***Defending the Democratic Space of Civil Society in the Philippines***

1. Objective and relevance of Project

The partnership of Center for Disaster Preparedness Foundation (CDP) and Nunca Mas urgently respond and address the shrinking democratic space in the country brought about by the anti-terrorism law’s passage and the planned replacement of the disaster risk reduction and management law amidst pandemic. In such situation, intentionally or unintentionally, civil society organizations (CSO) are under attack and the two laws are the latest examples of constricting the space and maneuverability of civil society to operate in supposedly a democratic society. The partnership engagement will influence and sustain the momentum of ongoing policy advocacy in the Halls of Congress (legislature)[[1]](#footnote-1) and the Supreme Court (SC) in the country.

The SC has set the preliminary arguments this December to hear the oral arguments from the 37 petitioners who filed in the High Court questioning the anti-terrorism law. Civil society organizations together with the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) will plan together the oral arguments to support and reinforce each other’s arguments. Since the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) to the law has already come out, the petitioners reiterated their call for a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) versus the law. Other petitioners prayed for the SC’s nullification of the law.

On the other hand, for the department of disaster resilience bill to be tackled in the Senate, there is gray of hope on the stance of some senators where they do not buy the idea of a centralized bureaucratic structure that requires a huge budget and removes local structures that engage various stakeholders and at-risk population. They value and put premium on a structure that works on the ground with local participation as they are the first responders and *frontliners*. Because at the ground and local level, the people have the capacity, the equipment and resources to be able to respond quickly being actually first responders and frontliners at the grassroots level. For some senators, what is needed is to just strengthen the existing local structures in partnership with local stakeholders to be able to respond quickly whenever a disaster occurs.

Just like Nunca Mas, CDP works in partnership and in collaboration with fellow CSOs, community-based and people’s organizations in partner-communities and with government organizations to promote the rights of the communities and the affected people for safe, resilient and sustainable future. For Nunca Mas, its mandate and work is based on both solidarity and professionalism, and the knowledge and learnings acquired during said work are used constructively to prevent further human rights violations in the population where they work, in cooperation with local partners.

The partnership’s twin-track policy intervention aims to shape and influence public opinion in favor of a policy on holistic resilience that addresses the roots of vulnerabilities and puts the affected people and communities at the center of humanitarian and development in a continuum. A policy that promotes and upholds the dignity of people and the resilience of society and nation. The second is a favorable response from SC addressing the constitutionality of certain provisions based on submitted petitions by 37 civil society organizations and networks including some lawyers’ groups. Integral to the twin-track policy advocacy intervention is the bolstering of learnings and collaboration amongst partners that cooperate on this policy advocacy to become sustainable within the partner-country and sharing lessons learned with Nunca Mas.

Based on the Global State of Democracy Report, all over the world, democracy is experiencing severe challenges. The erosion of popular trust in democratic institutions and processes reflects and nurtures an alarming rise in authoritarian rhetoric and practices. Democratic backsliding is a growing malaise. Declines in civil space have been observable in all regions of the world across all levels of democratic performance. In Hungary and Poland, drivers include governmental measures to combat terrorism, promote law and order and national security. In other countries like Egypt, Nicaragua and Venezuela, attacks have aimed at limiting the space for opposition and critical voices. The spread of (dis-)information on social media has also led countries like Sri Lanka to restrict social media uses. The most severe cases of restrictions on civic space take the form of harassment and in some cases killings of human rights activists. Front Line Defenders[[2]](#footnote-2) estimate that 321 civil society activists were killed in 2018 although it is most likely severely under-reported. The highest numbers were recorded in Colombia (126) and Mexico (48) followed by the Philippines (39 civil society activists killed), Guatemala (26), Brazil (23) and India (19) (Frontline 2019).

