is the Central Luzon Link Expressway
(CLLEx), a system of roads that spans from La Union Province to Camarines Sur Province. Reaction to CLLEx is by and large positive, with the expectation that the project will improve economic integration of other regions with metro Manila, as well as decrease traffic in and around Manila. JICA’s continued commitment to transportation infrastructure reflects its emphasis on actively facilitating balanced regional development.

**United States Agency for International Development**

The United States—until 2016—consistently committed more development finance to the Philippines than other countries in the region. In 2017, the Philippines received approximately US$155 million in U.S. foreign aid, which includes significant assistance from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The top three sectors for U.S. foreign aid are: conflict, peace, and security ($62 million); general environmental protection ($27 million); and maternal and child health/family planning ($18 million).

USAID’s flagship programs are often in basic education and reproductive health care. USAID has also consistently provided emergency response support—for example, in the aftermath Typhoon Haiyan and the Battle of Marawi. A recent major USAID program in education was “Basa Pilipinas” (Read Philippines): USAID supported the Philippine government to promote early-grade reading by improving access to materials and remedial programs. In reproductive health care, USAID supported the regionally-focused family planning and maternal/child health programs LuzonHealth, VisayasHealth, and MindanaoHealth, which all aim to improve access to reproductive health products and services in economically disadvantaged urban areas.

**DIASPORA COMMUNITY**

Six million Filipinos live outside of the Philippines, representing the seventh largest total diaspora community in the world. At approximately US$33.8 billion and just over 10% of the Philippine GDP in 2018, the Philippines is the third largest recipient of remittances. As remittance flows are from individual to individual, it can be difficult to track their direct impact on the development process and understand the faith dimensions. Still, remittances are at the foundation of the Philippine economy: in 2017, only the manufacturing industry (23.58%), trade/repair services (16.94%), and real estate/renting/business services (11.53%) constituted larger percent shares of GDP than remittances. In the same year, total remittances were over 200 times more than net official development assistance (US$160 million).

Motivations among overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to remit their earnings often include real or perceived familial obligations, limited opportunities/capacity for investment in their host country, altruism, patriotism, and currency purchasing power. Although it warrants further research, the faith dimensions of remittances appear to be limited. Faith and religiosity may play a role in the likelihood of an OFW to send...
remittances (and the amount), but only insofar as religious morality reinforces the family values that obligate support. Remittances are between individuals, so if that capital reaches a religious institution or faith-inspired organization, it would be better described as the discretionary spending of the Philippines-based family member.

The Philippine diaspora community is involved in the faith-inspired development process in a parallel manner to Filipinos based in the Philippines. Major religious communities in the Philippines actively target and establish presences in foreign cities with concentrated Filipino populations. These presences are of paramount importance to religious communities that are majority Filipino, such as Philippine restorationist churches. These institutions often view overseas Filipino communities as a means to expand their global presence and revenue base (through foreign currency). More important, they view overseas Filipino communities as a key avenue to evangelize among Filipinos who are actively seeking a medium to create fellowship with other Filipinos. In overseas contexts, Philippine restorationist churches can be particularly well-situated to attract new converts.
CHAPTER 3: PHILIPPINES
RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

The religious landscape of the Philippines is complex, ever-evolving, and forms a fundamental influence over the identity of Filipinos and the institutions that underlie Philippine social order. The sustained power of religious affiliation as a key driver of social organization and intercommunity dynamics is identifiable in the historical and contemporary development processes of the Philippines. Approximately 99% of the population identifies with some form of organized religion; in the 2010 census, only 0.1% of the population reported no religious affiliation. The Philippines ranks among the world’s highest in terms of religiosity—between 84% and 90% of Filipinos report religion to be important in their lives. The Philippines is a pluralistic nation and religiosity varies across the diversity of religious communities. Faith is an inextricable part of public life.

This chapter provides an overview of the diversity of religious communities the Philippines, focusing on the key facets of the institutions within those communities that drive initiatives for social action. Therefore, the analysis concentrates primarily on representing the religious landscape as it relates to the development process. Specifically, it describes the major religious institutions that are involved in the development space, not the underlying theology or sociological arrangements that motivate their involvement. Although faith-inspired development action in the Philippines is largely decentralized, there are certain bodies of leadership that possess considerable authority over what are or what become the social priorities of the wider religious community.

CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY OF THE PHILIPPINES

Accounting for 81% of the population, Roman Catholicism is the clear majority and the dominant religious force in the Philippines. The Philippines is one of only two majority-Catholic nations in Asia (East Timor is the other) and, with at least 74 million adherents according to the 2010 census and an estimated 83 million today according to population growth patterns, it is the
third largest Catholic nation in the world. Catholicism in the Philippines is by no means a monolith. Millions of self-identifying Catholic Filipinos do not identify primarily with the traditions of the orthodox Roman Catholic Church, particularly if they belong to what are often referred to as charismatic Catholic movements.

Basic quantification of minority religious communities in the Philippines is considerably more enigmatic than these figures suggest. Protestant Christians are often cited to be 11% of the population, drawing on a study conducted by the Pew Research Center, which problematically grouped almost all non-Catholic Christians as Protestant.25 A review of the primary source data suggests that Protestantism characterizes about 6% of the population.26 The literature review and field work also suggest that most non-Catholic Christian Filipinos do not self-identify as “Protestant” in the same way that Catholic Filipinos self-identify as “Catholic.” Rather, they typically self-identify as “Christian” followed by their specific church affiliation. These specific churches commonly and often clearly fall under Protestant denominational categorizations such as Anglican, Baptist, evangelical, Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, or restorationist, but individuals customarily avoid all labels other than “Christian.”

Internal differentiation between non-Catholic Christian denominations is particularly critical because a significant portion of Filipinos, all of whom self-identify as “Christian,” belong to religious congregations that originated in the Philippines, which are theologically and practically distinct from Catholicism or Protestantism. A review of primary source data suggests that groups falling under the broad categorization of “Filipinized Christianity” characterize at least 5% of the population.27 Major churches such as Iglesia Ni Cristo (INC) and Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI/the Aglipayan Church), each with millions of adherents and international reach, fall into this category.

Islam in the Philippines is concentrated in Western Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago, forming provincial and local majorities; nationally, at least 5% of the population identifies as Muslim.28 This estimate, based on the 2010 Census, is disputed by the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF), which estimated in 2012 that Muslims compose 12% of the population.29 The vast majority are Sunni Muslims of the Shafi’i school of jurisprudence, but there are several thousand Shia Muslims (mostly living in Lanao del Sur and Zamboanga del Sur) and a few hundred Ahmadi Muslims (mostly asylum-seekers from Pakistan).

Indigenous religions are an important piece of the religious landscape in the Philippines, but statistics on the number of adherents are poorly represented in the literature due to the wide diversity of indigenous groups. Official national data asserts that 0.2% of population, or 177,147 people, practices an indigenous religion.30 The Pew Research Center estimated the same category represents 1.5% of the population.31 Data on indigenous religions in the Philippines is complicated by enormous tribe-to-tribe diversity, inconsistent definitions of which groups fall into statistical categories, and the limited reach of surveyors. Moreover, syncretism between indigenous religions and
Catholic or Protestant Christianity is common. Decisions of category inclusion or exclusion for syncretistic religious practices are largely subjective and may be affected by response bias. An adherent of an indigenous religion or syncretistic practice may well self-report him- or herself Catholic or part of another religion, typically Christian, a categorization influenced by perceptions about social desirability and the structural limitations of available survey answers to capture the wide diversity of indigenous religions that are typically specific to single tribes.

Distinguishing indigenous peoples from other Filipinos brings up difficult and deeper questions about history and the modern definitions of indigeneity, but the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) estimates that 10 to 20% of the national population of the Philippines can be characterized as indigenous based on generally accepted definitions. Although the literature and available statistical information on indigenous peoples and religions have been characterized first and foremost by their limitations, a key deduction is that those who self-identify first with their indigenous religion, regardless of how much it is characterized by syncretism, are a minority of the indigenous community as a whole in the Philippines.

Buddhism is a small minority in the Philippines, accounting for 0.05% of the population. Filipino Buddhists primarily practice Mahayana branch traditions, with significant influence from Han Chinese Buddhist teachings and institutions.

DEMOGRAPHY AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

Analyzing the religious landscape of the Philippines in the above-described terms has a fundamental shortcoming. Religious identity and public expression in the Philippines is associated first to specific institutional affiliation, rather than general community affiliation. Within Catholicism, individual dioceses and churches exercise significant autonomy in their social development aims. They impact their members’ sociopolitical orientations through direct and local advocacy. Furthermore, Catholics commonly belong to lay ecclesial organizations, such as Couples for Christ, Legion of Mary, Knights of Columbus, El Shaddai, or Opus Dei. The wide diversity of social approaches of an individual church or lay ecclesial communities are key for understanding the nature of Catholic identity in the Philippines. Viewed through a national lens, Catholic identity can appear divided. In fact, Catholic identity is a driving force for why and how individuals pursue collective action, but the manifestations of that today are typically organized around local priorities.

The localization of identity and public orientation is even clearer when considering the wide diversity of Protestant communities. The highest estimate of Protestant affiliation is 11% of the national population; however, this is an aggregation and no individual Protestant group accounts for more than 1%. In parallel to Catholic identity, Protestant identity is similarly locally organized and focused.
Catholics affiliated only to the Catholic Church are still the largest group, but the internal landscape is extremely complex. The second largest group is Shafi’i Sunni Muslims, who represent over 5% of the population and are concentrated in Western Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. The third and fourth largest groups are Iglesia Ni Cristo and Iglesia Filipina Independiente, representing 2% and 1% of the national population respectively.

Comparing theological and institutional contemporary demography gives a more complete picture of the complex religious landscape of the Philippines. Furthermore, it begins to shed light on why and how relatively small communities of faith possess such seemingly disproportionate influence in a country where religious sociopolitical involvement is not only normalized, but demanded and expected.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AND INSTITUTIONS

Religious communities act collectively either through independent self-organization or through representative institutions. Institutions that represent the interests of the religious community are not always deliberately organized for that purpose. In certain cases, a religious community may be tasked instead with representing the wider interests of a sociocultural community for which a particular religion is a definitive or partial identifier.

Roman Catholicism

The Roman Catholic Church is the most influential religious institution in the Philippines. Over 300 years of Spanish colonization, the Catholic Church was indivisible from the state. Catholic missionaries received material support from the colonial administration and, in exchange, effectively served as the government at the village level.34 Spanish occupation, and thus such structures of unambiguously direct engagement of the Church in governance, ended over 100 years ago. Although the Church's role in state affairs has significantly evolved over time, a majority of Filipinos still view Roman Catholicism as a public religion, endowing the Church with certain privileges of authority.

Today, the Catholic Church continues to exert significant policy and practical influence. The institution of the Catholic Church is centralized with the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), which holds the highest hierarchical authority. Although the CBCP does act as a guiding force, operationally, the Catholic Church approaches social development primarily in a decentralized manner. To understand this, the institutional arrangements and activities of both consecrated and lay organizations must be considered.
Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)

The CBCP’s history can be traced back to World War II. The Japanese occupation of the Philippines between January 1942 and September 1945 took an extreme toll on the Philippines, accounting for the death of at least 57,000 Filipino servicemen and 900,000 civilians—6% of the population at the time. During and in the aftermath of the occupation, countless more Filipinos died or suffered severely due to disease and lack of basic necessities. The Catholic Welfare Organization (CWO) was founded in February 1945 by the Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines, William Guglielmo Piani, initially for wartime relief—shelter, food, medical, clothing, burial. In July 1945, the CWO became the official organization of the Catholic hierarchy of the Philippines, tasked “to unify, coordinate, and organize the Catholic people of the Philippines in works of education, social welfare, religious and spiritual aid and other activities.”

In response to the directives of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), the CWO reformulated itself as a canonical body and was rebranded as the CBCP in 1967. This marked a major shift of the institution’s defined purpose, from Catholic social charity to the promotion of Catholic faith, doctrine, and evangelization. This shift was met internally with some friction about a potential diminishing social awareness of the Church. By 1969 the social outreach mission of the CBCP was fully reasserted, but through the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA/Caritas). In contrast to the nature of its engagement under the CWO, NASSA/Caritas focuses not on targeted charity and relief, but rather on a drive for wider social transformation that includes humanitarian support, a development model, and advocacy.

