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| Danish organisation | Nunca Mas |
| Title of the intervention | **Fortifying Civil Society Actions for Inclusive and Rights-Based Resilience-Building in the Philippines** |
| Partner name(s) | Center for Disaster Preparedness Foundation, Inc. |
| Amount applied for |  |
| Country(ies) | Republic of the Philippines |
| Period (# of months) | 12 months |

**1. Objective and relevance (the world around us)**

Urgent collaboration is needed of various civil society networks to uphold and defend democratic space in the Philippines: network-driven actions, continuous engagement with communities & grassroots, and sustainable support system, among others, to pursue inclusive resilience-building. These priorities also serve as countermeasures to the increasing attacks against democratic and participatory practices, including dialogue and dissent. The curtailment of democratic practices by government forces have risen in the past two years due to heightened crackdown on groups that are critical to the administration. The present militaristic and anti-poor status-quo when it comes to policymaking, planning, and implementation of programs, especially as response to the pandemic, can possibly extend during and after the elections, with massive manipulation of polls considered to be highly likely. Human rights violations (HRVs) are also expected to spike, especially with the full implementation of the Anti-Terror Law (ATL)[[1]](#footnote-1).

This is the current reality in the country to date, the hurtling through a human rights crisis made worse by a global pandemic. Change did come after all, albeit in terms of high kill counts and immense suffering. Change, in human rights violations at a rate and intensity not seen since Martial Law’s darkest days.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The Global Climate Risk Index for 2020 still places the Philippines within top 10 countries most affected by extreme weather events globally.[[3]](#footnote-3) As the recent studies from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has articulated, countries riddled with conflict are less able to adapt to climate change and its impacts.[[4]](#footnote-4) Climate change amplifies inequity in societies and nations especially the ones that are still developing.

This collaborative partnership aims to build on the accomplishment of the current project between the Center for Disaster Preparedness Foundation (CDP) and Nunca Mas, “Defending Democratic Space of Civil Society in the Philippines” (Project Defend for short), where initial engagements and collaboration with CSOs and networks on online campaigns and on-going lobby work have been setup and active to uphold public participation amid the lockdown. The first project has been providing 1) technical support to CSOs, partner government agencies, and community-based groups on policy advocacy for the amendment proposals for Republic Act 10121; and 2) Space for dialogue and collaborations with networks and grassroots organizations on human rights against state-perpetrated harassment and HRVs and the impacts of ATL to the operations of legitimate organizations. Project Defend has helped shape public opinion in favour of a policy on holistic resilience. The project has contributed to a small win in the Supreme Court decision on a lobby through a petition declaring some provisions of the law unconstitutional. The Supreme Court has finally decided and declared unconstitutional a provision on definition of terrorism where dissent and protest are considered a crime. The provision on definition was declared unconstitutional due to its over-broadness. The exercise of rights, acts of dissent, as listed in the provision can no longer be included in the definition of terrorism. It is now a clear exception in Section 4 of the law. It is a gain, but the rest of the provisions remained as constitutional.

The continuing challenges faced by the present project within its period of implementation includes the insufficient support mechanisms for the victims of harassment and other forms of human rights violations (HRVs) from among partner CSOs, such as psychosocial interventions and referral system, and para-legal support among others; and the formulation of policy recommendations at present that can be sustained through more focused campaigns in the coming national elections and toward informed post-elections planning.

**1.1. The context of the Intervention**

In December 2020, nine (9) indigenous peoples were killed by state forces in what human rights groups dubbed as “Tumandok Massacre.” Seventeen (17) more members of Panay Island’s *Tumandok* tribe were arrested[[5]](#footnote-5). This was only a prelude to more state-perpetrated killings. On March 7 this year, nine (9) more activists were killed and six (6) more were arrested[[6]](#footnote-6), a hard crackdown on unionists and activists that alarmed even the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Killings and abuses perpetrated by cops has also increased in the last two years[[7]](#footnote-7), as President Duterte’s public speeches continuous to encourage killings and harassment, as well as accusing rights groups of “weaponizing human rights.” Red-tagging has been the center of discussion of the Oral Arguments in the Supreme Court regarding the Anti-Terror Law[[8]](#footnote-8).

