

## Peacebuilding Strategies in Southeast Asia: Lessons from Catholic Relief Services in Timor-Leste and Muhammadiyah in Mindanao

Sugito<sup>1</sup>, Hendy Achmad Reynaldi<sup>2</sup>, Syasya Yuania Fadila Mas'udi<sup>3</sup>, Sidiq Ahmadi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of International Relations, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia, [sugito@umy.ac.id](mailto:sugito@umy.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup> Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, [hendyareynaldi@gmail.com](mailto:hendyareynaldi@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Department of International Relations, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia, [syasyamasudi@umm.ac.id](mailto:syasyamasudi@umm.ac.id)

<sup>4</sup> Department of International Relations, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia, [sidiqahmadi@umy.ac.id](mailto:sidiqahmadi@umy.ac.id)

### ABSTRACT

*International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) play a crucial role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. However, their efforts often encounter challenges when their organizational values diverge from those of other INGOs or local communities. This study explores the peacebuilding strategies of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Muhammadiyah in Timor-Leste and Mindanao, focusing on their approaches to conflict mitigation and post-conflict recovery. Employing a qualitative methodology with document analysis, the study identifies three primary contributions of CRS and Muhammadiyah to peacebuilding: (1) alleviating human suffering by ensuring the safety and well-being of conflict victims; (2) fostering peace through democratic, non-violent, and participatory processes, with a particular emphasis on the protection of women and other vulnerable groups; and (3) supporting post-conflict reconstruction through initiatives aimed at restoring livelihoods and strengthening social cohesion.*

**Keywords:** Catholic Relief Services, Muhammadiyah, Peacebuilding, International Non-Governmental Organization, and Humanitarian Assistance.

### Introduction

Southeast Asia has historically been prone to ethnic and political strife. Indonesia, for instance, has experienced two major separatist conflicts: the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) dispute, which was resolved through the 2005 peace agreement, and the Free Papua Organization (OPM) conflict, which remains ongoing. The Philippines faces similar challenges due to the continued struggle of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) for autonomy. In Thailand, some Pattani people in the south are engaged in an ongoing struggle for ethnic justice. Meanwhile, Myanmar has seen violent conflict involving the Rohingya, who have resisted repressive state policies. Additionally, as the youngest nation in Southeast Asia, Timor-Leste has encountered political tensions between its two dominant ethnic groups, the Lorosae and Loromanu.

While some of these conflicts have reached periods of normalization through peace agreements, tensions persist, necessitating sustained peacebuilding efforts. The GAM-Indonesia conflict, for instance, reached a resolution through the regional autonomy solution in Aceh, and the MILF/MNLF conflict entered a phase of peace with the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). In contrast, conflicts in Pattani and Rakhine remain unresolved, though their intensity has fluctuated.

This study is driven by the overarching research question: How do international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) contribute to peacebuilding in conflict zones, and what lessons can be learned from the strategies of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Muhammadiyah in

Timor-Leste and Mindanao? While INGOs play a crucial role in global peacebuilding efforts, their engagement is often shaped by ideological, cultural, and institutional factors that can either facilitate or hinder their impact <sup>1</sup>. Existing literature has examined the role of INGOs in peace processes, emphasizing their contributions to humanitarian relief, conflict resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction <sup>2</sup>. However, there remains a gap in understanding how faith-based INGOs, specifically those rooted in Catholicism and Islam, navigate these peacebuilding roles in Southeast Asian conflict settings.

CRS and Muhammadiyah represent two distinct yet comparable approaches to peacebuilding. CRS, a Catholic organization, has engaged in humanitarian and reconciliation efforts in Timor-Leste, particularly following the country's independence and periods of civil unrest <sup>3</sup>. Muhammadiyah, an Indonesian Islamic organization, has been actively involved in Mindanao's peace process, serving as a mediator and contributing to post-war reconstruction <sup>4</sup>. By analyzing their strategies, this study provides insights into whether and how religiously affiliated INGOs differ in their approaches, what challenges they face in navigating local socio-political contexts, and how their interventions align with or diverge from existing peacebuilding frameworks.