Although it is not the norm, the CBCP has pursued direct political intervention under certain circumstances. For most of the martial law period under Ferdinand Marcos (1972–1981), the CBCP adopted a non-confrontational approach, electing to affirm it but caution against human rights abuses. After the assassination of Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino in 1983, the CBCP became openly anti-authoritarian and took a leadership role within the revolutionary coalition to oust the Marcos administration. This is marked most strongly by the 1986 “Post-Election Statement,” which declared the results of the Marcos–Corazon Aquino election invalid and was a catalyst for the People Power/EDSA Revolution that ultimately restored Philippine democracy.

The CBCP, led by Archbishop of Manila Cardinal Jaime Sin at that time, embraced its public role after People Power/EDSA. It had considerable influence over President Corazon Aquino and the drafting of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which included provisions that banned abortion and allowed for religion in public education. The CBCP intervened to prevent the potentially authoritarian-leaning constitutional changes championed by President Fidel Ramos. CBCP supported the election of President Gloria Arroyo, ultimately protecting her presidency by refusing public pressure to demand her resignation in the aftermath of the 2005 Hello Garci election corruption scandal.
These moments of direct political intervention led to a widespread sentiment that the Catholic Church is a “guarantor of democracy” in the Philippines. Critics of the separation of church and state in the Philippines often point to these examples. Still, while such interventionism has occurred (even at times on specific legislation), a generalized, semi-detached style of advocacy is more characteristic. The CBCP as an institution usually limits itself to broad-reaching issues that the body of bishops as a whole perceive to be pertinent to national morality. Typically, CBCP advocacy takes the form of pastoral statements, which often but do not exclusively concern matters of policy. In 2019, pastoral statements were issued on moral voting and good governance, extrajudicial killings, and maintaining interfaith efforts for the Bangsamoro peace process in the wake of the Jolo Cathedral bombing.

**Catholic Dioceses**

The development and advocacy efforts of the Catholic Church are primarily led by individual dioceses on behalf of their local congregations. There are 88 total ecclesiastical units; 78 are ecclesiastical provinces (16 archdioceses, 58 dioceses, and four territorial prelatures), eight are exempt dioceses (seven apostolic vicariates and the Military Ordinate of the Philippines), and two do not fall clearly into either category (the Chinese-Filipino Catholic Apostolate in the Philippines, and the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei, specifically the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross). Of the 88 ecclesiastical units, 86 have internal social action commissions that coordinate local social development efforts under the coordination and support of NASSA/Caritas.

NASSA/Caritas programs include emergency/disaster preparation, response, relief, rehabilitation, and resilience; HIV/AIDS; leadership training; microfinance; agricultural development; and farmer/workers’ rights. The individual diocesan commissions of social action across the Philippines implement these programs with support from NASSA/Caritas. Many dioceses also implement their own programs based on the needs of their community.

**Catholic Orders**

Religious orders have been a key part of Catholicism in the Philippines since the beginning of the Spanish colonial era. Like in other Spanish colonies, the purpose of Catholic orders in the Philippines was to evangelize. Listed with the year each established their first permanent mission in the Philippines and the primary regional locus of early activity in addition to Manila, the principal groups were the following: Augustinians (1565; Cebu), Dominicans (1588; Northern/Central Luzon), Franciscans (1578; Southern Luzon), Augustinian Recollects (1606; Central Visayas/Northern Mindanao), and Jesuits (1581–1768/1859; Rizal, Samar, Leyte/Mindanao, Jolo).

Spanish friars often worked in remote areas where—under *Patronato Real* (the royal patronage system)—they were effectively the sole representatives of Spanish authority. This arrangement within the wider encomienda system and distance of the Philippines from the crown led to the expansion of friar power and autonomy to such an extent
that the Spanish colonial administration intervened between 1767 and 1776 to suppress the orders. This resulted in the secularization of parishes as well as the full expulsion of the Jesuits from the Philippines for 91 years. Even after suppression, the orders remained powerful, particularly due to their large endowments of land; the Dominicans, Augustinians, and Recollects alone privately owned more than one-tenth of all improved land in the Philippines. Discontent with this situation was among the chief concerns that led to the Philippine Revolution of 1896 (Katipunan) and was ultimately not resolved until the Treaty of Paris (1898) following the Spanish–American War. Article VIII of the treaty protected private property rights, specifically including those of “ecclesiastical or civic bodies.” Accordingly, the United States purchased 410,000 acres of friar land, subsequently reselling it to Filipino farmers.

Today, there are approximately 125 active orders for religious men and 328 for religious women, each of which is socially active and usually dependent on initiatives taken by their individual members. Mendicant orders are particularly common and publicly active in the Philippines given their monastic commitments, which usually include a personal lifestyle of poverty and dedication to serving the poor.
### Table 3.1: Catholic Lay Organizations Recognized by the CBCP Episcopal Commission on the Laity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lay Organization</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Membership Claim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adoracion Nocturna Filipina</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td>116,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apostleship of Prayer</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon (LNP; Lingaya)</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ang Lingkad ng Panginoon (ALNP; Lingkod)</td>
<td>Charismatic/Singles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ascending Life</td>
<td>Senior Citizens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of the Children of Mary Immaculate</td>
<td>Marian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barangay Sang Virgen</td>
<td>Marian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen &amp; Professionals</td>
<td>Professional/Charismatic</td>
<td>&lt;30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bukas Loob Sa Diyos Covenant Community</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmelite Missionary Secular-Philands</td>
<td>Marian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Nurses Guild of the Philippines</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Physicians’ Guild of the Philippines</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Teachers’ Guild of the Philippines</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Women’s League of the Phils, Inc.</td>
<td>Women/Marian</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Youth Organization</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of God Our Father—Father of All Mankind Apostolate Phils, Inc.</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ’s Family Mission Movement</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Family Movement of the Philippines</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Christian Life Community of the Philippines</td>
<td>Ignatian Spirituality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confraternity of Mary Mediatrix of All Grace</td>
<td>Marian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Couples for Christ</td>
<td>Family/Charismatic</td>
<td>900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couples for Christ—Foundation for Family and Life</td>
<td>Family/Charismatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crusaders of the Holy Face of Jesus</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cursillos in Christianity</td>
<td>Leadership Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughters of Mary Immaculate Knights - of Columbus</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Mercy: Third Millennium Apostolate of the Philippines</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Laity Provincial Council</td>
<td>Lay Dominicans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elim Communities</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Rosary—Crusade Foundation, Inc.</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familia Community Foundation, Inc.</td>
<td>Family/Charismatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federation of Free Farmers</td>
<td>Peasants’ Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federation of Transparochial Charismatic Communities</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Focolare Movement</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Name Society of the Philippines</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knights of Columbus</td>
<td>Service Fraternity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP)
The Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP) is the joint forum of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of Men of the Philippines (AMRSMP) founded in 1955 and the Association of Major Religious Superiors of Women of the Philippines (AMRSWP) founded in 1957. The purpose of the AMRSP, as well as the AMRSMP and AMRSWP, is to coordinate, study common interest, and promote collaboration among its members. Membership is mandatory for all institutions of Catholic consecrated life.55

The AMRSP, in many ways, exists in parallel to the CBCP. Structurally, unlike the CBCP, the AMRSP is non-hierarchical and thus tends to be considerably more socially progressive in orientation. Catholic orders must belong to the AMRSP, but each order controls its own social action agenda and can choose to follow AMRSP suggestions. Dioceses also express a level of autonomy, but face much greater obligation to act within the policy and doctrinal parameters set by the CBCP.
Lay Organizations

Catholic expression among laypersons in the Philippines is highly diverse and not limited to traditional forms of participation. Lay organizations and movements within Catholicism form a key part of the unique religious landscape of the Philippines. They are largely self-organized, purposed, and run. Lay groups typically share Catholic identity and are centered on activities that express their faith.

A substantial portion of the major lay Catholic organizations in the Philippines fall within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement. Approximately 70% of all Christians involved in charismatic movements in the Philippines identify as Roman Catholic; 15% of all Catholic Filipinos are involved in a charismatic movement.56 The charismatic movements are centered around lay Catholic organizations that generally stress a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, experiential religion, and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lay Organization</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumption Prayer Group</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ’s Youth in Action</td>
<td>Youth/Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community of Beatitudes/Association Mother of Mercy</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Cooperators of the Opus Dei</td>
<td>Opus Dei Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Shaddai DWXI Prayer Partners Fellowship International</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Fondacio, Christians for the World</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Fraternity of Charles de Foucauld / Little Sisters of Jesus</td>
<td>Charles de Foucauld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*International Association of Charities (AIC)</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*International Federation of L’Arche Communities</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerygma Family</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light of Jesus Family</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathways Ministry</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Promoting Group of the Movement for a Better World</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neochatechumenal Way</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Regnum Christi Apostolic Movement</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Salesian Cooperators Association</td>
<td>Salesian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Salesian Youth Movement</td>
<td>Salesian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Sant’Egidio Filipinas</td>
<td>Social Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Shalom Catholic Community</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldiers of Christ</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahanan ng Panginoon (TNP)</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Recognized by the Pontifical Council for the Laity, International Associations of the Laity (Vatican)
The scope and capacity of Couples for Christ rapidly expanded in the late 1990s and early 2000s, causing leadership to struggle over organizational identity. The explicit purpose of CFC is both ministry and social development; the friction that ultimately led to CFC’s internal separation centered on dysfunction in maintaining a balance and coherence between these two goals. Three groups came out of the split: CFC and Couples for Christ-Answering the Cry of the Poor (CFC-ANCOP), Couples for Christ-Foundation for Family and Life (CFC-FFL), and Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation (GK; Gawad Kalinga).

Gawad Kalinga, the development arm, grew to national prominence and increased de facto independence, which resulted in a powerful faction of leadership within CFC (“The Easter Group”) alleging in 2007 that social development within CFC had drifted too far from Christian ministry. The Easter Group demanded significant reform to reverse what it perceived to be the secularization of GK and called attention to personal behavior within GK that they perceived as undesirable. Simultaneously, there was a dispute between Tony Meloto (GK chairman, who joined CFC in 1985) and Frank Padilla (CFC-FFL servant general and leader of the Easter Group, who was one of the original 16 CFC couples) over who was the “founder of Gawad Kalinga.” Meloto had been named “Filipino of the Year” by the Philippine Daily Inquirer in 2006 as “the founder of Gawad Kalinga.” Padilla and the Easter Group held firmly that Gawad Kalinga was founded collectively as an initiative of CFC. They resented Meloto’s conduct with respect to receiving the award.

CFC leadership as a whole sided with GK, electing to work with them instead of imposing the Easter Group’s demands. In response, Padilla and the Easter Group separated from CFC to create Couples for Christ-Foundation for Family Life (CFC-FFL). CFC-FFL is structurally nearly identical to CFC but centers its purpose on evangelization through the family and strictly refuses involvement in any activity that could be considered not pro-life in accordance with Catholic doctrine. By 2009, CFC and GK proved unable to come to a mutually agreeable resolution. In part mediated by the CBCP, CFC relinquished governing and corporate control in order for GK to operate as a “non-religious organization.”

The 2007 CFC crisis is an illuminating turn of events that speaks to two particular intricacies that exist at the intersection of religion and development in the Philippines. Faith-inspired organizations (FIOs), as well as overtly religious lay organizations/movements, are often fundamental for impoverished Filipinos to access basic services and receive aid in emergencies. In the case of Catholic entities, Church doctrine clarified by the CBCP obligates requirements and limitations of social engagement. The substance of the 2007 CFC crisis stemmed from the perception that GK reneged on the requirement to evangelize through development work and the limitation to be strictly pro-life. These views elicited considerable reactionary pressure to comply with unspoken red lines. GK’s unsatisfactory compliance resulted in their separation and characterization as a “non-religious organization” as well as the formation of CFC-FFL as a “more religious” foil. The second point is the predominance and consequence of personality-driven organizational governance. Not dissimilar to personality-driven politics in the Philippines, those perceived to be “the face” of socially involved religious movements tend to bear disproportional influence over the practical directions of the organizations they lead and the support they receive.

*Technically, GK replaced ANCOP first. Until it rebranded in 2000 and incorporated in 2003 as Gawad Kalinga, ANCOP was CFC’s development arm and the acronym stood for “A Network for the Church of the Poor.” After 2009, when Gawad Kalinga became unaffiliated with CFC, ANCOP was (re)formed to replace Gawad Kalinga, but the acronym now stands for “Answering the Cry of the Poor.”
continuationism with respect to spiritual gifts or charisms. They have a strong proclivity towards organized evangelization efforts and hold religious services or activities outside of Mass, which incorporate teachings outside of mainstream Catholicism. Although leaders of Catholic charismatic movements in the Philippines consistently emphasize Catholic identity, the religious practices in which they lead their congregations are influenced by Pentecostals and evangelical Protestantism.