At present, CDP continuous to receive reports from fellow CSOs, partners, and communities detailing harassments and red-tagging in various project areas in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao provinces. CDP documents these reports. Members of Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines (DRRNetPhils), a network of DRR practitioners which CDP co-leads, continuous to receive similar harassments in their operations. As a consequence, interventions identified for the next cycle include:

1) ***Para-legal support for human rights defenders and local humanitarian organizations in the Philippines.*** Before 2021 ended, the Supreme Court has finally declared unconstitutional a provision in Anti-Terror Law where dissent and protest are considered a crime (Section 4)[[9]](#footnote-9). Project Defend was able to contribute to this small win. However, the decision last December 2021 has left the rest of the law intact. Because of this, CSOs within the InterNetwork and DRRNetPhils need to have improved coordination in terms of para-legal work to provide support assistance to fellow CSO partners most affected by the Anti-Terror Law.

2) ***Continuous capacity-building and technical support in terms of lobby, advocacy, and policy dialogue*** for partner CSOs to assert public participation towards more informed policies, guidelines, and plans. Capacity-strengthening of larger target groups greatly help in the prevention of shrinking civic space. Existing partners in the InterNetwork and DRRNetPhils are targets for this component.

3) ***Mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS) for partner CSOs*** affected by human rights violations, especially in the areas being targeted with red-tagging and red-baiting.

**1.2. The role of the project in its contribution to strengthening Civil Society for the realization of social justice, participation, equal access and just institutions**

The CDP is a pioneer and a recognized civil society actor in the country for community-based disaster risk reduction and management. It works with community-based organizations, private sector, government agencies, and various non-government entities including faith-based institutions, and the academe. Presently CDP sits as one of the CSO representatives in the policy making body, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), as enshrined in the Philippine DRRM law. The organization also co-leads a network of DRRM organizations and practitioners in the country and assisted in the formation of an inter-network coordination and collaboration with various CSO networks. CDP and DRRNetPhils along with partner organizations and networks are presently engaged in policy advocacy, who are also being subjected to the attacks of the current administration, will work on achieving the overall objective of this proposed partnership through three target interventions.

**1.3. What climate and environmental considerations**

The year faces not just the pandemic and continuous lockdown for Filipinos. Extreme weather events are expected to affect the country more, considering the usual community-based preparations by communities are lessened due to restrictions in mobility. Moreover, recent reports released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicated that the impacts of climate change to Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines, will be more intense in terms of impact-drivers such as high average daytime temperature, heavy rainfall, coastal and flood erosion, marine heatwave, and relative sea level rise. These are all also expected to increase in the coming decades.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The overlap of the COVID-19 pandemic with extreme weather events during the last 18 months, demonstrates the need for greater investment in disaster risk reduction and a multi-hazard approach to disaster risk management. There is no vaccine against poverty. International cooperation to developing countries is essential if many of them are to survive the climate emergency and adapt to the challenges of a warming world which they have done little to create. The G20 countries must step up to the plate, not only to deliver on their promises to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but to provide financial, technological, and capacity building support to developing countries that are struggling to cope with rising sea levels, warming seas, erratic rainfall, and the constant threat of extreme weather events.

**2. The partnership/collaborators (our starting point)**

CDP has been instrumental in the passage of the current disaster risk reduction and management law (Republic Act 10121) and continuously provide inputs in policy adjustments in the executive level, through the national DRRM council. CDP invests its resources in community-based disaster risk reduction and management. It puts premium on resilience, empowerment, and development of communities as primary responders and frontliners in the midst of risks and vulnerabilities they face every day. CDP and its network partners at varying levels can very well conduct activities to create the groundswell of support from various stakeholders to shape public opinion in favor of a more acceptable enhancement of the current law. Nunca Mas will make the target intervention activities possible with its support to CDP in the country.

**2.1 The cooperation between the partners hitherto**

CSOs in the Philippines are very active and vibrant despite the threat of shrinking/closing of civic space. They continue to work together, forge partnerships and collaborate in various policy agenda and urgent issues and concerns that affect the rights and liberties of civil society organizations and the marginalized and vulnerable peoples and communities that they are mandated to serve. It is timely and fitting to wage a vigorous campaign and lobby/advocacy to influence policy decision and shape public opinion in favor of the affected people and communities. A good investment for this partnership engagement is working with advocacy at the national level which paved the way for more solid alliance building among various networks in different parts of the country.