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the broader scholarship on INGO peacebuilding by examining faith-based INGOs as critical yet underexplored actors in conflict resolution <sup>5</sup>. While secular INGOs are often studied in peacebuilding literature, religious INGOs, despite their historical and contemporary significance, remain underrepresented in systematic analyses <sup>6</sup>. Second, this research offers empirical insights into how INGOs interact with local communities and institutions, particularly in contexts where religious identity plays a significant role in conflict dynamics <sup>7</sup>. Lastly, by comparing CRS and Muhammadiyah, this study challenges the notion that religious INGOs operate uniformly, highlighting how contextual factors shape their peacebuilding strategies.

Moving beyond the broad hybrid peacebuilding framework <sup>8</sup>, this research argues that local legitimacy, ideological adaptability, and operational flexibility are key determinants of INGO success in conflict zones. The findings provide practical implications for policymakers, INGOs, and local actors seeking to design more effective and culturally sensitive peace initiatives.

## Literature Review

---

<sup>1</sup> Abu Bakarr Bah, "Civil Non-State Actors in Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding in West Africa," *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 17, no. 3–4 (2013): 313–36, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18754112-1704008>.

<sup>2</sup> Roger Mac Ginty, "Hybrid Peace: The Interaction Between Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peace," *Security Dialogue* 41, no. 4 (2010): 391–412, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010610374312>.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew McGregor, Laura Skeaff, and Marianne Bevan, "Overcoming Secularism? Catholic Development Geographies in Timor-Leste," *Third World Quarterly* 33, no. 6 (2012): 1129–46, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2012.681497>.

<sup>4</sup> Surwandono Surwandono, *Manajemen Konflik Separatisme: Dinamika Negosiasi Dalam Penyelesaian Konflik Mindanao* (Yogyakarta, 2013); Hilman Latief and Haedar Nashir, "Local Dynamics and Global Engagements of the Islamic Modernist Movement in Contemporary Indonesia: The Case of Muhammadiyah (2000–2020)," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 39, no. 2 (2020): 290–309, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1868103420910514>.

<sup>5</sup> Willemijn Verkoren and Mathijs van Leeuwen, "Civil Society in Peacebuilding: Global Discourse, Local Reality," *International Peacekeeping* 20, no. 2 (2013): 159–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2013.791560>.

<sup>6</sup> Maryann Cusimano Love, "Partnering for Peace in The Philippines: Military and Religious Engagement," *GUISD Pew Case Study Center*, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> CC Capacci and M Pozniak, *Creating Partnerships, Educating Children Case Studies from Catholic Relief Services* (Maryland: Catholic Relief Services, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Mac Ginty, "Hybrid Peace: The Interaction Between Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peace."

### **Conceptualizing Peace and Peacebuilding: INGOs' Roles and Approaches**

Research on peacebuilding has emphasized the participation of diverse actors, including grassroots organizations and civil society groups, as essential for achieving sustainable peace. Since the mid-1990s, INGOs have been increasingly recognized as key contributors to peace efforts, extending their roles beyond humanitarian assistance to mediation, social reconciliation, and institutional development <sup>9</sup>. The growing reliance on INGOs in peacebuilding stems from the limitations of state-centric approaches, as governments and international bodies often lack the legitimacy or flexibility to address localized conflict dynamics effectively <sup>10</sup>. However, to assess the effectiveness of INGOs like Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Muhammadiyah, it is crucial to define peace and peacebuilding clearly.