The vast majority of lay Catholic organizations are unrecognized by the Church, largely resultant from the sheer enormity and diversity of the phenomenon in the Philippines. Catholic orthodoxy, including in the Philippines, has been institutionally supportive of lay organizations, even charismatic movements from whose teachings it may significantly diverge. However, acceptance is far from universal, particularly in the case of charismatic movements. A complex dynamic often exists between self-identifying Catholic institutions and individuals in which they may not recognize one another as Catholic, based on the differences in their expressions of faith.

**Couples for Christ**

Couples for Christ (CFC) began in 1981 as a weekly family-focused gospel discussion group of 16 married couples as an initiative of Ang Ligaya Ng Panginoon (LNP; Ligaya), from which it separated in 1993. CFC has four global goals: (1) “evangelize peoples and inculcate a way of life based on Gospel values,” (2) “strengthen and defend the family as the basic unit of society and of the Church,” (3) “Total Christian Liberation” (justice, life, and poverty; building the Church of the Poor), and (4) “effective/efficient governance” of CFC. CFC is organized as household level associations (five to seven couples each) and the Christian Life Program (13-week seminar with three modules: “The Basic Truths About Christianity,” “The Authentic Christian Life,” and “Living a Spirit-filled Christian Life”). Over time, CFC expanded beyond couples to form the following ministries: Kids for Christ, Youth for Christ, Singles for Christ, Handmaids of the Lord (women over 40 years old, couple non-attending), Servants of the Lord (men over 40 years old, couple non-attending), and Missionaries. Membership estimates from CFC has been variable, potentially suggesting either declining membership or previously inflated numbers: 1.4 million in 2001, 900,000 in 2008, 800,000 in 2017, and 700,000 in 2018.

CFC poverty outreach activities are organized into two sectors. Answering the Cry of the Poor Foundation (CFC-ANCOP) is a quasi-independent non-profit organization that leads CFC development programs on education, health, livelihood, and community development. CFC directly runs six other social development programs on migrants, sociopolitical issues, uniformed personnel, environment, prison, and cooperatives.

**Opus Dei**

Opus Dei (“Work of God”) was founded in Spain by St. Josemaría Escrivá in 1928 and recognized by Pope John Paul II as a personal prelature of the Catholic Church in 1982. As a personal prelature, it is structured in a manner similar to a geographical diocese, but
it conducts activities on behalf of its members. Opus Dei’s purpose is centered on the spiritual formation of its lay members, teaching a universal call to holiness, an attitude of service with respect to evangelization and human advancement, and that ordinary life is a path to sainthood. The group has been criticized for conservatism, lack of transparency, elitism, and excessive tactics of recruitment and control.

Globally, there were 93,203 lay and 2,115 diocesan priest members of Opus Dei in 2018. There is no publicly available information on the prelature’s total membership in the Philippines. However, Msgr. Joseph Duran, former Opus Dei regional vicar of the Philippines who remains an Opus Dei-affiliated priest now working in the Diocese of Cubao, stated that there were approximately 3,000 total members of Opus Dei in the Philippines in 2001. There are 63 active diocesan priests affiliated with the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei in the Philippines.

The reach and influence of Opus Dei in the Philippines is considerably greater than the estimate of its total membership, most notably in private education. Opus Dei directs the religious instruction at the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P), eight private K-12 schools, and eight private preschools. Some students may be Opus Dei members, but all receive Catholic formation influenced by Opus Dei teachings. It is well documented that these educational institutions are markedly more elite/expensive, conservative, and focused on religious formation adherent to Catholic doctrine than their counterparts in the Philippines.

**El Shaddai**

El Shaddai DWXI Prayer Partners Fellowship International was founded in 1981 by Mariano Zuniega “Brother Mike” Velarde (a layman) as a Bible-based radio program. The organization began to grow into a charismatic movement after Velarde claimed on the air that his heart condition was miraculously healed by God, and subsequently radio listeners began reporting healing experiences due to hearing Velarde’s voice.

El Shaddai continues to be centered around “healing messages,” which are given by Velarde at outdoor rallies held on Sunday nights at the El Shaddai International House of Prayer in Amvel Business Park, Parañaque City, Manila. These “prayer and healing rallies” attract tens to hundreds of thousands of mostly poor Filipinos and are broadcast on televisions and radios across the country. Less frequently—once every few years on an anniversary of the group—El Shaddai holds rallies at the Quirino Grandstand in Rizal Park (Luneta), with an estimated attendance of one to three million people. Velarde’s personal endorsement of presidential candidates has been powerful, leading to the pervasive but unsubstantiated belief in bloc voting from El Shaddai—particularly, that it delivered the 1992 election for Fidel Ramos and the 1998 election for Joseph Estrada. Religious group bloc voting does exist in the Philippines; however, all evidence suggests that El Shaddai’s political influence is limited to the power of Velarde himself and his candidate endorsement. Importantly and problematically, El Shaddai uses such estimates of rally attendance and national election differentials to justify its
claim of having 9 to 11 million members. Full official membership, ID-bearing covenant members was cited at 219,758 in 2000\textsuperscript{76} and 252,463 in 2005.\textsuperscript{77}

In contrast to Catholics who are influenced by El Shaddai, full registered covenant members of El Shaddai face a number of requirements. They typically complete El Shaddai’s “Catholic Life-in-the-Spirit Seminar,” have been born-again/baptized in the Holy Spirit through El Shaddai, belong to a local neighborhood chapter, tithe 10% of their household earnings as well as give further financial “love offerings” to the El Shaddai Foundation (consistent with prosperity theology/prosperity gospel/seed faith), view Catholic Church traditions/dogma as a hindrance to the experience of faith, and actively participate in charismatic rites associated with healing that may include glossolalia, laying on of hands, and “counseling house calls” (channeling the Holy Spirit to exorcise evil spirits).\textsuperscript{78,79,80}

Healing is the fundamental message of El Shaddai. Covenant members are dedicated to this message and, within their local chapter fellowships composed of a maximum of 20 people, they often take the initiative themselves to form special collection funds to support fellow members should a crisis arise. Individuals are also encouraged to volunteer; this most commonly takes the form of supporting El Shaddai in its communications, events, and activities, but also has motivated individuals to provide pro-bono professional services.\textsuperscript{81} It is crucial to distinguish that these are not El Shaddai activities, but the initiatives of El Shaddai members. It is unclear if El Shaddai as an institution is involved in any contemporary charity or social development work.

**Protestantism**

Protestantism in the Philippines is intertwined with the colonial legacy of the American administration. In establishing the Insular Government of the Philippine Islands (1901–1935), which later became the Philippine Commonwealth (1935–1946), the American administration disestablished Catholicism as the state religion and opened the territory to American Protestant missionaries.

Throughout the period of American administration, American Protestant missionaries from mainline Protestant denominations conducted an organized, targeted proselytization campaign in the Philippines. This history is defined by the 1898/1901 Comity Agreement signed between the missionary enterprises of several American Protestant churches. Reminiscent of the contemporaneous General Act of the Berlin Conference (1885), which formalized spheres of influence in the colonial “Scramble for Africa,” the Comity Agreement “delineated geographical work allotments for each Church” to avoid inter-church conflict in the Philippines. This colonial legacy of the American period permeates deeply into the religious landscape of the Philippines today because concentrations of particular denominations align with the formal territorial designations delineated in the Comity Agreement.
The landscape of Protestant denominations in the Philippines is complex, but most Protestant churches can be theologically categorized as mainline, evangelical, or Pentecostal/charismatic. A 2001 Discipling a Whole Nation survey by DAWN, an evangelical organization, suggested total Protestant membership across the nation breaks down as follows: 13% NCCP affiliated (mainline), 16% Baptist (mainline/evangelical), 28% PCEC affiliated (evangelical), 24% Full Gospel (Pentecostal/charismatic), and 19% Independent (non-affiliation is typically evangelical or Pentecostal/charismatic).82

**Table 3.3: National Council of Churches in the Philippines, Full Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apostolic Catholic Church (ACC)</td>
<td>Independent Catholic*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (CPBC)</td>
<td>Baptist**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP)</td>
<td>Episcopal/Anglican Communion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en Las Islas Filipinas (IEMELIF)</td>
<td>Methodist*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iglesia Filipina Independiente (Aglipayan Church; IFI)</td>
<td>Independent Catholic/ Anglican Communion*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iglesia Unida Ekyumenical (IUE/UNIDA)</td>
<td>Multiple Church Merger*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP)</td>
<td>Lutheran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Salvation Army (TSA)</td>
<td>Holiness Movement, Methodist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP)</td>
<td>Multiple Church Merger*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Methodist Church (UMC)</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*May be better described as a Filipinized Christian Church

**In addition to being a member of NCCP, CPBC is a cooperative ministry in its own right and serves as the central coordinating body for 1,079 Baptist churches in the Philippines.

**Table 3.4: National Council of Churches in the Philippines, Associate Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Purpose/Denomination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Association of Christian Schools, Colleges, and Universities (ACSCU)</td>
<td>Protestant Christian Education Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consortium of Christian Organizations for Rural-Urban Development (CONCORD)</td>
<td>Coordination of Protestant Church Development Efforts in Mindanao and Cebu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecumenical Church Loan Foundation, Inc. (ECLOF)</td>
<td>Microfinance / Loans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaisahang Buhay Foundation (KBF)</td>
<td>Childcare (Day Care, Foster Care, Single Mother Assistance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manila Community Services, Inc. (MCSI)</td>
<td>Microfinance for Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingap Pangkabataan, Inc. (LPi)</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippine Bible Society (PBS)</td>
<td>Bible Distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Christian Movement of the Philippines (SCMP)</td>
<td>Student Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Church of Manila (UCM)</td>
<td>Methodist/Presbyterian Church Merger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mainline Protestantism

“Mainline” Protestantism does not equate to “mainstream.” The term comes from the American context and, in the Philippines, is linked to the American colonial legacy. “Mainline” distinguishes a pluralistic grouping of denominations that share a modernist theology/interpretive approach to the Bible, emphasis on salvation through Jesus Christ, and community engagement based on Social Gospel. Mainline Protestant churches also tend to be particularly involved with the ecumenical movement and, as it did in the United States, this led to the formation of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) to coordinate their activities. Willingness to engage in ecumenical activities with the CBCP-led Catholic Church was an early and crucial point of division between mainline and evangelical denominations in the Philippines. Most major mainline Protestant denominations are affiliates of the NCCP, with the exception of certain Baptist and Stone-Campbellite movements who embraced new theological orientations leading them to affiliate with the Philippines Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC).

National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP)

There are 10 full and nine associate members of the NCCP: seven independent churches, three merged churches, and one cooperative ministry.

Evangelical Protestantism

Evangelicalism is a trans-denominational movement within Protestant Christianity where groups typically share a biblicist theology/authoritative approach to the bible, an emphasis on substitutionary atonement through Jesus Christ, conversionism (necessity of being “born again”), and voluntary activism in a wide variety of forms. The evangelical movement is not characterized by wide-reaching denominations or involvement in ecumenical activities.

In contrast to mainline Protestant movements, which have occupied a place in the religious landscape since the early 1900s, the evangelical movement and its expansion in the Philippines is a more recent phenomenon. Prior to 1980, there were 228 non-Catholic Philippine church groups in the Philippines. There were over 20,000 separate churches by 1990, a number which grew to over 50,000 by 2000—over 60% of which had less than 50 members and 90% of which had less than 300 members.

Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC)

Coordination between evangelical churches and organizations in the Philippines is led by the PCEC. The PCEC is a cooperative ministry that promotes unity and solidarity among evangelical institutions in the Philippines. Many major evangelical churches in the Philippines are not affiliated with PCEC. Because the landscape of evangelicalism is considerably larger, newer, less theologically unified, and less interested in ecumenical activities than mainline Protestantism, the PCEC is able to exert less direct influence over its members than the NCCP.
Table 3.5: 10 Major Churches Affiliated with PCEC and 10 Major Churches Not Affiliated with PCEC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 Major Evangelical Churches Affiliated with PCEC</th>
<th>10 Major Evangelical Churches Not Affiliated with PCEC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alliance of Bible Christian Communities of the Philippines (ABCCOP)</td>
<td>Bible Baptist Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines (CAMACOP)</td>
<td>Christ's Commission Fellowship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of God in Christ (COGIC)</td>
<td>Churches of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of the Foursquare Gospel in the Philippines</td>
<td>Day By Day Christian Ministries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of the Nazarene Philippines</td>
<td>Destiny Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Free Church of the Philippines</td>
<td>Faith Tabernacle Church (Living Rock Ministries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Assembly of Presbyterian Churches of the Philippines</td>
<td>Grace Christian Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines General Council of the Assemblies of God (PBCAG)</td>
<td>Greenhills Christian Fellowship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victory</td>
<td>International Christian Church (Manila—MMICC/Cebu—MCICC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesleyan Church of the Philippines</td>
<td>International One Way Foundation, Inc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.6 Baptist Churches and Their Affiliations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperative Ministry</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Number of Churches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Association of Fundamental Baptist Churches in the Philippines (AFBCP)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist Conference of the Philippines, Inc. (BCP)</td>
<td>None / BWA</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, Inc. (CPBC)</td>
<td>NCCP / BWA</td>
<td>1,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention of Visayas and Mindanao of Southern Baptist Churches (CVMSBC)</td>
<td>None / BWA</td>
<td>1,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Baptist Churches of the Philippines, Inc. (GBCP)</td>
<td>PCEC / BWA</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Baptist Churches in the Philippines (IBC)</td>
<td>PCEC</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luzon Convention of Southern Baptist Churches, Inc. (LCSBC)</td>
<td>PCEC / BWA</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (PABWE)</td>
<td>ABWE International</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCEC Individually Affiliated Independent Baptist Churches</td>
<td>PCEC</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PCEC-affiliated churches pursue their own social development programs without direct PCEC supervision. Instead, PCEC endeavors to accomplish its own social outreach ambitions as well as offer support and lead by example through its development arm, Philippine Relief and Development Services, Inc. (PHILRADS). PHILRADS’ theory of change is centered on the concept of holistic ministry, an intertwining of evangelism and development for long-term prosperity. PHILRADS has a demonstrated strength in mobilizing support for disaster response and long-term programs in livelihood enhancement, child sponsorship, and agricultural development.

There are 74 denominations, 219 local churches, and 224 faith-inspired organizations that hold full membership in the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches.
Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide (JILCW)

Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide (JILCW) was founded in 1978 by Eddie Villanueva, a former leftist activist briefly jailed twice in 1970s for advocating for land rights and protesting martial law. JILCW claims four million members, though census data indicates that it accounts for 0.23% of the population. While it is difficult to confirm JILCW’s reach, evidence suggests that it is the largest Full-Gospel, Pentecostal Protestant church in the Philippines.

JILCW is not involved in social development or charity work. However, through the actions and public persona of its president-founder, it is one of the most overtly political religious groups in the Philippines. Villanueva has utilized JILCW as an ideological platform, preaching religious morality through the lens of politics. Though defeated twice, Villanueva ran reasonably competitive campaigns for president in 2004 and 2010. Today, though he remains the head pastor of JILCW, he is also a deputy speaker of the House of Representatives representing the Citizens’ Battle Against Corruption (CIBAC) Party. JILCW is an authentic religious community. The church as institution is utilized as a vehicle for political advocacy, just as the political involvement of JILCW leadership is a vehicle for evangelism.

Philippine Restorationist Churches

Philippine restorationist churches are recently established Christian-identifying religious communities of Philippine origin. These groups usually operate independently and are highly differentiated from one another as well as other Christian denominations. Philippine restorationist churches are characteristically reactive in their formation, part of a wider sociological movement that aspires to decolonize, reclaim, and purify institutional religion in the Philippines.

Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI; Aglipayan Church)

Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), also referred to as the Aglipayan Church, was established in 1902 by excommunicated Catholic priest Gregorio Aglipay. The motivating ambition of IFI was the belief that, because the Catholic Church was an institution of Spanish colonial oppression, formation of an independent Filipino Catholic clergy was fundamental towards the establishment of a politically and spiritually free Philippine nation. Distrust of Church-affiliated clergy led self-identifying Catholics to join IFI in massive numbers to support a Catholic Church for and by Filipinos. At the time, IFI was also seen as the only Christian alternative to the Catholic Church; it was the first Philippine restorationist church movement, and Protestant missionaries had not yet entered the landscape. Census data suggests a continuous
decline of IFI—composing 15% of the population in 1918, 11% in 1939, 4% in 1970, and around 1% today. Many factors are at play, but the decline is certainly due in part to IFI’s shifting theological foundations and affiliations. Another contributing factor may be its stricter institutional adherence to the principle of separation of church and state, which is at times viewed as moral reluctance in a landscape where religious sociopolitical advocacy is commonplace.

Since 1989, the largest and most active social development outreach arm of IFI is the Iglesia Filipina Independiente-Visayas-Mindanao Regional Office for Development (IFI-VIMROD). IFI-VIMROD implements nationwide development programming, but central to its theory of social transformation is building the capacity of People’s Organization for Development groups (Kahugpungan sa Katawhan alang sa Kalambuan, KKKs). KKKs are local organizations that receive support from IFI-VIMROD to implement specific community-adapted projects most commonly pertaining to improving economic opportunity and education. IFI-VIMROD has been an implementing partner of Australian Aid, the Anglican Board of Mission-Australia (ABM-Australia), Evangelische Entwicklungsdienst (Evangelical Development Service, EED), and Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World-Germany).

**Iglesia Ni Cristo (INC)**

Founded by Felix Y. Manalo in 1914, Iglesia Ni Cristo (INC), or “Church of Christ,” is the third largest religious community in the Philippines. All citations of membership indicate that INC has been steadily growing since its inception: from a community of 5,000 adherents in Manila in 1924 to 1% of the population nationwide in the 1960 census, and now 2.5% today. Like other Philippine restorationist churches, the timing of INC’s formation suggests an opportunistic bid to usurp the colonial Catholic Church.

Through its distinct theology and sociological organization, INC became the most controversial group in the religious landscape of the Philippines. Theologically, INC rejects the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus Christ, sees itself as the true reestablishment of an apostatized Catholic Church in an era immediately preceding the biblical apocalypse, and espouses that Felix Y. Manalo is the last prophetic messenger of God. Sociologically, INC is comparatively extreme in its direct administrative involvement in the lives of members. These include membership-associated obligations and consequences, hierarchical structuring, and an emphasis on narrative control, unity, and political lobbying.

INC is particularly controversial among non-INC members for its secretive style and the evidence that it has strategically coalesced political power in order to leverage preferential government treatment. It is well documented that INC endorses candidates for public offices and its members engage in strict bloc voting. There are also allegations of INC criminal activity, including but not limited to: political corruption, the use of charity fronts for money laundering, coercion of members, persecution and intimidation of ex-members, kidnapping, and murder.
INC has an exceptionally expansive and sophisticated media presence, operating an evangelization-focused conglomerate called Christian Era Broadcasting Service International (CEBSI) and a commercial conglomerate called Eagle Broadcasting Corporation (EBC). A central theme of INC broadcasting is to draw attention to INC social development or charity initiatives, particularly those that take place outside of the Philippines in non-Filipino communities. INC consistently demonstrates a problematic need to control public perception. Because it publishes grandiose, though anecdotal, stories of its globally-reaching charity and retaliates against criticism ad hominem without providing any refuting documentary evidence, it is difficult to ascertain what INC charity work is truly occurring, at what scale, and over what time periods.

Since 2011, the Felix Y. Manalo Foundation (FYM Foundation) has been the primary implementing agency of INC charitable outreach projects. INC charity projects include Ligap Sa Mamamayan (“Aid to Humanity”), focused on disaster response; Kabayan Ko, Kapatid Ko (“My Countrymen, My Brethren”), centered on in-kind basic needs donation and free medical/dental care; the INCGiving Project, concentrated on community-building and volunteerism; and Unified Livelihood and Advocacy for Development International (UNLAD International), geared toward employment training.

INC owns and operates several large for-profit businesses, whose activities include the management of the Philippine Arena, New Era General Hospital (Quezon City, Manila), Eraño G. Manalo Medical Center (a hospital in Ciudad de Victoria, Bulacan), and New Era University. INC members often receive preferential hiring treatment from major non-INC Philippine corporations. INC doctrine commands that members shall not join unions and that all collective bargaining must be undertaken by the INC administration, diminishing the wider exercisability of labor rights and creating pockets of extremely concentrated INC labor. The most visible iteration of this phenomenon is SM Supermall workers.

**Kingdom of Jesus Christ, The Name Above Every Name (KJC)**

Kingdom of Jesus Christ, The Name Above Every Name (KJC) was founded in Davao City, Mindanao by Apollo C. Quiboloy in 1985, a former United Pentecostal Church member who has claimed since 2005 to be the “Appointed Son of God,” “Owner of the Universe,” and the exclusive path to salvation. Based on its media reach, KJC asserts that it has seven million members. If this were true, KJC would be the second or third largest religious group in the Philippines. Its presence to date has not been significant enough to be included on any national census, indicating that its total active membership could be less than 100,000 and is certainly under one million. As of 2019, the largest documented audience at a KJC event was approximately 8,000 people. In 2015, 1,500 KJC members attended Quiboloy’s rally at the Quirino Grandstand in Rizal Park. A month earlier that same year, Pope Francis held a Sunday Mass at the Quirino Grandstand attended by 6 to 7 million people. Much of the recent expansion of KJC’s influence is attributable to the public friendship between President Rodrigo Duterte and
Quiboloy. Quiboloy is considered the unofficial spiritual advisor to a president who is otherwise openly distrustful of organized religion.

KJC is associated with two charity organizations: Children’s Joy Foundation, Inc. (CJFI, 1998) and Sonshine Philippines Movement (SPM, 2005). CJFI supports children who have become abandoned or whose basic, health, and education needs would otherwise be unmet; notably, it is a child placement partner of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DWSD). SPM is a volunteer-driven disaster response and environmental restoration non-profit.

**Other Christian Churches**

**Seventh-day Adventists (SDA)**
The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been active in the Philippines since 1911 and, by official census data, it accounts for at least 0.74% of the population. Although it is a relatively small minority, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is in fact the largest singular Protestant denomination in the Philippines.87 Activities of the SDA Church in the Philippines are coordinated by the Southern Asia-Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Under the division there are three administrative conferences—the North (Luzon), Central (Visayas), and South (Mindanao/Sulu Archipelago) Philippine Union Conferences—each of which has seven or eight sub-regional missions. The proportion
of SDA members by region are approximately as follows: North (Luzon) 30%, Central (Visayas) 23%, and South (Mindanao/Sulu Archipelago) 46%.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has been involved in the Philippines since 1974; ADRA Philippines concentrates its activities on disaster preparedness/relief and community-based livelihoods capacity-building initiatives. In total, the SDA mission conferences run 10 hospitals and nine degree-granting tertiary education institutions across the Philippines.

**Jehovah’s Witnesses (JW)**

Jehovah’s Witnesses (JW) established its first branch office (Bethel) in the Philippines in 1934, though JW preachers and distributors of literature have been active as early as 1912. Jehovah’s Witnesses account for 0.45% of the population. JW self-reports 3,419 congregations under direction of the Philippines branch office with 9,330 baptized members, 217,220 publishers, and 601,325 memorial attendees. The Philippines has the largest JW community in Asia and the eighth largest globally. Irregularities in demographic estimates of JWs do not primarily result from deliberate over or underestimation, but rather the dynamic nature of JW membership. An individual may self-identify as a JW and regularly attend services at Kingdom Halls (the JW place of worship), but they are not counted as or considered official members unless they continually maintain “publisher” status by reporting a minimum threshold of hours preached to non-members per month.

Analyzing the social development or charitable involvement of Jehovah’s Witnesses is controversial, marked by consistent criticism from external sources and defensiveness from internal sources. A fundamental underlying dissonance and misunderstanding among non-Witnesses is that Jehovah’s Witnesses view their public proselytization efforts as activities benefitting all of society, openly prioritizing what they term “spiritual support” over “material support.” JWs do not have a formal social development institution that is easily comparable—structurally or operationally—to those of other religious communities. “Material support” efforts typically stem from committees formed by individual JW congregations that raise funds from within the assembly for relatively small-scale outreach activities run entirely by unpaid volunteers, mostly to provide assistance to disaster-affected JWs.