The initial partnership forged in the abovementioned project has sparked and sustained a fruitful and meaningful engagement between the two organizations Nunca Mas and CDP. The participation of Nunca Mas at the inception of the project and the continuous updating and monitoring of the progress of the project has strengthened not only the relationship and partnership but having shared vision and goal to make change among the affected population of multiple hazards and human rights violations. An inspiring collaboration that has broadened perspectives and understanding in looking at the ecosystem and environment of the project.

**2.2. Contributions, roles, and responsibilities.**

While Nunca Mas steers the partnership via its oversight role and function in this project, CDP on the other hand, takes the lead in this partnership engagement via directing the implementation and national collaborations. Nunca Mas continues to accompany CDP in terms of providing technical support, such as technical guidance and serving as resource person or facilitator for knowledge with regards the global context of human rights, MHPSS, and fragile contexts among others.

Partner CSOs, target sectors, and technical experts are part of formation and implementation of the identified interventions. Networks, CSOs, and community-based organizations (CBOs) are also instrumental and contributing to upholding an inclusive platform for multi-level advocacies at vertical and horizontal levels.

Roles between and among project partners are elaborated in the following table:

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| CDP (lead partner) | Nunca Mas (project holder) | Other Partners in-country |
| Directing the over-all project and activity implementation in the Philippines | Responsible for over-all program & reporting/accounting to CISU. | Initiating dialogues and formation in line with MH-PSS for HRV survivors among CSOs. |
| Identifying CBOs in target hotspot areas for support, intervention, and collaboration for baseline of MHPSS support among CSOs | Arranging partners & fellow CSOs in Denmark to listen to the situation & efforts of partners in the Philippines. | Providing MHPSS orientation and dialogues among CSOs and other stakeholders for resilience-building and HR discussions. |
| Collaborating with existing legal and paralegal partners regarding formation of a sustainable mechanism towards protection of CSOs, CBOs, and human rights defenders (HRDs) | Providing insights and reflection based on progress report from partner. | Documenting legal, para-legal and technical support for security instruments. |
| Facilitating engagement with duty-bearers & community-based organizations on the ground | Accompanying CDP through technical guidance & support including feedback, and participating in learning conference. | Participating in capacity-building activities for improved lobby, advocacy, and policy influencing activities and campaigns. |
| Facilitating technical support for capacity-building activities for CSOs, CBOs, and HRDs toward upholding inclusive and rights-based, resilience-building policies, guidelines, and plans. | Guiding and technical support for an up-to-date global human rights and fragility contexts. | Actual lobbying, advocacy, and policy influencing activities with legislators and executive policy-making body for improved resilience-building and rights-based laws, and policies. |
| Reporting regularly to Nunca Mas on major project developments and milestones. | Undertaking one project financial, administrative, and monitoring visit to partners in the Philippines. | Identifying technical support for identified capacity-building for CSOs |
| Participating in public event in Denmark informing about the situation in the Philippines. | Disseminating gains, lessons learned from the partnership cooperation. | Holidng dialogue on lessons learnt among CSOs, private sector, and government agencies on MHPSS and HR. |

**2.3. The intervention’s contribution to partner development and collaboration.**

It is always heartwarming and inspiring for CDP and its co-collaborators and partners to have like-minded and kindred spirits from other parts of the world that are thinking and supporting organizations like CDP and its network partners. The difficult situation being experienced is somehow lightened owing to the assistance and support of fellow civil society organizations from other parts of the world like Nunca Mas from Denmark.

This development intervention is very crucial in strengthening the collaboration among CSOs, CBOs, and HRDs (human rights defenders) most affected by state-perpetrated HRVs but continuous to provide life-saving support for vulnerable communities and at the same time ensuring that public participation is upheld in policymaking and planning activities. This helps strengthen the existing and established partnerships and relationships among partners, especially the accomplishment of existing CDP and Nunca Mas’ partnership through Project DEFEND and in relation to target outcomes.

