

PROMOTING INCLUSION THROUGH LOCAL PEACE STRUCTURES

Practice paper



PROMOTING INCLUSION THROUGH LOCAL PEACE STRUCTURES: REFLECTIONS FROM KENYA AND THE PHILIPPINES

MARCH 2020

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Cover photo: Norhanie Taha Mamasabulod, a representative of Persons with Disability (PWD) in Layog's Community Safety Working Group, talks with a PWD street vendor about local security issues.

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KEY FINDINGS

- **There is evidence that local peace structures in Garissa (Kenya) and Mindanao (Philippines) exert influence and inform local government efforts to resolve 'traditional' violence such as land disputes or intercommunal feuds.** Local peace structures are subject to 'managed inclusion' in peace and security decision-making. Yet they have been largely excluded from efforts to address emergent political violence exacerbated by the increased competition for political office brought about by decentralisation.
- **Political and social culture shape attitudes to inclusion towards and within local peace structures.** Clientelism, deference to authority, and elite bargains in both contexts have made local structures vulnerable to instrumentalisation by political actors. Marginalised groups (such as women, youth, and minorities) within local peace structures face multiple barriers to meaningful participation, limiting their ability to shape security responses or priorities.
- **Establishing institutional links with formal governance poses both opportunities and risks to local peace structures.** Institutionalisation would help them to be financially viable and may enhance internal diversity and experience. Yet this could also make local peace structures vulnerable to political interference and control, limiting the ability of civil society to challenge government security approaches and advance local priorities.
- **Local peace structures can address both short-term security and long-term governance challenges.** Marginalised groups recognise the value of harnessing legislation and leveraging well-connected and privileged representatives to nudge political actors towards more inclusive decision-making. Yet they also recognise that this must be supplemented by long-term efforts to alter ingrained exclusionary patterns in society. Beyond addressing immediate security needs, local peace structures can serve a broader governance function as spaces to develop a more assertive and engaged citizenry in their relations with the state.

INSIGHTS FOR DONOR SUPPORT

- **Help to address legislative and policy incoherence to improve sub-state governance.** Processes of devolution and decentralisation can result in policy incoherence and ambiguities between national and regional levels of government. Donors should offer technical and advisory support to legislators and executives (particularly at the regional level) to resolve misunderstandings over functions or fill legislative and policy gaps. This in turn can enhance a government's ability to deliver services, and offer civil society actors clearer entry points to collaborate with and influence government decision-making.
- **Support regional-level peacebuilding functions as a complement to national security.** If national-level government retains strict control over security functions, donors should consider working with regional administrations to build regional-level peacebuilding policies as a complement to national-level security policy. Regional peacebuilding policies can formalise support to grassroots, community-led efforts and provide closer and more familiar decision-makers for local civil society to engage with. Effective regional peacebuilding approaches could also help national authorities to tailor and adapt their security approaches in specific regions to the realities of local conflict dynamics, and to bridge the gap between national security priorities and the needs and knowledge of local populations.
- **Accompany local peace structures in funding transition to regional bodies.** Community and civil society initiatives require continued funding to undertake their work effectively. In the short term, donors can work through international NGOs to provide operational funds. In the longer term, however, donors should seek to support regional authorities to fund local peace efforts (through, for example, regional peacebuilding policies) whilst accompanying local peace structures (in coordination with domestic and international NGOs) to build their resilience to political interference and co-option.
- **Encourage government-civil society communication channels.** Where donors provide peace and security support, they should encourage government actors to establish and sustain consultation channels with civil society actors and communities, and demonstrate how local perspectives influence decision-making. More broadly, donors must ensure that bilateral support to conflict-affected states – whether in trade, diplomacy, defence or development – does not restrict a country's civic space and the influence of its civil society on governance.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of inclusion as a core component of good governance is emphasised in key international policy frameworks and policies, such as in Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals,¹ and the 2018 World Bank/United Nations Report, Pathways to Peace.² Effective local governance – ‘where the state intersects with society and the point at which national policies meet local aspirations’³ – can address insecurity in fragile and conflict-affected contexts by designing responses based on the needs and perspectives of local populations.

Done well, local governance can build confidence in a country’s political direction, reinforce the legitimacy of state institutions, and disincentivise future violence. Local peace structures can play multiple roles in reinforcing inclusive forms of local governance,⁴ from diffusing local tensions between groups to building consensus on how to create and sustain legitimate institutions. Yet societal divides, weak institutions and dysfunctional politics in conflict-affected contexts pose challenges for their ability to do so.

This study explores how and to what extent local peace structures are able to influence peace and security approaches in conflict-affected contexts transitioning towards more localised forms of governance. It also assesses the extent to which marginalised actors within these structures experience and are able to overcome resistance to their inclusion in decision-making by elites – both within their own communities and in formal government positions.