The Philippines with its rapidly growing population of 106.7M (2018) is also disaster-prone due to its location and geophysical characteristics being situated in the Pacific Ring of Fire and Western Pacific Basin, where tropical cyclones are formed. Repeatedly struck by hydrometeorological hazards such as typhoons and floods, and geological hazards like earthquakes including hazards such as fire, landslides, drought and volcanic eruptions. The country also experiences human-induced hazards and disasters caused by political and socio-economic origins such as armed conflict in the South threatening the security of civilian communities with displacement of thousands of civilians as a result. Certain regions face instability from armed groups and conflicts. Illegal logging and mining extractions exacerbate the situation of forests and mountains that impact on the surrounding uplands, lowlands including adjacent cities.

**1.1. The Context**

On June 3, 2020, the Philippine Congress has passed into law the Anti-Terrorism Act that replaced the Human Security Act. The new law has removed all safeguards and has increased the number of days that suspects can be detained from 3 to 24. It eliminates critical legal protection and permits government’s overreach against groups and individuals labeled as terrorists. It has an overbroad definition of terrorism wherein subject suspects can be apprehended without warrant to weeks of detention prior to an appearance before a judge. This law opens door to arbitrary arrests and long prison sentences for people or representatives of organizations that have displeased the President.

On the whole, the overly broad and amorphous usage of terrorism can be utilized for attacks on dissent and curtailment of human rights and civil liberties by state forces. Said law also resulted in the weakening of the judicial system being constitutionally enshrined to check and balance different branches of government. It allows for surveillance, wiretapping and invasion of privacy of individual on mere suspicion of being alleged terrorist without any evidence of wrongdoing. It allows for warrantless arrests and detention of persons for a period of 14 days without charges. And it has removed financial penalties for abuse of police officers and soldiers on false pretense and other safeguards.

Sadly, the democratic space won during the people power revolution after long years of martial from 1972 to 1986 is now shrinking with civic space becoming tight and narrowed due to the militarized approach and conduct by the government in all their campaigns and undertaking like the anti-drug campaign. Now, the managing of the pandemic in terms of stricter measures for the population to follow is again punctuated with abuse based on military strategy and approach by the administration.

On the other hand, the current law on disaster risk reduction and management that addresses the root causes of vulnerabilities of at-risk population and engages the whole population on all-of-society and whole of nation engagement in a comprehensive framework of disaster risk reduction and management is now targeted by the current administration for replacement. Through a law the government’s plan is to set up a department, which would revert back to response framework regressing from the current comprehen-sive framework encompassing prevention and mitigation; preparedness; response; and recovery and reha-bilitation. The bill on Department of Disaster Resilience has been approved in the Lower House of Congress. The remaining battleground for influencing is the Senate and towards final approval is the bicameral conference of both Houses. Senators close to the President would like to fast track as it is a priority by the President. The law may be passed for implementation in the first half of next year.

Though the government claims democracy is still in place and at work, but in truth and reality, it is becoming fragile with law and order not serving the majority of the population. Since the beginning of the current administration, tens of thousands of lives were already taken in the guise of anti-drug campaign considered to be extrajudicial killings.

What is alarming for CSOs is the shrinking civic space considering the critical role to play of civil society organizations in complementing the role of the government for instance in humanitarian and development action. There were already experiences in different major islands of the country where the delivery of relief goods and services has been hampered due to red tagging of organizations providing services to people in need in far-flung areas.

There were also cases of vilifying leaders and members of organizations working at grassroots level to sow fear and terror among these organizations and the local population. In extreme situations, it has caused the death of quite number of leaders and key members of organizations working among the people in the guise of mistaken identity. As earlier pinpointed, the Philippines is included in the FrontLine Defenders’ Report, actually second to South America as to increase in the number of killings of suspected activists.

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

CDP is a pioneer and recognized civil society actor in the country for community-based disaster risk reduction and management. It was instrumental in the passage of the current law on comprehensive disaster risk reduction and management (Republic Act 10121). It is one of the CSO representatives sitting in the policy making body, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) as enshrined in the DRRM Act of 2010. This is the law to be replaced by the government, removing the seat of CSOs in the policy making body including the participation of the marginalized and most vulnerable sections of the population in different localities all over the country. The present government wants a centralized response agency in the context of a department, which is a bloated bureaucracy that can request for bigger budget allocation, an easy source of corruption (especially in preparation for the forthcoming national election in just a year).