**3. Target groups, objectives, strategy, and expected results (our intervention)**

The target groups for the activities are operating in hotspots to HRVs, where these CSOs are presently working to deliver rights-based, humanitarian, and resilience-building initiatives.

For Key Result 1 on Establishing Paralegal support and reporting instruments for HRDs and humanitarian organisations:

1. Civil society organizations (CSOs) within InterNetwork and DRRNetPhils who have projects and collaborations in different parts of the country and are presently being affected by the government’s crackdown on dissent, activism, and participatory practices;
2. Paralegal and legal networks are also target partners to provide appropriate support for HRVs and HRDs in hotspot areas which are those that:

1) Are vulnerable to natural and human-induced hazards

2) Has existing displacement due to natural and/or human-induced hazards caused by armed conflict

3) Has existing partner CSOs/INGOs delivering development or humanitarian interventions

4) Has reported HRV cases among CSOs/HRDs working in the area

5) Has on-going development aggression (e.g., ancestral domain of indigenous peoples that are being opened for mining and other extractive activities).

For Key Result 2 on Continuous capacity building and technical support in lobby, advocacy, and policy dialogue:

c. Civil society organizations within InterNetwork and DRRNetPhils who have projects and collaboration in different parts of the country so they will be capacitated for lobby, advocacy, and policy dialogue

d. National government agencies and local government units are also targeted on policy advocacy for a law on holistic resilience and for understanding the project’s campaigns on inclusive and rights-based resilience building by influencing bills concerning human rights (HR) and integrated risk management (IRM) or those that are covering climate change, ecosystem management, and disaster risk reduction (DRR) issues.

For Key Result 3 on Establishing initial coordination to discuss mental health and psychosocial support and systems of services for victims of HRVs among CSOs and HRDs:

e. MHPSS institutions and practitioners are also targeted, including networks and organizations who are technical experts on these.

**3.1. The participation of the target groups and their benefit thereof**

Critical target groups:

*a) Civil society organizations*: the foundation of constituency and movement for inclusive resilience building and defending the gradual closing of civic space. They collaborate with one another and draw strength and motivation from each other to manage the situation.

*b) Organizations of Lawyers and Para-legal practitioners:* they can provide support in legal and paralegal which are important support in human rights violations and to human rights defenders*.*

*c) MHPSS Network and Practitioners:* an important support mechanism for the needs of human rights organizations and human rights defenders addressing wellbeing and compassionate care.

*d) Legislators*: legislative champions who can carry the substantive issues related to policy changes and policy reforms in the advocacy component of this project

*e) National agencies and local government units*: provide support to humanitarian, development and human rights organizations including human rights defenders if they stand on the side of the most marginalized and most vulnerable .

**3.2. Target groups’ Involvement in the development of the intervention.**

The formation of the technical working group (TWG) for Project Defend that meet regularly for activities and engage various networks of civil society in different parts of the country to reach the target groups. They are the ones consulted for this proposal submission. The group is seeking clarity with CDP if the project will continue. The TWG understands the positive impact of the project’s advocacy, public information, having more strengthened organizations, partnership, and collaboration which was realized by the project. As CDP decided to explore with Nunca Mas a possible project development, the Technical Working Group was very appreciative and gave their time and inputs into the project formulation.

**3.3. Strategy of the Intervention**

The main strategy of the intervention is the complementation of advocacy and providing support services (legal, paralegal and MHPSS) for the victims of human rights violations and human rights defenders. This is building on the gains of the current partnership project which has the components of vigorous policy advocacy and awareness raising campaign to bring about a conducive, enabling environment for a policy on inclusive and holistic resilience building.

1. Engaging Civil Society networks more actively is a key to making the policy advocacy and campaign more vibrant, visible, and proactive, especially in strengthening the paralegal mechanisms for support system among CSOs affected by red-tagging and red-baiting. This can be done through regular interaction, virtually due to COVID-19 which is an opportunity for coordination and collaboration; and surely the exchange of information can be undertaken bilaterally and multilaterally between and among networks and members in geographic proximity or in a purposive manner. Considering the wide spread of CS networks in the country, it can utilize both online and offline means of sharing to achieve the set purpose.
2. As civil society networks undertake policy advocacy, they are capacitated in the process in different geographic areas of the country. This is the strength on which further capacity building on policy dialogue, lobby, and advocacy will be built. CDP and DRRNetPhils including the InterNetwork will engage legislators for improved CSO engagements in the process of legislation and policy-making. It is important to discuss this with the identified champions and newly-elected officials to plan out on how to move the current law improvement forward. Information and Education Campaign materials are to be developed, produced, and distributed.
3. An additional strategy is the MHPSS intervention among CSOs including HRVs and HRDs to complement the legal and para-legal support services. In line with advocacy, CSOs can proactively engage existing institutions and government agencies toward improved mechanism for MHPSS and referral system, especially for the victims of human rights violations and human rights defenders.