ELITE: A DEFINITION

Our use of the term ‘elite’ in this paper should be understood as ‘a person (or group) within a given society possessing a significant level of some or all of the following measures: wealth, power, access, networks and knowledge’. This definition acknowledges that elite status is derived from a combination of different measures, particularly in societies with strong customary traditions where non-formal actors and institutions wield significant influence.

APPROACH

Garissa County in northern Kenya and Mindanao in southern Philippines were selected as comparative contexts for this study. Conciliation Resources has been supporting local peace initiatives in both contexts for a number of years and has conducted programmes in partnership with civil society organisations and local peace structures. Both contexts experienced decades-long conflict in the latter half of the 20th century, driven in part by grievances against the state, and continue to suffer from insecurity through insurgency, political violence and resource competition. Both are also evolving as they adjust to ongoing processes of political decentralisation undertaken by the state to address, in part, the injustice, exclusion and marginalisation which have fuelled conflict.

In Kenya, research centred on the experiences of three local peace committees representing sub-counties in Garissa County – Balambala, Lagdera and Garissa Town – in the context of Kenya’s shift since 2013 towards a more devolved form of government. In the Philippines, research centred on the experiences of two Community Safety Working Groups in two localities in Maguindanao province – Layog Barangay and Pandan Barangay⁵ – in the context of the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

LOCAL PEACE STRUCTURES EXPLAINED

Local peace structures encompass formal and informal groups, committees and networks operating at a community level to conduct early warning, mediate local disputes and conflict, educate and raise awareness amongst local populations on issues of concern, and encourage dialogue between stakeholders, including authorities.

Some local peace structures have existed for decades – grown from traditional forms of dispute resolution – whilst others have been developed in response to new conflicts or challenges faced by communities. Local peace structures operate on a voluntary basis; they tend to appoint their leaders and members and operate in parallel to state institutions and actors, although there can be exceptions.

LOCAL PEACE COMMITTEES IN GARISSA COUNTY, KENYA

BACKGROUND

Kenya's north-east, comprising modern-day Garissa, Mandera and Wajir counties bordering Somalia and Ethiopia, has had a long history of ethnic conflict, violence and marginalisation from the political centre. Both before and after independence, Kenyan government action in the region has been driven by mistrust of the indigenous Kenyan Somali population, who have been subject to restrictions on their freedom of movement, collective punishments and military coercion.

The collapse of Somalia's central government in 1991 resulted in refugee flows, arms proliferation and clan tensions spilling over the border, further destabilising the region. During the early to mid-1990s, north-eastern Kenya became one of the most insecure and ungoverned zones of the Horn of Africa,⁶ as the Kenyan state neglected the region and largely withdrew from its role as security provider. In its absence, local peace committees (LPCs) – led by clan elders, based on Somali customary law and encompassing a broad representation of society – were established to resolve conflicts and ensure community security.

The success of these local peacebuilding efforts, coupled by the increasing integration of Somali political and economic elites into the mainstream Kenyan political and economic system, convinced the Kenyan state to roll out LPCs across neighbouring administrative districts. A National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management⁷ was established in 2001 to coordinate and support all peace-related activities in Kenya, including those of LPCs. In effect, a hybrid security system was created, in which the state accepted to a certain extent the role of local civil society actors in fulfilling its mandate.

Significant violence during and following the 2007 national elections triggered a process of devolution. Kenya's 2010 Constitution outlined the creation of new administrative units – counties – to replace districts, the preceding administrative unit of local government. A number of governance functions were devolved to newly-created county governments, which received significantly larger budget allocations (equivalent

to 15% of national revenue) than preceding district administrations in support of these newly acquired functions. A 2012 County Government Act further detailed the roles and responsibilities of county governments, and their relationship with national government. In 2013, elections to county executive and legislative positions were held for the first time.

LPCs HAVE STRUGGLED TO ADAPT TO NEW CONFLICT TRENDS

The establishment of county-level government – with expanded function and significant budget increase – has heightened competition to capture key political positions at the county level. There have been notable instances of high-level ethnic Somali Kenyan representation in Kenya's national politics, yet overall the historic lack of representation of north-eastern Kenyans at the national level has made competition between prominent sub-clans⁸ at a regional level acute.

Whilst 2013 county elections in Garissa were largely peaceful – due to strong international and domestic pressure to avoid a repeat of the violence that blighted the 2007 nationwide elections – the lead-up to and immediate aftermath of the 2017 county elections saw a return to violence along sub-clan lines. Cross-county clashes between Garissa-based Somali communities and dominant ethnic groups in Isiolo and Tana River counties (respectively, the Borana and Pokama) have also increased, as county-based political actors have leveraged violence and fearmongering among their own communities in order to consolidate their voter bases. This suggests that devolution has not resolved the conflicts which have characterised the Kenyan democratic process, but merely displaced them from the national to the county level.