In the Philippines, both effort and criticism have centered on JW contributions to nationwide relief efforts following major natural disasters. The best documented and visibly most expansive “material support” effort of Jehovah’s Witnesses in the Philippines was in reaction to Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. Donations from JW congregations all around the world were allocated by the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses to the Philippine branch office for home reconstruction projects in affected Visayan cities. One year after the typhoon, the results as documented were that 612 unpaid volunteers repaired or rebuilt 742 homes: 256 in Ormoc, 218 in Roxas, 167 in Tacloban, and 101 in Cebu. Acknowledging the labor of those individual volunteers but understanding
that at least 1,079,452 homes were destroyed just by Haiyan’s initial impact, the documentable and anecdotal evidence of JW material support activities in the Philippines do not meet a reasonable expectation of what the community’s capacity for social development assistance could be.

*The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also referred to as the Mormon or LDS Church, established its first mission in the Philippines in 1967, though largely unsuccessful proselytization attempts by individual Mormon U.S. servicemen took place as early as 1898. The LDS Church accounts for 0.15% of the population. It self-reports a 0.75% share of the population across 1,227 congregations in nearly every major population center in the Philippines. However, while geographic spread of the LDS Church in the Philippines is largely verifiable, its self-reported membership data does not seem to effectively account for its low long-term retention rates, which have been cited at 2% 5 years after conversion.

Social development activities of the LDS Church in the Philippines are managed by the national branch of LDS Charities, the humanitarian assistance arm of the wider donation coordination organization LDS Philanthropies. With a yearly operating budget that fluctuates around US$1.5 million, LDS Charities-Philippines concentrates its activities on disaster relief and community-specific development projects. Disaster relief, most often in the form of the provision of food and water supplies, has been consistent for most major typhoons since 1985. Similar short-term relief initiatives have also been coordinated for other types of natural disasters and conflict displacement. Longer-term LDS Charities-Philippines initiatives center around clean water/sanitation, access to vision care, and wheelchair donation.

*Islam*

Islam first reached the Philippines in the thirteenth century, when Arab merchant Tuan Masha’ika arrived on the island of Jolo. The influence of the Sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao made Islam the majority religion in the Sulu Archipelago, Southern Palawan, and Western Mindanao in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Islam became closely associated with the Moro people in the mid-sixteenth century as the sultanates actively resisted Spanish colonial occupation.

*National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF)*

The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) is the primary government agency to represent, coordinate, and support the interests of the Muslim community in the Philippines. The NCMF replaced the Office on Muslim Affairs (OMA, 1987–2009) through the Republic Act No. 9997, which clarified the group’s mandate and ensured a balance in tribal affiliation among its leaders. One of the NCMF’s key expressed powers is to “undertake and coordinate development programs for the advancement of Muslim Filipino communities.”
The term “Moro” is often erroneously attributed to a homogenous ethnic group. The term originates from the Spanish term for Moor, used in colonial times to distinguish all Muslims, regardless of their ethnic or social identity, from Catholic converts. Because the Muslim peoples of the Sulu Archipelago and Mindanao actively rejected Spanish colonial rule and conversion to Catholicism, the term also became shorthand for those who resisted political authority. This connotation remains in effect today: Moro primarily denotes association with the Bangsamoro resistance, rather than a particular racial, ethnic, tribal, or religious affiliation. Those who self-identify as Moro primarily do so to signal political solidarity. It is considered derogatory if used by a non-Muslim Filipino to describe a non-Muslim Filipino outside of this context.

There are significant Arab, Iranian, Indonesian, and Sindhi ethnic communities that have been present in the Philippines for generations. Although these groups are majority-Muslim, they are generally not considered Moro.

**Ethnic Composition of Moro Identity Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group*</th>
<th>Primary Areas of Residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iranun</td>
<td>Northern Maguindanao (likely majority in the contiguous districts of Matanog, Barira, Buldon, and Parang); Lanao del Sur, Cotabato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kagan/Kaagan</td>
<td>Coastal Davao Gulf (Davao City)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kagan/Kaagan (including “Kalagan,” although there is debate as to whether this term specifically refers to a subgroup of Kagan people who adopted Christianity and rejected Moro identity)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalibugan/Kolibugan (Western and Central branches of the Subanen subgroup)</td>
<td>Zamboanga Peninsula (interior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maguindanao</td>
<td>Maguindanao (majority); Cotabato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maranao</td>
<td>Lake Lanao (both Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molbog (Palaweño subgroup, not including Cuyunon or Agutayanon Palaweño subgroups)</td>
<td>Balabac Island, Bataraza (majority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palawanon (Pala’wan/Palawan)</td>
<td>Palawan (highland interior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sama-Bajau (including Banguingui, Bihing/Lipid, Dea/Darat, Badjao/Sama-Dilaut, Jama Mapun, Pangutaran, and Ubian; not including Abaknon of Capul; not including most Christian Sama in Davao del Sur)</td>
<td>Tawi-Tawi (majority); Sulu Archipelago, Coastal Southern Mindanao (widespread)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sango/Sangir</td>
<td>Sarangani Islands; Coastal South Cotabato, Davao del Sur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tausug/Suluk</td>
<td>Sulu (majority); Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, Palawan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yakan</td>
<td>Basilan, Zamboanga City</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Bolded are what are commonly referred to as the “13 Moro Tribes”*
The goals of armed Moro groups vary, they broadly fall into two categories. The first category includes the MNLF and MILF, two groups that support peace with the Philippine government through the establishment of the semi-autonomous BARMM. The second category comprises those groups that reject subnational autonomy in any form, including the ASG, BIFF, Maute/Toraifie, and AKP. During the Battle of Marawi (May–October 2017), the MNLF and MILF supported the Philippine government in its fight against ASG, BIFF, and Maute/Toraifie.

The MNLF’s acceptance of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement, which offered semi-autonomous status to the Muslim-majority territory of ARMM, created a rift between the MNLF and MILF. While the MNLF agreed to a ceasefire, the MILF continued its armed struggle. As the conflict raged on, it became evident that negotiations had to include MILF in order to achieve a lasting peace; ultimately, the establishment of the MNLF-led ARMM (1996–2019) proved inadequate in resolving the conflict. The Aquino III administration (2010–2016) saw significant advances toward peace, culminating in the MILF-GRP 2014 Comprehensive Political self-determination has been a chief concern of the Muslim community in the Philippines for at least five centuries, producing both armed militancy and political negotiations. Key belligerent groups in the modern era of the Moro conflict (1969-present) are described below.

### Major Active Armed Moro Groups in the Philippines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Relevant Affiliations</th>
<th>Estimated Members</th>
<th>Bangsamoro Transition Authority Nominees</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)           | 1969–1996; secessionist, 1996–present; accept subnational autonomy (ARMM) | • ARMM  
• Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) — Observer Member  
• Parliamentary Union of OIC — Observer Member | 17,700 (1996) | 9/80 (Government Designated) |
| Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)            | 1977–2011; secessionist, refuse subnational autonomy (ARMM) 2011–present; accept subnational autonomy (BARMM), federalism | • Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) — MILF Paramilitary Wing | 11,000 (2011) | 41/80 (MILF Designated) |
| Abu Sayyaf (ASG)                                | 1991–present; organized crime, Salafi jihadism, unclear political end goal | • Linked to Al-Qaeda (pre-2014)  
• Pledged to ISIL (2014), unclear if entire group | 424 (2019) | 0 |
| Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)      | 2008–present; refuse subnational autonomy, reject MILF, unclear political end goal | • 2008 split from MILF  
• 2014 alliance with MNLF  
• 2015 internal tri-split; the most radical of the three, the Toraifie Group, pledged to ISIL | 264 (2019) (Southern Maguindanao) | 0 |
| Maute/Toraifie Group                            | 2012–2017 (Maute) 2017–present (Toraifie); reject MILF, Salafi jihadism, Islamic State in Lanao | • Pledged to ISIL  
• Post-Battle of Marawi, remnants of Maute absorbed by Toraifie | 25 (2019) (Lanao del Sur) | 0 |
| Ansar Khalifa Philippines (AKP)                  | 2014–present; refuse subnational autonomy, reject MILF, organized crime | • Pledged to ISIL (branding/recruitment) | 20–50 (2019) (Sultan Kudarat) | 0 |
Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB). The Duterte administration (2016–present) has so far committed itself to advancing the peace process; in 2018, it passed the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), which provided for the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BARMM).

At present, the MILF is participating in the transition to BARMM, a semi-autonomous state replacing the ARMM. This state will remain subnational and therefore be subject to the national government with respect to constitutional, foreign policy, defense, and security issues. However, in addition to receiving block national economic assistance funding, the regional government will have increased authority over numerous internal governance structures overseeing justice, tax revenue, discretionary spending, territorial jurisdiction, and economic policy.

A two-part plebiscite was conducted to ratify the BOL and expand BARMM beyond the existing ARMM territories. The first part of the plebiscite, held on January 21, 2019, concerned ratification of the BOL in ARMM jurisdictions and inclusion of Cotabato City, Isabela City, and Basilan into BARMM. The February 6, 2019 plebiscite concerned the inclusion of localities in Lanao del Norte and Cotabato province. All localities except Isabela City and four barangays in Cotabato province voted to join the BARMM.

A successful BARMM is crucial to a lasting peaceful resolution of the Moro conflict in the Philippines. As evidenced by the growth of armed Moro movements, the “independence or death” mentality with respect to the Moro struggle has not simply disappeared with recent developments. Still, there is substantial reason for optimism based on three primary factors: overwhelming popular support for the BARMM; a sustainable compromise based on acceptance of the BOL by the GRP, MNLF, and MILF; and the ideological fragmentation of secessionist Moro groups.
Islamic Social Finance and Banking

Zakat (obligatory almsgiving), sadaqah (voluntary charity), and waqf (charitable endowment) are the three main forms of Islamic charitable giving. Grounded in the moral authority of the Quran and hadith, they assist in poverty alleviation, humanitarian assistance, and wealth redistribution. However, given their practical usage limitations—they are a matter of individual choice with no systematic oversight—they may be better characterized as tools of Islamic social welfare rather than institutions of social development. The NCMF charter includes these forms of charitable giving, as does the legislation establishing the Bangsamoro Autonomous Regional in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). However, zakat, sadaqah, and waqf are typically informal and unregulated today; almost all instances of Islamic charitable giving occur without the involvement of institutions or formal procedures for collection and redistribution.

Al-Amanah Islamic Bank of the Philippines (AIB), established in 1973 by presidential decree, is the only banking institution offering sharia-compliant deposit and loan arrangements. However, less than 20% of its deposit/loan arrangements are sharia-compliant; furthermore, its capacity is extremely limited, and it has struggled to compete with conventional banks. Two national-level secular microfinance institutions, the Center for Agriculture and Rural Development-Mutually Reinforcing Institution (CARD-MRI) and Association for Social Advancement-Philippines (ASA-Philippines), offer Islamic loan arrangements. ASA-Philippines provides a cost-plus financing model and CARD-MRI offers interest substitution for a fee.

Religions of Indigenous Communities

The majority of Philippine’s over 110 indigenous ethnolinguistic groups practice some form of indigenous religion. The diversity of indigenous groups makes it difficult to understand, represent, and implement programs and policies representing these groups’ interests. The highest-level agency responsible for this task is the National Commission on Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (NCIP); in addition, there are hundreds of civil society organizations that focus on specific regions, tribes, or issues, including peacebuilding, cultural preservation, land tenure, and ancestral domain.

Pursuing collective action above the local level has been challenging and procedurally slow, as groups often have competing interests with one another and the NCIP. Indigenous communities living on protected tribal lands are typically self-sufficient and not as dependent on development outreach as other groups. Development-oriented clergy and FIOs, especially Protestant ones, are engaged in indigenous communities across the Philippines. Many of these groups openly embrace evangelism as a motivating factor in their work.

In the past 40 years, the Philippine government has shifted its policy focus from assimilation to cultural pluralism. The 1987 Constitution recognizes the rights of indigenous cultural communities, and the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act of 1997
(IPRA) specifically details those rights and establishes a mechanism for assuring them. The policies enacted by IPRA are largely regarded as progressive, but its rights protection policies and enforcement have been consistently criticized as insufficient by indigenous peoples and advocacy organizations. At the same time, recent successes of the indigenous rights movement in the Philippines have ensured that indigenous communities can practice their religions and continue their cultural ways of life without state interference.