A learning conference for the engaged stakeholders provides a space and opportunity for various actors and stakeholders to share and learn from the experience of this partnership engagement. Nunca Mas will participate in this conference. Strategic reflection at mid of the project implementation and towards the end of the project. Mid-way reflection provides changes that need to be made due to the fragility of the situation. The learnings and recommendations will feed into a document suggesting best practices.

**3.4. Describe the objectives and expected results.**

The overall goal of the project is for the Philippine CSOs to uphold the civic space and fortify the networks’ solidarity by participating in local and national policy dialogues and advocacies on inclusive resilience-building and protection of human rights.

The expected results include:

1. *Establishment of paralegal support and reporting instruments for human rights defenders and humanitarian organizations in the Philippines, which also includes preventive mechanisms to deter harassments and attacks against civil society front-liners.*
2. *Building capacities and technical support in lobby, advocacy, and policy dialogue to assert public participation towards more informed policies, guidelines, and plans that uphold rights-based and inclusive resilience-building, especially for the most vulnerable sectors.*
3. *Establishment of initial coordination to discuss mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and systems of services for the victims of HRVs among CSOs, and human rights defenders.*

**3.5 Intervention Strategy and Activity Plan**

**Overall Goal of the Project:** Philippine CSOs uphold the civic space and fortify networks’ solidarity by participating in local and national policy dialogues and advocacies on inclusive resilience-building and protection of human rights.

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| **Key Results** | **Indicators** | **Activities** |
| *1. Establish paralegal support & reporting instruments for human rights defenders & humanitarian organizations in the Philippines, including preventive mechanisms to deter harassments & attacks against civil society front-liners* |  |  |
| **Output:**   * Baseline data for human rights defenders (HRDs) and humanitarian workers * Setting up para-legal support & security mechanisms to deter harassments & attacks against civil-society front-liners. * Documentation of good practices | * 3 networks of HRD organiza-tions participating in the capa-city strengthening for paralegal trainings * At least 2 legal & para-legal groups engaged in a partner-ship * At least 5 CSOs, are part of the para-legal support & security mechanisms * At least 10 HRDs participating in planning of documentation & drafting of preventive mech-anisms against HRD attacks | * 2 fora held for Human Rights & Protection * Training on strengthening of CSO community-based para-legal groups * Consultation with legal & para-legal networks * Documentation of HRDs’ mechanism to prevent at-tacks & harassments * Coordination & partnership with Commission on Human Rights |
| *2. Continuous building capacities & technical support in terms of lobby, advocacy, and policy dia-logue to assert public participa-tion towards more informed po-licies, guidelines, & plans that uphold rights-based & inclusive resilience-building, especially for the most vulnerable sectors* |  |  |
| **Output:**   * Manual on policy dialogue & lobby work for improved policies & plans * Coordination mechanism with legislative & policy-making bodies toward influ-encing resilience & human rights related bills * Improved participation of var-ious CSOs in policy-making & legislation process of resilien-ce & human rights bills | * Three CSO networks participa-ting in lobby work to influence resilience & HR bills in legis-lative branch * At least 1 (one) HR Bills, policies, plans influenced * At least 1 (one) resilience Bills, plans, & policies influenced * At least 2 senators heading a committee engaged * At least 2 newly elected sena-tors engaged * At least 2 policy-making bodies engaged in the executive branch * At least 3 HRDs groups engag-ed & participated in capacity-building | * Capacity-building & streng-thening of Civil Society lob-by groups on 1) Policy Dia-logue; 2) Lobby & Advocacy amid the pandemic; 3) Poli-cy Development Write-shops for resilience & HR bills * Policy dialogue engageme-nts with legislators & natio-nal policy-making bodies on resilience & HR bills * Lobby & advocacy actions, including pre- & post-elections planning |
| *3. Establish initial coordination to discuss mental health & psycho-social support (MHPSS) & sys-tems of services for the victims of HRVs among CSOs, & human rights defenders* |  |  |
| **Output:**   * Collaborative mechanism ba-sed on initial partnership for MHPSS for CSOs affected by HRVs, covering: 1) Mental Health Support; 2) Psycho-social Support; 3) Social Sup-port; 4) Referral services for those in need of specialized MHPSS services | * MHPSS becomes part of the interventions & contingency plans of 3 networks of CSOs working in hotspot areas * At least 3 of identified hotspot areas participated * At least 3 CSO networks parti-cipated in MHPSS advocacies * Partnership with at least 5 HRDs organizations on MHPSS | * Coordination meetings & partnership engagement with MHPSS institutions & practitioners * Coordination meetings & partnership engagement with government arm on MHPSS * Capacity-building for MHPSS inclusion in contingency planning of stake-holders * Awareness-raising activity on MHPSS & support system * Two National Forum with MHPSS practitioners & communities |