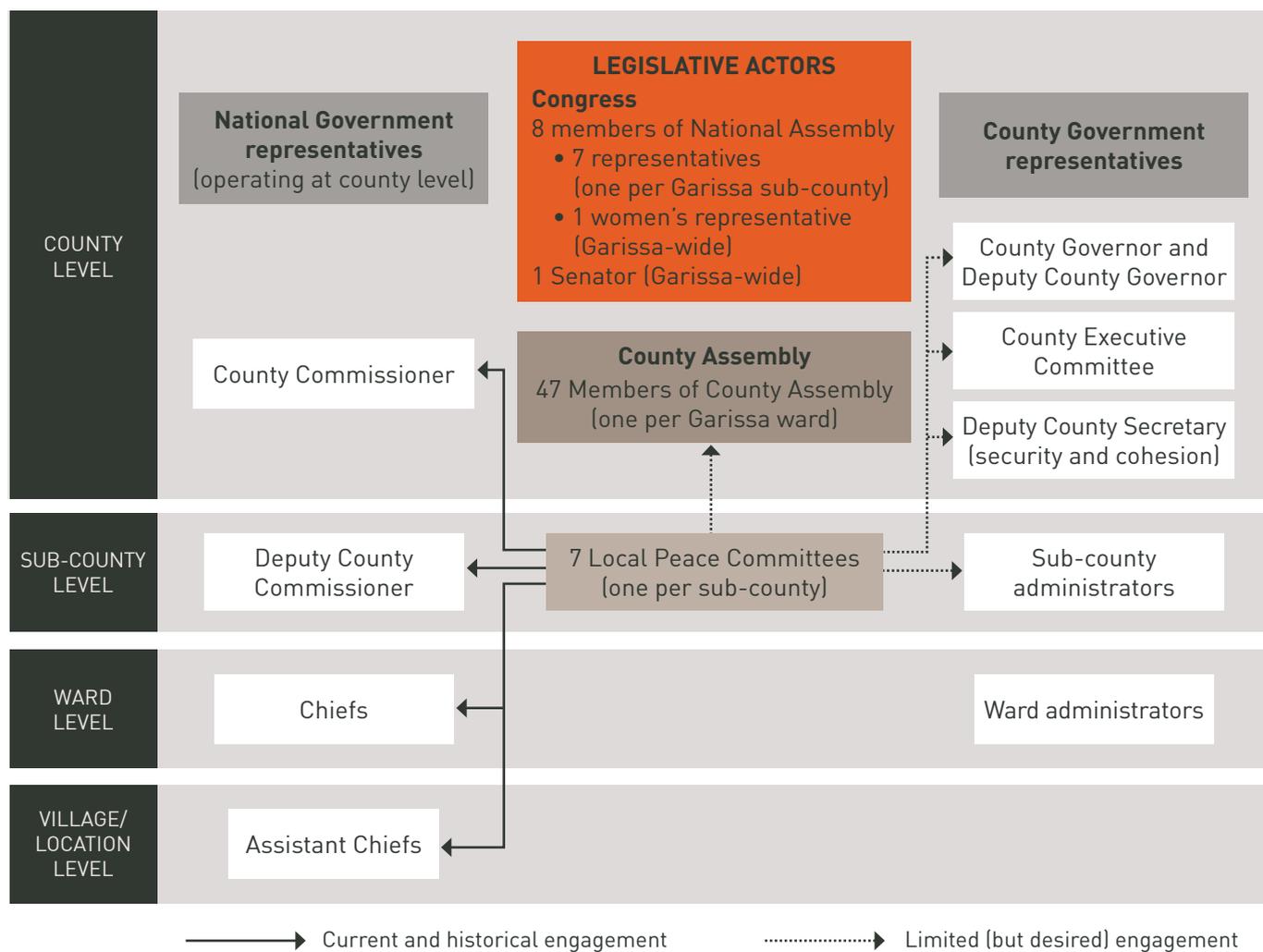
The re-emergence of political violence poses a significant challenge to LPCs. Rooted in clan-based tradition, LPCs have played an effective role in mediating and resolving inter-clan disputes over land boundaries and access to grazing grounds and water sources. National government officials such as the Garissa county commissioner's office have drawn heavily on LPC expertise, access and legitimacy to formulate responses to this form of violence. Yet LPCs have been less successful in responding to the increase of politically driven conflict within the county.