In pursuing advocacy, lobby and campaign efforts both against the Anti-Terrorism Law and the impending replacement of the disaster risk reduction and management law, CDP together with the network the Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines (DRRNetPhils) composed of 60 organizations nationwide, will be at the helm. The Network has been able to engage other big networks including big faith-based networks called the Inter-Network against these two crucial policies.

In line with the Department of Disaster Resilience (DDR), the Congress in which a large chunk of majority of the representatives is consolidated and in allegiance to the current administration. Thus, it was so easy for them to pass a law that is a priority of the President. The only saving factor is the Senate, wherein Senators speak of their way of thinking independently from the administration, which means that they can evaluate the merits of a bill before passing it into law. This is the critical space that civil society organizations can work on, to tilt the balance between the lower and upper house. If the Senate would not support the approved version at the Congress, then, there is possibility of a more open and balanced consideration of inputs from civil society organizations. In such situation, CDP and DRRNetPhils need to win a sizeable number of senate champions from among the 24 senators as soon as possible.

Another way to influence the outcome at the Senate on top of lobby efforts is to utilize both the established and social media including the shaping of public opinion of the general public.

**1.3 What climate- and environmental considerations**

Considering the extraordinary situation brought about by the pandemic, the Philippines has already been experiencing multiple hazards such as typhoons and flooding including earthquakes and conflict in Mindanao. It is a complex situation where the country’s population especially the most vulnerable and at-risk are battling simultaneously multiple hazards in their midst. Particularly, the proposed disaster risk reduction and management law will negatively influence how hazards are dealt with by the exclusion of CSOs and local communities in participation and risk sharing.

The partnership/collaborators

CDP has been instrumental in the passage of the current disaster risk reduction and management law (Republic Act 10121). Majority of inputs to the bill passed into law came from CDP and the network that it leads, the DRRNetPhils. CDP has rich experience in partnership and collaboration; in advocacy and networking and in knowledge generation, dissemination and management. 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. This is far greater in times of disasters. Even when brought about by human induced hazards such as armed conflict or aggressive development which include extractive mining operations.

CDP’s presence in the country is at the national level having partnerships with community-based organizations in the three major islands of the country. The network it leads covers likewise most of the country. 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. At the same time, partners from among faith-based networks with its coverage of the whole country can lobby with the assigned House representatives in different districts in different parts of the country in preparation for the bicameral conference of both Houses for the final approval and law’s passage. The lobby and advocacy with the Senators and the island-wide consultations need to begin at once in the new year (2021) to have the required impact.

Nunca Mas will make the target intervention activities possible with its support to CDP in the country. CDP will sustain the initial efforts of civil society organizations in filing petition in the Supreme Court by drumbeating the implications of the law to the broader public. At the same time, it will identify champions in the Senate for the development and harmonization of the bills that will be passed into law that captures the resilience of communities, and nation and enhances shared leadership in risk governance.

**2.1 The cooperation between the partners hitherto**

CSOs in the Philippines are very active and vibrant despite the threat of shrinking 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. The current policies on anti-terrorism, the replacement of disaster risk reduction and management law pose as a threat to the democratic space that the organiza-tions and the people have been enjoying since the people power revolution in 1986. Considering the estab-lished efforts and collaboration between and among these organizations, it is but timely and fitting to wage a vigorous campaign and lobby/advocacy to influence such policy decision and shape public opinion in favor of the affected people and communities. Working with advocacy at the national level has paved the way for more solid alliance building among various networks in different parts of the country. This is a good investment for this partnership engagement.