**3.6. Contribution to establishing sustainable and lasting improvements after intervention period**

Key Results 1-3 will contribute substantially to the sustainability of the partnership project. Through engaging broad networks of civil society, MHPSS practitioners and institutions, community-based organizations (CBOs) lawyers and paralegal groups for policy advocacy, raising awareness, capacity development and strengthening of organizations, the project is abled to influence lawmakers and the general public to shape public opinion for inclusive resilience building of the nation.

The national and local policy advocacy and lobby is also essential for a favorable consideration beneficial to at-risk population, civil society, and the general public. Finally, knowledge, learnings and lessons that will be gained from project experience will provide platform, guidance and praxis sharing for policy advocacy in the country and with Nunca Mas and their partners. The groundwork laid by the initial project will be sustained by this follow through project to pursue key priority actions by all stakeholders involved.

**3.7. Conditions that can hinder/delay fulfilment of the objectives and possible solutions**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Major Risks | Probability | Impact | Mitigation actions | Residual Risk |
| Compounding hazards |  |  | * Preparedness measures; contingency planning |  |
| Present political situation |  |  | * Being alert, proactive and politically astute; monitoring and support system |  |
| COVID-19 pandemic |  |  | * Safety measures at home, in the office and in the community |  |
| Shrinking civic space |  |  | * Campaign and advocacy; raising awareness; wider civil society constituency building; international attention |  |
| National Election 2022 |  |  | * May be bloody (deaths of candidates and supporters (starting with the campaign this year till the actual election in May 2022. |  |

**3.8. Plans to monitor and collect and use experiences**

CDP has institutionalized MEALS (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Learning and Sharing) Guidelines. The MEALS tools are available with regular updating and adjustments to suit varying project designs together with respondents’ composition and feedback. The practice of lessons learned and sharing with key partners and stakeholders are being conducted. CDP added strategic reflection mid-way into the project to make way for the needed changes and adjustments based on reflection results.

Sustainability planning is put in place as part of ensuring that the gains, knowledge, and skills acquired from the partnership engagement are being utilized and applied in a sustainable manner. The different capacity building undertaken and the awareness raising of the general public will help identify sectoral leaders and community leaders and champions who will stand up as resource persons on the advocacy agenda being pursued by civil society networks. A report is targeted to come out in line with this to enrich social actors in advocacy on politically very sensitive issues at the highest political level in still more fragile political environment.

**4. Information in Denmark**

The purpose of the information work is to keep the public and decision makers aware of the development in Philippines and try to also reach youngsters making them interested in the global south in general and in Philippines in particular. Concretely, targets for the information are members of NM, followers on Facebook and those potentially interested in the political development in Philippines and its implication on the civil society and rule of law in the country. NM will provide relevant information on Philippines and the project on the facebook, home page, and at minimum one public meeting in co-operation with other organizations working with the Philippines, among these other CISU members. Learnings from the project in relation to shrinking space and advocacy will be presented together with experiences from other NM projects.

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