In reality, contestation has always existed between the prominent sub-clans of Garissa; yet traditional conflict resolution mechanisms such as those used by LPCs have struggled to bridge widening fault lines between these sub-clans as they compete for power, and the observable shift from 'bottom-up' solutions rooted strongly in communal life towards the discreet bargaining and deal-making increasingly prominent amongst Garissa's political elite. LPCs have struggled to adapt their skillset or develop their networks to influence, or hold accountable, the political elite at the county level; equally, Garissa's elite are reluctant to create ways for them to do so, and have 'managed' LPCs so that their focus remains on local resource-based conflict issues. A mooted county-wide LPC has been scuppered due to disagreement between sub-clans over who would hold key coordinating roles.

THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF LPCs WOULD RESOLVE FUNDING AND COORDINATION CHALLENGES, ALTHOUGH RISKS ARE INHERENT

Both Kenya's 2010 Constitution and 2012 County Government Act state the importance of participatory and inclusive governance, yet neither document links this ambition to the maintenance of peace and security. An annex to the constitution states that security-related functions, such as military forces and policing, remain the remit of national government. It is unclear whether peacebuilding is considered as part of the security remit or as a separate function. This is evidenced by the 2015 National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, which offers a vision of complementarity between national and county government, but has failed to be enacted as legislation due to a lack of consensus amongst parliamentarians.

MAP OF KEY GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES IN GARISSA COUNTY, KENYA



In practice, the national government has been reluctant to cede authority over security-related issues as part of the devolution process. As a result, coordination between national and county governments on peace and security issues has been unwieldy, with consequences for the inclusion of LPCs in Garissa. National government administrators operating in Garissa are mandated to maintain security at the county level, but are overshadowed by police and military efforts coordinated from Nairobi and do not possess a significant budget to fulfil this brief. In parallel, the Garissa County government does not have a peacebuilding policy due to the absence of a formal mandate on this function in the 2010 Constitution or 2012 Local Government Act. Consequently, the county executive has no mandate to allocate any of its significant funds to peacebuilding activities.

Officials under the county commissioner's office in Garissa stated that they worked closely with LPCs and appreciated their input, flagging outbreaks of violence and helping to navigate clan dynamics and traditional conflict resolution approaches. Yet LPC members interviewed suggested that officials under the county commissioner, who are appointed centrally and are rarely native to the region, do not possess the familiarity or influence necessary to effectively lead responses to clan-based conflict. Furthermore, the LPCs' reliance on the limited funds of the county commissioner's office means that they are routinely underfunded, lacking the basic logistical support necessary to mobilise in response to outbreaks of violence in their localities. Government-mandated community security initiatives such as *Nyumba Kumi* (a neighbourhood watch scheme) have increased competition for government attention and resources.

Instead, LPCs favoured the creation of a formal institutional link with the Garissa county government, whom they saw as a preferable government partner in terms of engagement, legitimacy and funding support. LPC members also suggested that such a move would not only financially facilitate their work but enable them to inform a distinct county-level 'peacebuilding offer' as a counterpoint to the national government's military-security approach. This would be particularly pertinent in light of the Kenyan military's response to Al-Shabaab incursions into Kenya's north-east, which has tended to treat local populations with suspicion and not as peacebuilding actors in their own right.

Institutionalisation could also serve to widen participation in local peace efforts, potentially mobilising a younger peacebuilding cadre with new ideas and a broader breadth of experience. Poor coordination between the county and national levels has meant that elections to LPCs have not taken place since 2010; reinstating this process might serve to create more diverse LPC leadership in future.

Institutionalisation also carries risks, however. LPCs are popular with local communities because their work remains rooted in, and responsive to, local priorities. As a result, they offer little value and pose no threat to political actors who might otherwise have an incentive to interfere with them. The creation of a formal mandate for LPCs by county government could alter this dynamic; funding could be directed to a governor's 'preferred' LPCs, or LPCs could be pressured to respond to the grievances of certain constituencies over others. Any step towards institutionalisation, such as a County Bill formally mandating the county to support local peacebuilding efforts, would need to offer safeguards to minimise political instrumentalisation or bias.

LPCs IN GARISSA KEEP MARGINALISED GROUPS AT ARM'S LENGTH FROM DECISION-MAKING

The initial success of LPCs in the early 1990s was due to their ability to bring together and build consensus amongst a wide range of stakeholders, largely thanks to pioneering women peacebuilders who were able to navigate and overcome the narrow clan interests of male clan elders. During the roll-out of the LPC model in the early 2000s, the National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management established membership criteria so that LPCs represented a cross-section of society comprising traditional leaders, religious leaders, youth, women, people with disabilities and minorities residing in the region (i.e. in the case of Garissa, non-Somali Kenyans).