Though this is the first time that CDP and Nunca Mas are partnering, previous cooperation in politically very sensitive areas established the relationship and the trust and confidence, which will be brought forth in this partnership engagement. The Nunca Mas project group and board possess considerable experience from working in the Philippines with for instance two of these having been based in the country for 8 and 2 years respectively besides being involved in partnering with CSOs in the country for even more years. They have been involved in similar activities including national advocacy with CSOs there for even more years, and not less importantly experience from co-operating with key staff of CDP. Finally, it is part of the strategic plan of Nunca Mas to operate in countries where the organization through its active members has competences and where a foundation of trust has already been laid.

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

CDP will take the lead in this partnership engagement in terms of directing the implementation of the project while Nunca Mas will provide oversight role and function into the partnership engagement accompanying CDP in its endeavor and facilitate exchanges of relevant experiences.

CSOs and networks bring voices of the communities in various advocacy platforms to amplify said voices in diverse platforms at national and global levels. This is making the communities and other stakeholders a force to contend with in relation to the vigorous campaign and advocacy that will reverberate in major islands in different parts of the country.

Below is the snapshot of the sharing of roles between and among project partners.

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| CDP (lead partner) | Nunca Mas (project holder) | Other Partners in-country |
| Responsible for the over-all project implementation in the Philippines | Responsible for over-all program & reporting/accounting to CISU | Participate & take lead in national & island wide project engagement activities |
| Identify suitable civic and faith-based leaders to talk on the agenda concerns of policy intervention | Arrange for partners & fellow CSOs in Denmark to listen to the situation & efforts of partners in the Philip. | Person-to-person lobby with the senators |
| Ensure good standard of activity implementation | Provide reflection based on progress report from partner | Participation in Senate hearing on the proposed bill |
| Facilitate engagement with duty-bearers & community-based  organizations on the ground | Accompany CDP in their work by of-fering technical guidance & support including feedback, by for ex. parti-cipating in learning conference | Participation in oral arguments in the Supreme Court |
| Report regularly to Nunca Mas on major project development and milestones | Undertake one project financial and adm. monitoring visit to partners in the Philippines | Participation in campaigns for temporary restraining order of the anti-terrorism law |
| Participate in public event in Denmark informing about the situation in the Philippines | Disseminate lessons learned from partnership cooperation | Maximum utilization of tri-media and social media for policy advocacy intervention |

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

The policy intervention will surely strengthen the existing and established partnerships and relationships among partners in relation to target outcomes. Pursuing a common agenda and action will solidify the co-operation and collaboration of national and local partners as well as between CDP and Nunca Mas.

Target groups, objectives, and expected results (our intervention)

The target groups in terms of those participating in activities are civil society organizations in different parts of the country; the national government agencies and local government units targeted on policy advocacy for a law on holistic resilience of communities and nation; and the general public for the understanding of the law on anti-terrorism and the passage of a law on holistic resilience of communities and nation.

Since it is policy intervention in the Legislature and Supreme Court, the Senators and Supreme Court Justices are likewise part of the target groups of this project engagement. Because the objective of the current administration is really to consolidate power and authority in different branches of the government, they have succeeded in getting the majority of the Lower House and also at the Upper House. Even the Supreme Court Justices may be on the President’s side being appointed by him. This partnership engagement can only solidly bank on four opposition senators plus some that can be swayed. At the Supreme Court, there is definitely one Supreme Court Justice who seems to see the danger in the law, while the remaining are still uncertain. The project can, however, bank on the breadth and depth of the opposition to the anti-terrorism law from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, to the business sector, to faith-based groups and networks, the academia and the broad civil society groups and networks.

The target number to be reached among the general public is 50/50 men and women including vulnerable sections of the population, the women and young people, the older persons and persons with disabilities including indigenous peoples.

