

# Boost Bangsamoro in the Southern Philippines



## **What is it?**

- ▼ Global South innovation
- ▼ South-North learning
- ▼ South-South learning

## **Who is it by and for?**

To strengthen peace in post-conflict southern Philippines, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) ran a series of citizen assemblies in Bangsamoro communities to help chart the course for economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. This series of assemblies drafted key recommendations on livelihood and employment, public health, and education policies for the region of Bangsamoro.

## **Context: Conflict in southern Philippines**

In 2019, the Bangsamoro region—home to a majority-Muslim population that has long been neglected in the Catholic-majority country—achieved a degree of autonomy. Self-rule was the result of a 2014 peace treaty, which voters endorsed via plebiscite five years later. The creation of the new autonomous region helped bring a peaceful resolution to decades of armed conflict between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Philippine government. Nevertheless, the Bangsamoro peace process in the southern Philippines, while successful in many respects, faced the COVID-19 pandemic at a critical moment of governance scaffolding.

## **Boost Bangsamoro key innovations on deliberation**

- I. Deliberation introduced in a post-conflict and governance scaffolding scenario
- II. Application of citizen assemblies in fragile and conflict-affected settings
- III. Peace theory approach and context-sensitized facilitators
- IV. Capacity building in Bangsamoro's government, citizens, facilitators and organizers to craft spaces for inclusive and connected conversations on difficult issues
- V. Offline and online assemblies, using social networking platforms like Facebook to achieve social inclusion for the online processes.



# Boost Bangsamoro in the Southern Philippines

VI. “Boost Bangsamoro tells a story about a platform that harnessed constructive citizen input and served as a connector between the Bangsamoro government and the people. It dispels worries that giving voice to ‘ordinary’ citizens might either reinforce dependent relationships of patronage or deteriorate to conflict and confrontation. Boost Bangsamoro served as a viable model of what a democratic and deliberative can achieve, despite constraints.

## **Lessons learned and reflections on mutual learning**

- ▼ The assemblies were a strategic instrument to build trust between elite-captured governments and randomly selected citizens, in a key and sensitive moment of governance in Bangsamoro.
- ▼ Participants found the value of hearing and sharing experiences of suffering in a space where public officials were also participating.
- ▼ South-South evaluation process