LPC members interviewed demonstrated a commitment to inclusive participation and made a strong connection between the strength and legitimacy of an LPC and the diversity of its membership. Those interviewed also demonstrated a strong adherence to the 'two-thirds' principle⁹ contained in the 2010 constitution which states that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective bodies shall be of the same gender. Yet whilst membership of LPCs in Garissa is diverse, decision-making remains firmly in the hands of male elders. The three key governance positions in LPCs – chairman, treasurer and secretary – are almost without exception appointed to male elders. Elders argue that the LPC approach – rooted in customary dispute resolution – requires in-depth knowledge of historical and evolving clan relations which only they possess.

Focus group discussions revealed a willingness amongst LPC leaders to embrace a form of inclusion limited to consultation and input, which would not challenge traditional notions of patriarchal leadership based on the values of age and experience. Women-only discussions with LPC members in Balambala and Modogashe stated that they were involved in the early



warning (of escalating incidents) and feedback of peacebuilding activities, but not in their planning or undertaking. Similarly, youth representatives felt that they were notified of but not consulted in the planning and undertaking of peacebuilding activities; observation of power dynamics during this research's conception and validation workshops seemed to confirm how elders limit the space for younger people to express their thoughts on how to improve peace and security in the region.

A further barrier to the inclusion of typically marginalised actors is the need for LPCs to accommodate prominent sub-clan families in each sub-county area; LPC leadership positions need to be divided up between family elders, leaving little room for non-traditional leaders to stake a claim. In this way, the need to ensure 'horizontal' inclusion, through an acceptable division of power amongst prominent sub-clan leaders, was seen as more important than developing 'vertical' inclusion by promoting greater agency of under-represented groups in society.

Despite these obstacles, focus group discussions revealed that Kenya's legislative framework had helped to strengthen arguments in favour of the inclusion of diverse actors in peacebuilding, and that this has had some impact in nudging behaviours and attitudes of traditional male leaders. In particular, officials under the county commissioner's office used the constitution's 'two-thirds' rule as a lever to persuade clan elders to give women greater visibility and agency

in LPC activities. Female officials under the county commissioner's office, such as an assistant chief from Garissa Central, told of an increasing willingness of traditional leaders to collaborate with them, though considerable reluctance was still the norm.

The positive example of formal governance actors should not be overstated, however. The constitution's ambitious vision of inclusive and participatory governance has been creatively adhered to by political actors, as both the national assembly and county assemblies have created cadres (of largely female) 'nominated' members in order to meet the requirement set out by the constitution's 'two-thirds' rule. Directly elected women representatives constituted just 7.9% and 6.6% of Kenya's national assembly and county assemblies respectively. Wealth and family connections are also key determinants in who governs, often trumping age and gender considerations; the majority of the county assembly members (councillors) in Garissa, Garissa's Deputy Governor and three of the eight MPs representing Garissa constituencies at the national assembly are under 40 years old, considered young by cultural standards. Women Members of the County Assembly interviewed confirmed that securing nomination as a women's representative was dependent on the nominee's party activism, political patronage, financial backing and public visibility, factors which greatly limit the majority of women from standing a chance of nomination.

COMMUNITY SAFETY WORKING GROUPS IN MINDANAO, PHILIPPINES

BACKGROUND

In 2014, the Government of the Philippines signed the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The CAB brought to an end a 50-year insurgency on the island of Mindanao, driven by long-standing grievances of the Moro (Muslim) community against the state.

In subsequent years it proved difficult to enact the CAB into Philippines law due to the Mamasapano incident, a gunfight between MILF and state military actors in early 2015 which turned political support against the MILF peace process. The 2016 presidential election of Rodrigo Duterte, previously Mayor of Davao City in Mindanao and a strong advocate of the peace process, revived political momentum behind the CAB; in June 2018, the CAB was endorsed by Congress through the Bangsamoro Organic Law, which triggered the creation of a new political entity called the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). In early 2019, a plebiscite was held in regions in western Mindanao envisaged as part of the BARMM to approve the Bangsamoro Organic Law and therefore join the new autonomous entity. Despite a few notable exceptions, a strong majority voted in favour of joining the BARMM.

The creation of the BARMM is ongoing. A transitional authority is currently overseeing the establishment of the autonomous regional government, which will elect its first parliament and executive in 2022. In this context, key security concerns relate to the smooth transition of security provisions to the autonomous regional government over the next three years, including the demobilisation (and part integration) of 40,000 MILF combatants. There are also fears of an Islamic State-affiliated extremist insurgency, as jihadist movements disaffected by the 2014 peace deal have begun to gain a foothold in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region – notably during the five-month capture of Marawi City in May 2017 by the Maute and Abu Sayyaf groups.