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

Several groups are targeted for this intervention to achieve the desired results which consist of the following:

1. *CSOs*: The DRRNetPhils currently led by CDP serves as the primary instrument in reaching out to other fellow CSOs such as the InterNetwork consisting of faith-based groups and other development organizations having stakes in the twin objectives of this intervention: on policy advocacy for holistic resilience; on influencing the Supreme Court for a more favorable response on the petition on the anti-terrorism law. The Supreme Court will possibly buckle down on the basis of the pressure that can come from a broad opposition to the law. These CSOs will benefit from the intervention in terms of widening civic space for more amplified voices of the communities and at-risk population.
2. *Legislators*: Several champions in both Houses are targeted of lobby and advocacy for this intervention to bring about a more positive outcome in terms of the passage of a law that addresses the four pillars of holistic resilience.
3. *National agencies and local government units*: Both the national agencies and local government units are important for the passage of the law on holistic resilience. CDP targets national agencies and local government units where they have already established cooperation and partnership which would facilitate a more positive response to the objectives of the intervention. Solid positions of national and local governments on the significance of grassroots engagements prior, during and post disasters will strengthen contrary opinion to a centralized management of response to disasters.
4. *The communities and the general public*: The ultimate target to benefit from this intervention.

The target groups outlined above will be participating in identified activities of the project in webinars and conversations and the communities that will be reached by varied forms of information, education and communication materials. Complementary to national efforts, it would be good to also design webinars targeting the international community to draw their support to the campaign and policy advocacy outlined in the intervention. CSOs in different countries (for instance Denmark) may be targeted for said purpose.

3.2. Describe the objectives and expected results.

This project partnership has twin objectives:

1. *To shape and influence public opinion in favor of a policy on holistic resilience. Corollary to this is engaging legislative champions that can help pass a law beneficial to the people and not for the whims of the state.*
2. *To press for positive response of the Supreme Court on the overstretched broad definition of terrorism depriving the rights and liberty of possible affected people.*

Integrated in the whole intervention is strengthening learning and knowledge sharing among partners and stakeholders. This is for the purpose of sustainability for those that cooperate on this policy advocacy. This is beneficial for the country partners and also for sharing with Nunca Mas.

It is a fact that whenever the problem and solution to be addressed by intervention is in line with policy advocacy, it often takes time, and the final outcome may be beyond the project’s life. But surely, measurable indicators that informs the project of its progress and development towards achieving the target results are identifiable.

The expected results of the intervention are: *one*, the passage of a law on resilience that captures the four pillars of prevention and mitigation; preparedness; response; recovery and rehabilitation including climate adaptation and mitigation; *two,* certain provisions of the anti-terrorism law declared unconstitutional and therefore written off from the law; and *three,* strengthened leadership and capacity of civil society networks amplifying the voices of the affected people and communities igniting learning from the experience and sharing to fellow CSOs in country and outside.

Intervention results can be measured through the number of legislators engaged that served as champions; the number of CSOs and networks engaged in policy engagements.

3.3 Intervention Strategy and Activity Plan

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| Key Results | Indicator/s | Activities |
| KR 1: Enhanced law addressing gaps & chal-lenges of the current law | A DRR and resilience law passed by Legislature with participatory structure & mechanism at varying levels |  |
| Output 1: Passage of a law on DRR and resilience | * Law engaging all of society & whole of nation * Number of senators championing the proposed enhanced law * Number of island-wide awareness rai-sing undertaken – data disaggregation of pax * Number of workshops undertaken – data disaggregation of pax * Number of lobby groups formed * Geographic coverage of population reached through information & education campaign materials * Number of House of representatives en-gaged in different parts of the country for bicameral conference | a. Conduct awareness raising on proposed amendments based on sunset review of the law addressing the gaps in varied platforms at diffe-rent levels including at-risk population & communities  b. Initiate advocacy workshops engaging multi- stakeholders to enjoin all sectors in policy advocacy  c. Organize lobby groups to engage the sena-tors on one-on-one lobby & in public & com-mittee hearings to firm up contents of the amended law  d. Undertake broad information, education & communication campaign so the public may know of the target replacement of the law  e. Engage the tri-media (written, radio and television) & utilize social media as well |
| KR 2: Declared unconsti-tutional certain conten-tious provisions on anti-terrorism law &/or nullified the law | * Clarity on Terrorism definition * Sections 12 and 13 considered as unconstitutional and are rescinded * Best if law nullified |  |
| Output 2: Revocation of contentious provisions in the law; or law nullified | * Clear and concrete definition of terrorism made and clarified * Section 12 pertaining to material support to terrorist revoked; and Section 13 limiting humanitarian groups of its coverage removed * Civic space for expression of dissent without being attacked * Number of CSOs/networks; lawyers’ groups & business sector filling petitions & present oral arguments before SC * Number of IEC materials produced * Number of collaborative meetings for preparation for oral arguments in SC | a. Meta-legal support via social media – upholding Philippine Constitution and Filipinos’ freedom of expression of dissent with no attack  b. Support to fellow CSOs presently being red-tagged affecting security and operations  c. Information, education, and communication campaign so the public may know the content of the anti-terrorism law  d. Sustained meetings of various sectors and groups for mapping out actions |
| KR 3: Strengthened leadership & capacity of CS networks in policy advocacy | Improved and broadened partnerships and collaboration of civil society networks and other stakeholders at varying levels |  |
| Output 3: Increased participation, experience and skills of CSOs in policy advocacy | * Number of civil society networks engaged in different major islands of the country * Number of meetings | a. CSOs taking lead in awareness raising acti-vities, lobby groups and media engagements  b. CSO partnership meetings to discuss progress of the engagements  c. Conduct learning conference for stake-holders to draw lessons learnt from project experience for sharing with Nunca Mas  d. Preparation of brief lessons learnt report |