**Buddhism**

Archeological evidence suggests that Buddhism reached the pre-colonial Philippine islands around the ninth century CE, likely the result of contact with maritime Javanese traders, whereas most Chinese traders practiced Traditional Chinese Religion. However, there is little evidence to suggest that Buddhism was widely practiced during the precollonial era. The small contemporary Buddhist community is primarily composed of Chinese Filipinos and recent local converts.
Chinese Filipinos, or Tsinoy, have lived in the Philippines since precolonial times. The Spanish actively suppressed Chinese-Filipino Buddhists for over 300 years; those Buddhists who resisted cultivated a religious practice that, due to little internal documentation or contact with China-based Buddhists, bears little resemblance to the religion practiced by the first Buddhist merchants to arrive in the Philippines. In recent decades, more and more Chinese Filipinos have converted to Christianity, further decreasing the number of Buddhists. Today, they make up around 2% of the total population. Like the rest of the Philippines, the Chinese-Filipino community is predominantly Catholic; only around 2% of Chinese Filipinos are Buddhist, down from around 40% in 1970.\textsuperscript{109} Less than 50,000 people identified as Buddhist on the 2010 census.\textsuperscript{110} In a community in which syncretism plays a key role, this demographic shift may also be due to the complex nature of religious identity that is not reflected in the census data.

There are 37 Chinese-Filipino Buddhist temples in the Philippines today. Religious practices at these combine Han Chinese, Tangmi, and Guanyin Buddhist elements with Traditional Chinese Religion, Daoism, and Christianity.

The major Buddhist development institutions active in the Philippines are of foreign origin. The Tzu Chi Foundation, a Taiwan-based Humanistic Buddhist charity, is by far the most prominent Buddhist FIO active in the Philippines; the foundation’s local work began with disaster response efforts in 1991. Since then, Tzu Chi-Philippines has expanded its program focus to education and health. Tzu Chi-Philippines relies heavily on its volunteers, the majority of whom are Chinese Filipino.
CHAPTER 4: FAITH-INSPIRED ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The faith landscape of the Philippines is wide and diverse, complicated by the uneven nature of religious power dynamics and specific characteristics of different communities. Still, a sociocultural mandate to participate in development, at least at the community level, is in play within all faith communities and expected of all faith institutions. While the form that religious moral responsibility to conduct poverty outreach takes is highly variable, faith-inspired engagement is as ubiquitous as it is unmistakable. This chapter considers faith-inspired engagement through the lens of several development issues, emphasizing the activities of faith-inspired civil society organizations.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESILIENCE, AND RELIEF

The 2018 World Risk Index—a composite indicator of exposure, vulnerability, susceptibility, coping capacity, and adaptive capacity in regard to natural hazards including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, storms, floods, droughts, and sea level rise—positions the Philippines as the world’s third most vulnerable country to natural disaster. Of 172 countries considered, the Philippines follows only Vanuatu and Tonga.111

Eight of the 10 most destructive typhoons in the recorded meteorological history of the Philippines have occurred in the past 10 years. Super Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda), which made landfall with 190 mph winds in Samar, Eastern Visayas, Philippines in 2013, is the strongest tropical cyclone by wind speed to have ever made landfall in recorded history. The typhoon directly uprooted the lives of 16 million people and was the costliest (US$22 billion) and the second worst by casualties—6,300 dead, 28,688 injured, and 1,062 missing in the immediate aftermath—ever documented in the Philippines.

The Haiyan case represents the apex of disaster relief in the Philippines. FIOs that have been involved in disaster relief in the
Faith-Inspired Action. The mobilization of disaster relief following Haiyan was unprecedented. International FIOs were highly involved in these efforts. Understanding the Haiyan case provides insight into the capacity of faith-inspired disaster relief in the Philippines. Among other reflections, the active roles of FIOs inspired a consultation in August 2014 co-organized by the Department of Foreign Affairs and UNDP. The focus was on individual responses, the role of some churches as hubs for relief, and priorities for including faith organizations more systematically in planning for disaster relief. Faith-inspired action is described below through the lens of individual FIO response activities.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Catholic Relief Services has a long history in the Philippines. It is among the most notable FIOs not only for its programming, but also for its participation in and ability to initiate interreligious collaboration in the areas of disaster relief, peacebuilding, and health care outreach. In the aftermath of Haiyan and in close partnership with Caritas Internationalis, CRS reached approximately 200,000 people in Leyte and Eastern Samar with emergency shelter, clean water, and sanitation within three months. CRS continued with disaster recovery efforts until 2015, with support for the homes of approximately 20,000 families, but the bulk of organizational capacity was focused on initial response.

World Vision. World Vision has been active in the Philippines since 1957 and today remains a key actor among international FIOs, particularly in the areas of disaster preparedness, education, health/nutrition, child protection, and livelihoods. In the aftermath of Haiyan, World Vision reports that its programs reached almost 800,000 people in three months for immediate basic needs relief, 320,000 for recovery efforts over the next year, and 84,000 in the rehabilitation phase that lasted until the end of 2016. World Vision's support for 566 communities and 48 municipalities in some of the most disaster-stricken communities more than three years after the initial landfall is a key example of an FIO consciously programming toward long-term disaster recovery. World Vision's efforts tend to be holistic and forward-looking, as demonstrated by its work providing shelter, water, sanitation, and hygiene, education, and cash-based programs, as well as working to repair and replace vital public infrastructure.

Islamic Relief. Islamic Relief began working in the Philippines as a direct result of the Typhoon Haiyan crisis and reached over 133,000 people, primarily in Northern Cebu, with food and temporary shelter in its first project in the Philippines. Islamic Relief remained involved in disaster response after Haiyan, notably in the aftermath of 2014 Typhoon Hagupit. It has also engaged in expanded, regional long-term programs in Visayas and Mindanao, focused on rural livelihoods and employment training. Since the 2017 Marawi Crisis, the organization has shifted its emergency response programming to conflict-associated humanitarian relief in Mindanao.

Tzu Chi Foundation (TCF). The Tzu Chi Foundation was highly active in disaster response and basic needs relief in the cities of Tacloban and Ormoc in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan. The operational capacity and national reputation of TCF grew during Haiyan response, as it ran one of the largest and most successful cash-for-work programs in recent memory; at the peak of the program, over 30,000 people participated per day in debris removal. The organization remains a major actor in the landscape of FIOs in the Philippines and is particularly noteworthy for its capacity to mobilize and organize concentrated social outreach. Since 2015, Typhoon Koppu (known locally as Typhoon Lando), the foundation’s disaster outreach efforts have typically been limited to basic needs response alone.

Iglesia Ni Cristo/Felix Y. Manalo Foundation (FYMF). Iglesia Ni Cristo, under its charity arm Lingap sa Mamamayan (Aid to Humanity) and implementing arm Felix Y. Manalo Foundation (FYMF), provided volunteer-driven medical and dental relief, most significantly in Ormoc City. Such activities were paired with pastoral efforts to individuals receiving or waiting in line for FYMF aid. FYMF characterizes its work as trauma, emotional, and spiritual support. Iglesia Ni Cristo drew criticism during the aftermath of Haiyan for simultaneously running an evangelization campaign claiming that divine intervention caused its churches to survive the typhoon and refusing to open those churches to shelter the thousands of displaced people in immediately surrounding communities.
Philippines for decades mobilized their highest levels of support ever at that time. The severity of the crisis motivated the formation of new organizations that became involved for the first time. As the Philippines is extremely vulnerable and faces major natural disasters on a yearly basis, the Haiyan relief efforts should be considered an anomaly in terms of support when compared to business-as-usual disaster response.

Engaging faith-inspired organizations into broader national-level strategic planning and response preparedness has been recognized as a key issue, but far more could be done. Large-scale collaborative action is rare and has occurred primarily in times of crisis. Systematic coordination and explicit partnerships still need to be explored.

EDUCATION

Historical Context
Since the Spanish colonial era, when education was almost exclusively conducted by Catholic orders (Augustinians, Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, etc.), religious actors have played a major role in the Filipino education system. The specifics of these roles during the American colonial era are more complex to define. The administration largely set up new, non-religious institutions or reinstituted former Spanish Catholic schools and universities as secular without any required religious curriculum; it also opened the Philippines to the establishment of dozens of Protestant private educational institutions. Furthermore, although the American “Thomasites” taught no explicitly religious curriculum in laying the foundation for the Filipino public school system, many of these volunteers were documented to have been explicitly motivated by their Christian (typically Protestant) faith.

The Second Philippine Republic (1942–1945), also referred to as the Japanese-sponsored Philippine Republic, is a short but significant chapter for understanding the intersection of education and religion in the Philippines. Through Military Order No. 2 (1942), the Japanese attempted to dissolve the predominantly Christian educational system that had been created under the previous colonial regimes and replace it with a new, pro-Japanese system that emphasized Asian identity and the “spiritual rejuvenation” of the Filipino people. Though it left scars, Japanese ambitions for indoctrination in the Philippines ultimately failed in tandem with the Japanese surrender in 1945. With the establishment of the independent Republic of the Philippines, public education was established as secular. However, the Philippines’s history (including American influence), Filipino aversion to Japanese education policy, and the resource limitations of the young government paved the way for religious influences in the education system.

Public Education
The role of faith, particularly Catholicism, in the public education system today has some distinctive complexities. The 1987 Constitution of the Philippines states that
“the separation of Church and State shall be inviolable,” unambiguously determining the foundation of public education as secular. Still, until Department Order No. 36 forced revision in September 2013, the Department of Education’s (DepEd) vision statement included “developing functionally literate and God-loving Filipinos.” Within the wider criticism of public education in Philippines being “Tagalog-centric” (referring to the Tagalog people of South/Central Luzon, predominantly Catholic), there is also criticism that the curriculum carries an inherent pro-Christian bias. Some anecdotal evidence suggests that there has been improvement in overall religious literacy involving Islam and its history in the Philippines within public education in recent years, but the wider criticism that Christianity holds a disproportionate place in secular public education persists.

**Private Education**

Private education institutions are prominent in the Philippines. Private school enrollment at the primary level was 8.2% in 2016 and at secondary was approximately 18.1%. This increases dramatically for higher education institutions: a full 88% of these institutions are private. Most private educational institutions are religiously affiliated, typically with a Catholic institution or a Protestant denomination. There are several hundred madrasa (Islamic schools) in the ARMM (now BARMM) and in greater Mindanao with formal curricula; however, the percentage of these that are full systems meeting national education standards—rather than weekend schools intended exclusively for the study of Islam—is unclear. It appears that as Filipinos progress through the educational system, they are increasingly likely to receive or have received education from an openly religious, usually Christian, institution—especially when preparing for middle or upper class professions.

**Faith–Inspired Action**

Faith-inspired organizations of several quite different kinds are thus highly involved in both public and private education in Philippines. Private schools often publicize their affiliated or supporting actors. Understanding such relationships within the public-school system is more complicated. The Department of Education has recently faced major structural problems, such as budget shortages relative to need, declining quality of public education (with falling national test scores and primary school completion rates), and widening socioeconomic divides.

These issues have led the Department of Education to partner with international aid organizations, as well as FIOs. For example, World Vision was a key funding entity behind the implementation of the department’s Kindergarten Catch-Up Education Program. It trained public school teachers for the World Vision Culture of Reading project and donated school supplies to public schools. Religious curriculum or instruction in public education that is initiated or funded by faith-inspired agencies has been less common and is not well documented. The Tony Blair Faith Foundation
TBFF), now rebranded as the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, was a notable exception, as it initiated and funded major faith-centric initiatives within the public education system in the Philippines. Four private Catholic universities and one public university in the Philippines were members of the TBFF’s Faith and Globalization Network, and the Face to Faith program for interfaith dialogue around conflict was briefly mainstreamed into public education by the Department of Education for Filipinos aged 12 to 17.

Bilateral aid organizations of the United States and Australia, USAID and AusAID, have been key supporting actors for education in the Philippines. USAID has maintained a secular approach in its education programming in the Philippines, which is nationally focused and typically limited to public education. AusAID has a more regionally focused approach to education and does not limit its work to public education programs; it has implemented programs in Mindanao that train Muslim teachers and support schools that provide Islamic education.

HEALTH

National health expenditure as a percentage of GDP in 2016 was 4.39% in the Philippines,115 roughly on par with other lower-middle income countries (3.96%).116 Still, health care provision and quality have not kept pace with demand. Shortcomings in the Filipino health care system present themselves in the form of regional and economic inequities in health outcomes, service delivery, and financing. Working toward addressing the structural gaps in the health care system has been a key social development agenda of many faith-inspired organizations.