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region's population is made up of a complex mix of indigenous and 'settler' communities, who have engaged in sustained inter-communal conflict over land ownership and political prominence. Illongo settler communities for example, (predominantly Christians from the Philippines' central islands) are routinely accused of receiving preferential treatment from law enforcement agencies; indigenous Teduray communities fear that the BARMM's Muslim orientation will prioritise Moro identity whilst eroding their rights and liberties; Moro communities' long-standing affiliation with the MILF have created resentment and fear amongst other communities. *Rido* conflicts driven by blood feuds between prominent clans and fuelled by the widespread availability of light weapons supplement intercommunal violence.

It is in this context that 12 CSWGs have been established since 2016 throughout Maguindanao province in the BARMM. These aim to provide an inclusive platform in which communities can work alongside government actors to build intercommunal cohesion, jointly address local conflict concerns, and build an engaged citizenry. Through this work it is hoped that CSWGs build an enabling environment for the successful implementation of the CAB, namely the successful establishment of the BARMM.

CSWGs OFFER AN INCLUSIVE ALTERNATIVE TO GOVERNMENT-MANDATED PEACE STRUCTURES

The influence of local structures on security-related decision-making remains fairly nascent in the BARMM. A number of community-based security mechanisms exist which pre-date the establishment of the BARMM; Barangay Peacekeeping Action Teams (BPATs) act as a police force multiplier and conduct informal patrols to flag suspicious activity or the presence of unidentified armed actors. *Lupon Tagapamayapa* ('council of mediators') are called upon to adjudicate barangay-level disputes as a preventative measure, to avoid an escalation of violence and the involvement of local courts.

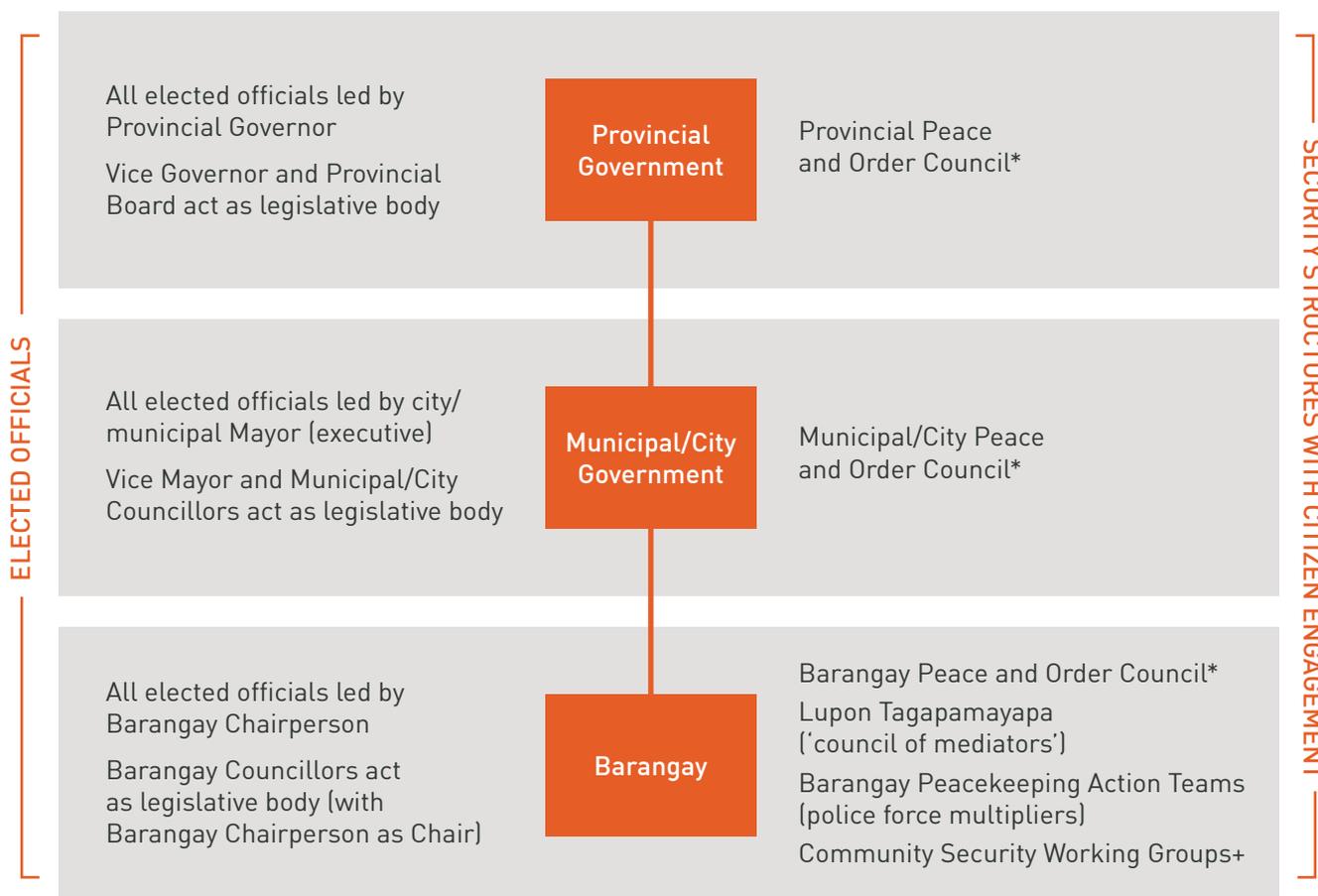
Crucially, both of these local bodies are mandated by the government, and contribute to, rather than complement, security work led by Local Peace and Order Councils (LPOC) containing local government officials and representatives of the Philippines National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. This is particularly the case with BPATs, who report directly to LPOCs in support of their efforts to monitor and address threats of 'extremist' violence and drug-related criminality. Indeed, LPOCs originated as a counter-insurgency measure during a period of martial law under former President Ferdinand Marcos.