The main strategy of the intervention is a vigorous policy advocacy and awareness raising campaign to bring about a conducive, enabling environment for a policy on holistic resilience, and a favorable response of the Supreme Court on the constitutionality of the provisions of the anti-terrorism law. In line with such strategy, the partnership engagement’s activities are the following:

***a. Advocacy and Raising Awareness of the General Public***

Advocacy and raising awareness is critical and crucial component of this intervention. For the Anti-Terrorism Law, it is important to make known to the general public the important provisions that will likely affect them. For example, protest actions will be considered terrorism when the purpose of their engagement is any of the following: intimidate the general public or a segment thereof; create an atmosphere of or spread a message of fear; provoke or influence by intimidation the government or any international organization; seriously destabilize or destroy the fundamental political, economic or social structures; create public emergency or seriously undermine public safety, in which with the overstretched and overbroad definition of terrorism in the law, any protest action may be misconstrued as an act befitting the description mentioned.

For the policy advocacy on resilience, CDP and civil society networks will wage vigorous campaign and awareness raising on the recommendations based on sunset review of the current law and will urge lawmakers to consider preserving the gains of the current law while recognizing the need to address the gaps and challenges towards achieving safety and holistic resilience of the communities and nation.

Information and Education Campaign materials designed for various audience are to be developed, produced and distributed in media and social media and to the greater public via offices and communities.

***b. Identifying and Engaging Senate and Congress Champions***

At the Lower House, several Representatives that help to champion the holistic resilience did not gain enough influence from among the 304 representatives of the 18th Congress in public hearings and plenary sessions held. What was passed by the Lower House is not an acceptable one for civil society organizations and partner-communities. CDP and DRRNetPhils, will continue to engage progressive champions in preparation for the bicameral conference of the Lower and Upper Houses.

At the Upper House, CDP has identified several champions from among the 24 senators who can bring forward the proposals and recommendations of the civil society organizations. This is the remaining policy battleground for CSOs to pursue a policy that capture the sentiments and representation of the people. After Senate decision, the final arena to unify the two Houses’ decisions is the bicameral conference. This process is hoped to be completed by next year.

***c.* *Engaging and Expanding Civil Society (CS) Networks***

Engaging CS networks more actively is a key to making the policy advocacy and the campaign more vibrant, visible and proactive. This can be done through regular interaction, virtually due to COVID-19 which is an opportunity for coordination and collaboration; and surely 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.

There are lots of ways to make this possible in the context of the pandemic, in online or offline information sharing, conversations, and limited face-to-face meeting. The following approaches and methodologies are to be utilized to ensure the active engagement of CSOs and other stakeholders in the country.