Health Disparities

Economic disparities in health outcomes, service delivery, and financing are deep-rooted and widening. At 554 cases per 100,000 people, the Philippines has the third highest incidence of tuberculosis (TB) in the world.117 Despite consistent improvement in morbidity rate, diarrheal diseases remain a key health risk for Filipino children under 5 years old: they are responsible for 7% of all deaths of children under 5.118 The prevalence of diarrhea among Filipino children under 5 years old in the poorest quintile was more than double the prevalence of those in wealthiest quintile.119

When controlled for population growth, utilization of health services in all forms has been steadily declining, with the steepest declines in the use of rural health stations. Provinces in the poorest quintile consistently have the lowest utilization rates, usually between 5% and 10% less than the wealthiest quintile of provinces. Health care cost considerations are paramount in the differences observed. Pharmaceutical prices in the Philippines are among the highest in Asia, and out-of-pocket costs as a source of total health care expenditure have steadily increased, from 47% in 1997 to 57% in 2007.120 The quality of health care
available to poor Filipinos is also a major concern; it is telling that 74% of Filipinos in the wealthiest quintile received inpatient care from private hospitals. Impoverished Filipinos have the greatest health risks, facing obstacles to health care access and the ability to pay for services, which result in a lower utilization rate.

Regional disparities are particularly pronounced when comparing majority-Muslim provinces to the rest of the country. Such disparities are the most visible in the ARMM, which consistently fares the worst in health outcomes, service delivery, and financing. Data from 2008 showed that the Philippines had a rate of just 1.04 hospital beds per 1,000 population. There are stark disparities between regions: the rate in the National Capital Region was 2.47, while the ARMM had a rate of 0.17 beds per 1,000 population. These same disparities also exist in life expectancies: NCR has a life expectancy of 67 to 69 years for men and 74 years for women, while it is just 58 years for men and 62 years for women in ARMM.
Faith-Inspired Action

FIOs are deeply engaged in health initiatives. Their involvement is typically highly specialized within the health sector, with outreach often limited to specific conditions and areas. World Vision focuses on child nutrition and preventive care from tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. The work of NASSA/Caritas Philippines addresses health care and medical supply access in post-disaster situations.

Secular entities often work with FIOs as implementing partners in the health sector. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s approach in the Philippines is largely to fund existing or new health initiatives; one such example was a US$400,000 grant to Lutheran World Relief to support and expand its health-focused typhoon relief work. One of USAID’s largest and most consistent implementing partners for emergency response health, tuberculosis, and infectious disease action is CRS.

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT (GAD)

The 2018 World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index ranks the Philippines as the eighth most gender equal nation in the world and the most gender equal nation in all of Asia.125 The index measures gender differentials in economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political empowerment, and health outcomes. The improvement and success in GAD over time in the Philippines is worthy of note. Still, there remain major gender and development challenges. The clearest intersections of faith and GAD relate to issues that are considered to affect the “institution of the Filipino family,” such as marriage/divorce, reproductive health, and LGBT rights. The following discussion focuses on these topics.

Marriage/Divorce

Along with Vatican City, the Philippines is one of only two countries in the world where divorce is illegal. It remains illegal largely because of conservative Catholic congressmen and the powerful Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) lobby; these congressmen and the CBCP have advocated against divorce bills that have come to votes in each congress since the thirteenth (2004–2007). It is important to note that divorce, full separation outside of annulment conditions, is legal for individuals who married in Islamic ceremonies. The illegality of divorce makes failed or violent marriages difficult to escape. According to the 2013 National Demographic and Health Survey, 17% of the population has experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner, and 15% of first marriages were before age 18.126 Conservative politicians and the CBCP hold that there are legal and religiously appropriate means of terminating a marital union. The Philippines allows for marital annulments under the 1987 Family Code in cases where there is “lack of parental consent, psychological incapacity, fraud, marriage by force or intimidation, inability to consummate the marriage, and if one party has contracted a sexually-transmitted disease.” There is a precedent that annulments
are not granted on the grounds of domestic violence, varying types of coercion, illegal activity or imprisonment, drug addiction, a change in sexual orientation, infidelity, and abandonment, among others. The narrow grounds for annulment, paired with the fact that the process can often take 10 years and cost US$5,000, bars many, particularly women, from personal autonomy and safety after a marriage contract has been signed. Remarriage is legal in cases where annulments were granted.

The aforementioned cases where annulments are not applicable have been accepted as the basis for legal separation, the other option available to exit a union. Legal separations are an intricate legal institution and only constitute the termination of conjugal partnership. Former spouses who have completed a legal separation may live and conduct their affairs separately, but they are still legally married to their former partner and cannot remarry.

The Catholic Church, through the CBCP, is a driving force for advocacy around complicated issues of family and marriage law in the Philippines. The majority of Filipinos marry in churches with Christian services. This combination of legal intricacies, in addition to the legality of divorce for those married in Islamic ceremonies, suggests that the Catholic Church possesses a degree of formal power over national marriage law.

All recent polls suggest that the majority of Filipinos support the legalization of divorce. On March 19, 2018, the most recent divorce bill, House Bill 7303, passed in the lower house by a vote of 134 to 57; there does not appear to have been a counterpart Senate bill. More importantly, President Duterte publicly expressed in April 2019 that he would reject the bill if it ever came to a presidential signature, effectively killing any chance that a divorce bill could pass during his administration. He publicly deferred the justification of the decision to his daughter, Sara Duterte-Carpio, the mayor of Davao City, whose rationale against the bill was her Catholic faith.

Reproductive Health

Reproductive health remains a priority in the Philippines. The average total fertility rate in 2017 was 2.7, but there were wide discrepancies associated with rural-urban divides, educational attainment, and wealth quintile. In 2017, 17% of married women had an unmet need for contraception, while 49% of single, sexually active women had an unmet need. Religious affiliation plays a key role in Filipino perceptions of family planning and is often cited as a social barrier to access, as well as source of personal objection. In particular, the Catholic Church, through advocacy groups, exerts a great degree of influence over matters of reproductive health in the Philippines. Family planning education trainings, most often conducted by secular NGOs, are common, and there is little evidence that they face public backlash in a generalizable way.

In January 2017, President Duterte issued a major executive order on family planning, which aims to ensure that all Filipinos have access to reproductive health and sexual education, as well as free contraception, by the end of 2018. The cited motivation was that lack of access to family planning is a driver of high poverty rates and a form of
economic discrimination, given the reality that many impoverished Filipina women cannot afford high-priced, modern contraceptives. The executive order also represents a key turning point in how family planning is conducted in the Philippines. For example, contraceptive implants faced a Supreme Court-ruled restraining order on procurement, distribution, and medical administration in 2015 that lasted through 2017. The legalization of contraceptive devices was passed by Congress only in 2012, and the Supreme Court ruling forced 51 contraceptive drugs and devices to be reevaluated to ensure that they could not cause an abortion.

The 2008 National Demographic and Health Survey reported that 36% of pregnancies are unplanned—20% are mistimed and 16% are unwanted. Undergoing or procedurally assisting an abortion is a criminal offense in the Philippines; any involvement carries a mandate in the Penal Code for imprisonment. Exceptions are uncommon and formally unlisted, though a precedent has been set that an abortion may be carried out in order to save a pregnant woman’s life. Thousands of women in the Philippines seek illegal and/or unsafe abortions as a result, often through a wide variety of black market means. In 2012, over 100,000 women were hospitalized due to complications known to have arisen from an unsafe abortion, and almost 25% of all hospitals in the Philippines reported unsafe abortions as one of the top 10 causes for admission.

LGBT Community

The Philippines is considered the most LGBT-tolerant country in Asia. Seventy-three percent of Filipinos agree that “society should accept homosexuality,” per a national survey conducted by the Pew Research Center. The perception of “general tolerance,” however, obfuscates the reality of the LGBT experience in the Philippines. There exists a uniquely severe line between answered response and behavior, as well as between tolerance and acceptance with respect to the LGBT community in Filipino society.

LGBT rights are variable in the Philippines, especially as they relate to what are considered religious institutions. Homosexual activity is and, notably, has always been unambiguously legal in the Philippines, and any form of LGBT discrimination in employment, housing, the military, and several other areas is strictly illegal. The assurance of these fundamental rights speaks to the culture of tolerance of the LGBT community in the Philippines as they concern privately self-identifying and not being the subject of discrimination.

Rights and protections in the public sphere, however, reflect the lack of true LGBT acceptance in Filipino society. Family law and practice are particularly complicated and tenuous, largely due to the fact that the Filipino family is seen by many policymakers as a Christian institution that must be actively protected. The rights of LGBT persons in the Philippines appear to end with any publicly exercisable family rights. Same-sex marriage is illegal, while same-sex private civil unions are legal but publicly unrecognized. An LGBT individual may adopt a child—his or her sexuality
in this case is not considered—but same-sex couples may not adopt children. It is illegal for an individual to actively initiate the change of his or her gender in public records in all cases, even for individuals born intersex or for those who have undergone a sex reassignment surgery and hormone treatment. It is also illegal for men who have sex with men to donate blood.

Another major issue at the intersection of faith and LGBT rights is the legality of the thriving industry that is most often termed gender conversion therapy. Conversion therapy in the Philippines is conducted openly through both formal organizations (usually FIOs) and informal means (usually within homes or churches), but it is invariably a religious affair. Bagong Pag-asa (New Hope) Ministries in Makati City is perhaps the most established entity. Although it is now independent, it received foundational support in the 1990s from Love in Action founder and Exodus International co-founder Frank Worthen, who is considered the originator of the “ex-gay movement.” Filipinos who have undergo conversion therapy do not always do so by their own volition. While each has his or her own experience, it is common for individuals to have been forced by or have faced enormous pressure from their families or religious communities to enter conversion therapy programs.

Premeditated, targeted violence against the LGBT community in the Philippines is prevalent enough to be incongruous with the purported LGBT tolerance of the country. Between 2008 and 2016, there were 41 known murders of transgender people in the Philippines—the highest total in Southeast Asia.¹³² Hate crimes against the LGBT community are the most common in Muslim Mindanao, where there is a troubling yet widespread misconception that mistreating LGBT individuals is wajib, or necessary, for all Muslims. Notably, most contemporary Islamic scholars agree that, while homosexual acts are stated to be sinful in the Quran and hadith, there is no direct scriptural justification for the punishment of any form of non-heterosexual behavior.

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

Human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of a person by means of coercion, deception, or another form of abuse of power to gain control over that person for the purpose of commercial, labor, sexual, or other form of exploitation.¹³³ Sex trafficking, involuntary servitude, and debt bondage are common types of human trafficking that may lead to or be characterized as modern-day slavery. According to the 2018 Global Slavery Index, approximately 784,000 (7.70 per 1,000) Filipinos currently live in conditions of modern slavery. Of 167 countries indexed, the Philippines ranks 30 in prevalence of and 42 in vulnerability to modern slavery.¹³⁴
**Sex Trafficking**

In the Philippines, religious institutions and faith-inspired organizations are most directly involved in addressing human trafficking as it relates to sex trafficking. However, labor exploitation accounts for an estimated 64% of all victims and is globally the most common form of human trafficking. Although human trafficking for sexual exploitation accounts for 19% of victims of human trafficking, 79% of surveyed respondents identify it as the most common form. Largely due to its visibility and public perception, sex trafficking is by far the most common form of human trafficking in which faith communities intervene and advocate—the moral obligation to do so is universally stressed in their organizational mission statements.

**Government Action**

The Government of the Philippines has passed some key pieces of legislation in an attempt to alleviate the problem, including the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (R.A. 9208) and recent amendments to the Revised Penal Code Articles 341 on White Slave Trade and Article 202 on Prostitution. Enforcement of R.A. 9208 has been weak, and structural deficiencies in the revised penal code have the effect of criminalizing prostituted persons and failing to target those who do the exploitation. Given the relatively weak protection mechanisms and the gravity of harm experienced by exploited individuals, mostly women and children, organizations and institutions of faith have focused many of their efforts on the prevention of sex trafficking, as well as recovery and advocacy for victims.

**Faith-Inspired Action**

In one of the most salient examples of ecumenical support across cooperative ministries, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, and the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches signed the Covenant of Partnership on Human Trafficking in 2016. Citing the biblical obligation to intervene, the covenant affirms a commitment to interfaith advocacy and puts into place concrete support mechanisms to increase the capacity of member churches to provide direct services to victims of human trafficking. The Catholic Order of Dominicans in the Philippines has established itself as key force for improving awareness and accountability to legal protection for victims of human trafficking in the Philippines. Through the work of Dominicans Justice and Peace, the Dominican Family of the Philippines, and individual clergypersons, such as Sister Cecilia Espenilla, Dominican advocacy has played a fundamental role in the policymaking process on human trafficking in the Philippines.