Participation in these local security bodies, although drawn from the local population, remains fairly exclusive, as membership is decided by barangay-level government officials along the lines of the perceived 'seniority' (both professional and social) of individuals, and the extent to which these individuals engage constructively with the work of barangay and municipality-level political actors.

CSWGs, on the other hand, are not government mandated and are open forums with no restrictions on membership. Equal standing is given to all members as a means to try to counteract power dynamics between ordinary citizens and social leaders, and between communities and political and security actors. By creating a less hierarchical space for dialogue, CSWGs intend to enable less visible and vocal individuals to challenge the way in which security is understood and acted upon by government and security actors. In both Layog and Pandan barangays, this has meant increasing the focus of officials on the gendered drivers of localised violence; CSWG members in both locations stated that CSWGs had enabled them to push officials to increase their focus on the prevalence of domestic abuse and the high incidence of job loss amongst young men as part of a comprehensive security strategy. Both of these factors, which are underplayed in mainstream security discussions, were identified by community

LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Key elected officials and security structures



* Peace and Order Council (POC) guidelines recommend the inclusion of 3 civil society organisations in each POC. These must be approved by the Chairperson of each POC

+ Community Security Working Groups are not government mandated bodies, unlike other local security structures at Barangay level



participants as key enablers in the escalation of *rido* conflict and the recruitment of young men into criminal and/or 'extremist' groups.

In addition to addressing immediate security concerns, CSWGs play an important governance function. Community members interviewed in Pandan and Layog stated that CSWGs offered them a forum to test levels of assertiveness in putting forward arguments or raising topics as part of conversations with government and security officials. CSWGs therefore can play a role in challenging orthodox Philippines political culture by raising levels of accountability and responsiveness of government in its duty to citizens.

DESPITE SUCCESSES, CSWGs ARE HINDERED BY AN EXCLUSIONARY POLITICAL CULTURE

CSWGs in Layog and Pandan have helped to create a more inclusive and collaborative discussion on peace and security issues in these localities. Yet the shift should not be overstated, given the broader political environment in which CSWGs operate; politics in the BARMM largely mirrors a Philippines political culture that is marked by elitism and access through patronage. Select political families dominate Bangsamoro politics and operate a client-patron relationship with their

constituents. Kinship ties with powerful political actors, livelihood dependency on established landowners, lack of education and mobility, and a culture of deference severely restrict ordinary citizens from demanding a change of approach by decision-makers. Legislation to encourage participatory governance, most notably the landmark 1991 Local Government Code,¹⁰ has struggled to move popular participation in decision-making beyond consultation which seeks to notify of events which have either happened or have already been determined will happen.

CSWGs are subject to these exclusionary currents; participants in both Pandan and Layog noted the tendency of barangay officials and security actors to gatekeep discussions by assuming a facilitation role and holding the final call on how best to address outstanding security issues. It was also noted that, in the absence of a formal government mandate, CSWGs were more likely to receive endorsement from government actors if strong kinship ties existed. In the case of Layog, the endorsement of the Municipality Mayor, a paternal uncle of the Barangay Chief, was instrumental in giving the CSWG prominence as a primary forum for local peace and security discussions; conversely, the CSWG in Pandan struggled for constructive relations with municipality and barangay officials, as the Ilonggo Christian mayor has little incentive to reach out to the CSWG's predominantly indigenous Moro and Teduray participants.