1. *A monthly or twice a month on-line meeting* will be called upon for development updates on the goings on about the bills being deliberated at the Upper House and the follow up on the results of the petitions filed before the Supreme Court. At least 5-6 meetings are to be held spread over the whole year of 2021. Between ten to twenty network members will regularly be engaged in these scheduled regular meetings.
2. *A monthly webinar* is to be planned out. This is for purposes of reaching out to the different geographic areas in the country to engage local government units, CSOs and community-based people’s organizations. Three major island group webinars may be slated for each purpose of discussing the proposed law; and the implications of the anti-terrorism law. At least 10 webinars are targeted for the project duration to cover the twin focal agenda.
3. *A learning conference* for the engaged stakeholders provides a space and opportunity for the various actors and stakeholders to share and learn from the experience of this partnership engagement. Nunca Mas will participate in this conference. This may be done towards the end of the project. The learnings and recommendations will feed into a document suggesting best practices.

***d*. *Strengthening* *Capacities of* *CSOs on the Policy Agenda***

As civil society networks undertake policy advocacy, they are in the process capacitated in different geographic areas in three major islands of the country. CDP and DRRNetPhils including the InterNetwork have to study the various bills filed in the Senate in order to harmonize this with the approved version at the Lower House. The unified proposal and recommendation of DRRNetPhils as a network in collaboration with other networks is for presentation with the Senate champions. It is important to discuss this with the identified champions from among the Senators to plan out on how to move this forward and agree on who can really fight for such through to end until the bicameral conference of both Houses.

3.4. The Systematization of experiences

CDP has institutionalized MEALS (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Learning and Sharing) Guidelines. MEALS tools are available with regular updating and adjustments to suit varying project designs and the composition of respondents. The practice of lessons learned and sharing with key partners and stakeholders are being conducted.

Sustainability planning will be 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 as resource persons on the advocacy agenda being pursued by civil society networks.

The Lessons Learning and Sharing is a great opportunity for all the partners engaged to go through a process of sharing what they have gained from the partnership engagement: from the knowledge and skills acquired, to the extent of generating lessons and learnings from collaboration, partnership, coordination and cooperation. A central output of the above will be a brief and concise best practice report that will show how it is possible for CSOs to engage with central state institutions using a non-confrontational approach to counter shrinking political space and for ensuring legal safe guards for civil society actors. The report is intended to enrich other social actors interested in advocacy on political very sensitive issues at the highest political level in a still more fragile political environment.

**3.5. Risk and Mitigation Measures**

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| Major Risks | Probability | Impact | Mitigation actions | Residual Risk |
| Compounding hazards |  |  | * Preparedness measures |  |
| Present political situation |  |  | * Being alert, proactive and politically astute |  |
| COVID-19 pandemic |  |  | * Safety measures at home, in the office and in the community |  |
| Shrinking civic space |  |  | * Campaign and advocacy; raising awareness; international attention |  |

**3.6. Completion and sustainability**

Key Results 1-3 will contribute substantially to the sustainability of the partnership project. Through engaging broad networks of civil society, the private/business sectors and lawyers’ groups for policy advocacy, the project is able to influence lawmakers and supreme court justices for a favorable consideration of the proposals and recommendations of CSOs.

The national and local policy lobbying and advocacy 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 by 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 these activities can be used for further similar actions by the partners in the Philippines.

Intervention-related information work in Denmark

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 information on the 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, some of these other CISU members. Learnings from the project in relation to shrinking space and advocacy will be presented utilizing the above-mentioned learning report at the public meeting.

If COVID-19 permits a representative from CDP will be invited to the event. She/he will also make a presentation at *Vestskoven* *Gymnasium* (previous *Albertslund*). Nunca Mas has an arrangement with English/Spanish section there. Alternatively, the arrangement will take place via webinar using Zoom or the like.

1. The Congress constitutes of House of Representatives (the lower house) and the Senate (the upper house). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. An international human rights organization that collects data on threats against human rights activists. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)