FIOs have also shown leadership in addressing human trafficking, particularly where direct action is required. Two Christian organizations, RENEW and PREDA, and their approaches for addressing human trafficking are described below.
The RENEW Foundation (Recovery, Empowerment, Networking, and Employment for Women Foundation), based in Angeles City, centers its operations on prevention, intervention, and reintegration for women and children victimized by sex trafficking. The foundation describes itself explicitly as a Christian NGO with its mission “to offer renewal through freedom, faith in Christ, and economic opportunity...” and its model for holistic support spanning across all of its programs, including spiritual support, guidance, and counseling. There is a prominent focus on prevention and transition. RENEW identifies at-risk youth and supports them long-term toward employment. The foundation also supports trafficked women and prostitutes to transition out of their current situations by operating a hotline; providing medical, legal, and psychosocial services; and offering housing, job training, and placement.140

The PREDA Foundation (People’s Recovery Empowerment Development Assistance Foundation), based in Olongapo City, centers its operations on rescue, treatment, and recovery of sexually abused children. The foundation’s mission centers on inspiration from Gospel values and the relationship Jesus of Nazareth had with the poor. Its 12 projects aim to support children who have been victimized by sex trafficking, primarily by conducting rescues in partnership with law enforcement, and providing legal, educational, and general social assistance.141
CHAPTER 5: LOOKING AHEAD

The Philippines stands out for two seemingly contradictory realities: sustained high economic growth and ever-present risks of political instability and natural disasters. Assuring that this growth is inclusive is the leading challenge looking ahead. Social protection mechanisms have limited capacity and reach, leaving the poorest of the poor to bear a disproportionately high burden of risk. Focusing on the complex religious landscape highlights how tensions—both between hope and catastrophe, poverty and resilience—play out in daily life. The beliefs of so many Filipinos and the institutions that support them and that they support should thus be considered as vital actors in meeting the challenges of development.

Much has been written about the poverty alleviation and social development activities of religious institutions or those that are motivated by faith. Outreach to those in need is considered to be a central element in the exercise of faith in the Philippines. This social expectation is at the heart of Philippine identity, public policy, and private behavior. Local engagement originates from the bottom up. Filipinos seek out career or general opportunities to serve their community not as an extension of their faith, but precisely as the practice of faith itself. Religious social outreach institutions and FIOs have in turn grown in scope and capacity to facilitate this inclination.

The purpose of this study is to present a comprehensive yet accessible overview of the religious landscape of the Philippines in relation to major development issues. The report gives context to and underscores the multidimensional links between Philippine development strategies and religious institutions. It highlights development issues for discussion within which faith-inspired actors are particularly active.

This study thus aims: (1) to improve awareness, in useful and accessible forms, about the complex landscape at the intersection of faith and development; (2) provide an entry point towards understanding religion as an iterative force of social transformation; and (3) inspire outcome-beneficial collaboration between secular and faith-inspired development actors. The
report’s goal is not to offer policy recommendations or development strategies, but rather to share knowledge that ultimately contributes to better, contextually informed policymaking and strategic design for inclusive development.

The following sections summarize key observations from the report. They are intended to guide future research and action around religion and development in the Philippines context.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

**Awareness of the Philippines’s religious context is fundamental for informed development debates and the effective implementation of development strategies.**

Exploring the religious landscape of the Philippines begins with understanding religion as simultaneously a force for identity and social organization. High religiosity, regardless of religious affiliation, appears to be a largely universal feature of the Philippine experience. Most Filipinos identify as religious, approaching religion as a vehicle for the expression of their faith. As such, religious institutions in the Philippines take active steps to accommodate internally the evolving nature of faith expression. The religious landscape in the Philippines is evolving based on how Filipinos constantly make active choices with respect to the expression of faith. The intense and rapid responsiveness of faith to social dilemmas distinguishes the common manifestations of collective action in the Philippines from the rest of the world. This is at the heart of why religious context is crucial for informed development debates and implementation of development strategy. Whether faith directly or indirectly motivates collective action for social development in the Philippines, willful ignorance about it is damaging to development program efficiency and effectiveness.

**Faith-inspired interventionism is so intertwined with the Philippine historical legacy that today it is recognized as an intrinsically Filipino cultural value.** Kapwa, or “fellow being,” is the core cultural value that underlies Philippine identity and society. It is a recognition of interconnectedness and shared humanity amongst Filipinos, along with the moral obligation to actively support and care for others as an extension of caring for oneself and is considered fundamental social duty and expectation. Participation in faith-inspired social outreach evolved into a central means by which Filipinos demonstrated living virtuously in fulfillment of the expectations of kapwa. In the Philippines, well-established and new religious movements, Christian and non-Christian alike, must compete to attract and retain adherents. They do so by demonstrating virtuousness through charity work. Because faith-inspired outreach is strongly socially and institutionally enforced, over time it has become so ubiquitous as to be recognized as a Filipino cultural value in its own right.

**Although there is separation of church and state in the Philippines, faith-inspired moralist governance and the engagement of religious institutions in direct advocacy places religion unshakably at the heart of procedural progress of the state.** The
separation of church and state is written into the Philippines Constitution. However, the historical roots of religious governance evolved informally into faith-inspired moralist governance among state insiders and direct religious advocacy among state outsiders. State insiders depend upon the public perception of their religious moral credibility to get elected, stay in office, and realize policy ambitions. State outsiders, whether leaders of faith institutions or civil society, leverage their religious moral credibility to directly petition politicians and advocate for specific policies. Due to the abuses of the Marcos administration, the post-Marcos order was deliberately inclusive of religious checks on the state. Both formal and informal checks play a significant role in shaping policy.

The pairing of high religiosity and the social expectation for religious communities to be involved in development work among Filipinos is at the foundation of the Philippines’ strong, active, and influential faith-inspired civil society. The Philippines, with a total of between 249,000 and 497,000 CSOs nationwide, has one of the highest levels of CSOs per capita in the world. External donor funding is a key consideration for most Philippine CSOs but has been declining since the 1990s. Religious/spiritual organizations (including lay religious organizations and some FIOs) are among the most financially independent and self-sustaining actors in civil society, with an estimated aggregate 85% of revenue coming from individual donations or member fees. Philippine civil society is as a whole well-established with high capacity, but also immense and characterized by low barriers to organizational entry. Therefore, donor organizations and foundations must carefully ascertain prior to any agreement or disbursement a beneficiary organization’s financial sustainability and capacity to effectively manage grants.

Partnerships between FIOs and the traditional secular development community, especially at the national level, exist but are somewhat limited, and they are only partly dependent upon the ideological consequence of religious doctrine on social development programming. Frustration among Philippine civil society concerning the accessibility of development finance is common and not necessarily unfounded, but often misdirected. Bilateral or multilateral development finance is almost always received by the government, which itself often forms partnerships with civil society. In select circumstances, usually limited to disaster or humanitarian response, multilateral and bilateral aid organizations form client relationships with CSOs. In rare cases, the Philippine branches of international FIOs win these large, relatively short-term contracts because they are best able to demonstrate capacity to assure successful project implementation. Foundations and private donors operate at greater speed and discretion, and often actively and selectively intend to work with FIOs.

Although there is much overlap between the development activities of faith-inspired and secular actors, there is considerable friction between their development priorities. Friction between faith-inspired and secular actors is rooted in the combination of overlapping interests and competing visions in a crowded development landscape. A survey from the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-
NGO) suggests high activity overlapping: 77% of all development NGOs work on education/training/human resource development and 56% on community development. Considering education specifically, curriculum is among the most contentious issues between faith-inspired and secular development actors, the former emphasizing spiritual development for holistic education and the latter emphasizing that education must be an equalizing force that does not institutionalize religious privilege. The system of public education has been subject to the ebb and flow of these contentions, leading civil society organizations to take faith-inspired CSOs that usually focus their education programs on providing alternative opportunities for religious or religiously minded education as partners, while secular CSOs usually focus more generally on improving educational opportunities and outcomes for impoverished Filipinos.

Constructive dialogue towards collaboration across faith-inspired and secular development communities must be consciously encouraged and supported. Although damaging stereotypes are common, generally faith-inspired and secular development communities are well informed about one another’s development priorities and activities. The most common form of collaboration is informal, either demanded by circumstances of local capacity or a function of religiosity among personnel within secular offices. Open, constructive collaboration between faith-inspired and secular development communities has been elusive due to resistance to uncomfortable though mutually beneficial compromise. A close reading of Philippine history suggests that reversing this trend does not occur organically; only major national crises have driven motivation for constructive dialogue towards truly inclusive solutions. Active, as opposed to reactive, collaboration should be fostered in the Philippines.

**POTENTIAL AREAS FOR ACTION**

Religious actors are leaders in communities and in the development process, thus genuine engagement should be considered a matter of due diligence for aid/development effectiveness. There is high mutual awareness between faith-inspired and secular development communities, particularly within Philippine civil society. Given the sophisticated understanding these communities tend to have of one another and the fact that informal engagement is already commonplace, open recognition and formal engagement would benefit development outcomes. Strict public secularism among traditional development agencies and the government in the Philippines is not necessarily an issue requiring change. Rather, these entities should no longer avoid or minimize the reality that faith-inspired action is a fundamental force in development in the Philippines.

Faith-inspired development actors should not be expected to compromise their religious values, but should be expected to engage without dismisssiveness derived from perceived moral superiority. Moralism is intertwined with faith-inspired action in the Philippines, whether in project implementation, advocacy, or governance. The predominance and practical application of strongly held religious values is part of why
faith-inspired organizations are able to mobilize popular, self-sustaining movements that elicit visible development outcomes. This is undoubtedly a point of pride among many socially involved, religious Filipinos. Still, a minority of faith-inspired actors and institutions carry a problematic moral superiority complex over actors and institutions they perceive to be secular or generally less religiously adherent. This has a tangibly negative effect on development outcomes as it prevents or limits compromise-driven collaboration.

**Faith-inspired organizations, particularly the internal development arms of religious institutions, need to work to improve transparency with and accountability to their congregations.** Religious institutions largely self-regulate their development initiatives and often have weak transparency and accountability mechanisms, which stem from occupying a position of moral authority, rejecting external audits, and controlling relevant media output by creating extreme limitations on available information. This problematic phenomenon is most common among independent Christian churches, the most egregious example by far being the Iglesia Ni Cristo’s Felix Y. Manalo Foundation. This is present to a lesser extent within the Catholic Church and Protestant cooperative ministries. Constituents within religious congregations must themselves exert pressure on their religious charity administrations to provide paper trails and generally more detailed information about how their donations are truly spent. Publication of such information should also be in the best interest of religious institutional administrations; if the integrity of their development arms can be demonstrated, then they will be able to retain old members and attract new adherents.

**The Philippine country offices of multilateral and bilateral international development agencies should consider establishing task forces on faith-inspired organizations within their civil society engagement programs.** Inside these organizations, the most in-depth knowledge-generating activity around the issue of faith-inspired development takes place within divisions that focus on civil society. A good case can be made for expansion of the capacity of these divisions. Expanding civil society engagement programs to be strategically more inclusive of faith-inspired organizations as a knowledge-generating activity can contribute to organizational due diligence. Religious groups and/or FIOs are often the established implementing or logistical partners of entities that are the ultimate recipients of their support, including the national government, local government units, and large grant-receiving organizations. Improving knowledge around the aid chain from disbursement through implementation in the Philippine context will improve programmatic orientation.

**FIOs would benefit significantly from expanded collaboration with one another.** Differing theological perspectives on ecumenical or interfaith collaboration need not detract from assuring that projects maximize reach, efficiency, and effectiveness. Just as collaboration among faith-inspired and secular development communities will improve development knowledge and outcomes, so too will increased collaboration across different religious communities.
Endnotes


87 2010 Philippine Census.


91 2010 Philippine Census.


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101 2010 Philippine Census


104 "Where We Work: Philippines," Latter-day Saint Charities, 2019, https://www.latterdaysaintcharities.org/where-we-work


110 2010 Philippine Census.


138 Philippine Commission on Women. 2012.


142 Katherine Marshall, WFDD Executive Director, was a participant.