Young people, women, farmers and herders, and people with disabilities (PWD) were both the groups least likely to speak up in CSWG discussions and those most likely to namecheck the barriers to inclusion listed above. Women in particular noted strong patriarchal expectations – deference to male authority and the expectation to fulfil household duties – as a barrier to attendance and active participation in discussions. Participants from these groups acknowledged the heavy reliance they had on a few ‘connected’ representatives – through marriage or family ties – to highlight their priorities, for example the wife of the MILF’s local committee chief in Pandan CSWG and a female PWD representative from the powerful Mamsabulod family in Layog CSWG.

Despite these barriers, CSWG participants from these groups were largely pragmatic about the limits to their inclusion. They understood that changing patronage politics in the Bangsamoro region would be an incremental process, and that CSWGs offered a useful space to gain an understanding of local government bureaucracy so that they could more tactically engage with it to their advantage – including through the use of their ‘connected’ representatives. In this way, they felt that the ‘managed’ inclusion which characterised their participation in the CSWGs should be seen not as an end state, but rather as a rung on the ladder towards ‘meaningful’ inclusion.

A MORE SUSTAINABLE FOOTING FOR CSWGs WOULD BRING BOTH BENEFITS AND DISADVANTAGES

Institutionalising local peace structures brings both benefits and disadvantages. A government mandate would enable CSWGs to receive sustained funding which would enable it to remain an open forum for all citizens to participate. Young women, for example, are significantly less likely to attend CSWGs due to their childcare and household obligations. Funding support could help to cover the associated costs of their participation at CSWG meetings. Institutionalisation would also strengthen the legitimacy of CSWGs in the eyes of local government officials, increasing their willingness to act on and feed CSWG recommendations up to senior decision-makers.

Conversely, a government mandate could both transform CSWGs into a contested space (over access to funds) and potentially limit inclusion (by setting criteria on participation). To date, CSWGs have benefitted from being able to explore different options for the support of influential actors precisely because they are not controlled by government; for example, Pandan CSWG has worked with MILF members and implementation bodies created by the CAB to resolve outbreaks of violence. The ability of CSWGs to work in contested spaces and to act as an impartial convenor of groups with low levels of trust might be compromised should they be more closely coordinated by apprehensive government officials.

Methodology

Research was conducted between June 2018 and September 2019 in four stages:

- Two-day conception workshops with consultant researchers and members of local peace structures to develop joint understanding of research concept, test core research questions and agree research schedule (*Garissa workshop – 15 men, 8 women; Mindanao workshop – 13 men, 6 women*);
- Three-day field research trip undertaken by consultant researchers, conducting a mixture of key informant interviews and focus group discussions (*Garissa research respondents – 27 men, 12 women; Mindanao research respondents – 28 men, 20 women*);
- Two-day 'retreat' in London bringing together Conciliation Resources staff and consultant researchers from both contexts to present and compare emerging findings from research trips, identify research gaps and plan follow-up activities (*4 men, 4 women*);
- Two-day validation workshop in Garissa led by consultant researchers; additional key informant interviews in Mindanao to cross-reference initial research. Findings relayed to Conciliation Resources staff for development of learning paper (*Garissa validation workshop – 10 men, 6 women; Mindanao additional interviews – 3 men, 4 women*)

ENDNOTES

1. SDG16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg16>
2. United Nations and World Bank (2018). *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/publication/pathways-for-peace-inclusive-approaches-to-preventing-violent-conflict>
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4. Spearing, Michelle. 'Addressing State Fragility from the Bottom Up Through Inclusive Community Governance: Exploring Theories of Change', CARE Nederland, 2016.
5. A barangay is the smallest administrative unit in the Philippines. Its English language equivalent is a neighbourhood or suburb (in urban areas) or village, district or ward (in rural areas).
6. Menkhous, K. 'The rise of a mediated state in northern Kenya: the Wajir story and its implications for state-building' *Afrika focus* — Volume 21, Nr. 2, 2008 — pp. 23-38. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/26569619_The_Rise_of_a_Mediated_State_in_Northern_Kenya_The_Wajir_Story_and_its_Implications_for_State-Building
7. www.nscpeace.go.ke/
8. Somali Kenyans in Garissa County derive from the Ogaden Clan, itself a subset of one of the five noble Somali clan-families, the Darod. Three prominent Ogaden sub-clans exist in Garissa – the Abdiwak, Awlyahan and Abdalle.
9. Article 27, clause 8 - Kenya constitution 2010: www.klrc.go.ke/index.php/constitution-of-kenya
10. The Local Government Code is contained in Republic Act 7160. Chapter 1, Section 2 C states: 'it is likewise the policy of the State to require all national agencies and offices to conduct periodic consultations with appropriate local government units, nongovernmental and people's organizations, and other concerned sectors of the community before any project or program is implemented in their respective jurisdictions'

Conciliation Resources is an international organisation committed to stopping violent conflict and creating more peaceful societies. We work with people impacted by war and violence, bringing diverse voices together to make change that lasts.

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