Peace is often categorized into two forms: negative peace and positive peace <sup>11</sup>. Negative peace refers to the absence of direct violence or armed conflict, whereas positive peace involves deeper structural transformations that address the root causes of conflict, such as inequality, injustice, and exclusion. Simply ending hostilities does not equate to sustainable peace if underlying grievances remain unresolved. Peacebuilding, therefore, extends beyond conflict resolution to include long-term processes aimed at fostering positive peace through institutional reform, social cohesion, and economic development <sup>12</sup>. The United Nations (UN) defines peacebuilding as a multidimensional effort involving security sector reform, political reconciliation, and community resilience <sup>13</sup>. By incorporating these elements, INGOs can help prevent conflict recurrence, facilitate trust-building among stakeholders, and promote inclusive governance structures <sup>14</sup>.

To determine whether CRS and Muhammadiyah's strategies align with peacebuilding objectives, it is necessary to establish clear indicators. According to Abu Bakarr Bah <sup>15</sup>, effective peacebuilding efforts can be assessed based on three key components: alleviating human suffering, negotiating and implementing durable peace agreements, and post-conflict reconstruction and social integration. Alleviating human suffering includes humanitarian aid, protection of civilians, and addressing basic needs such as food, health services, and shelter <sup>16</sup>. INGOs contribute by filling gaps in government responses and ensuring that vulnerable populations receive necessary assistance. Beyond immediate relief, peace agreements require mechanisms to ensure long-term stability. INGOs often act as mediators, facilitate dialogue, and monitor agreements to promote compliance among

---

<sup>9</sup> Bah, "Civil Non-State Actors in Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding in West Africa"; Verkoren and van Leeuwen, "Civil Society in Peacebuilding: Global Discourse, Local Reality."

<sup>10</sup> Oliver Walton, "Conflict, Peacebuilding and NGO Legitimacy: National NGOs in Sri Lanka," *Conflict, Security & Development* 8, no. 1 (2008): 133–67, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14678800801977146>.

<sup>11</sup> Johan Galtung, "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no. 3 (1990): 291–305, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343390027003005>.

<sup>12</sup> Mac Ginty, "Hybrid Peace: The Interaction Between Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peace"; Jannie Lilja and Kristine Höglund, "The Role of the External in Local Peacebuilding: Enabling Action—Managing Risk," *Global Governance* 24, no. 3 (2018): 411–30, <https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-02403007>.

<sup>13</sup> Edward Rees, "Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Peace Operations: 'Improvisation and Confusion' from the Field," in *International Peacekeeping: The Yearbook of International Peace Operations*, ed. Harvey Langholtz, Boris Kondoch, and Alan Wells, vol. 12 (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Brill N. V, 2008), 139–66, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18754112-90000059>.

<sup>14</sup> Katia Papagianni, "Mediation, Political Engagement, and Peacebuilding," *Global Governance* 16, no. 2 (2010): 243–63.

<sup>15</sup> Bah, "Civil Non-State Actors in Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding in West Africa."

<sup>16</sup> Laura J. Heideman, *Pathologies in Peacebuilding: Donors, Ngos, and Community Peacebuilding in Croatia, Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, vol. 36 (Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2013), [https://doi.org/10.1108/S0163-786X\(2013\)0000036008](https://doi.org/10.1108/S0163-786X(2013)0000036008).

conflicting parties<sup>17</sup>. Once an agreement is in place, post-conflict reconstruction becomes essential, focusing on governance, economic empowerment, and community reintegration<sup>18</sup>. INGOs play a key role in rebuilding institutions, promoting social trust, and ensuring that former combatants and displaced populations can reintegrate into society<sup>19</sup>.

Given these peacebuilding dimensions, INGOs have gained prominence due to their flexibility and ability to engage at multiple levels. Their functions include protection, early warning systems, advocacy, peace education, social cohesion efforts, mediation, and service delivery<sup>20</sup>. Unlike government-led interventions, which may be constrained by political interests, INGOs can foster grassroots participation and mobilize international support<sup>21</sup>. Their effectiveness, however, depends on their ability to integrate local perspectives, navigate political constraints, and balance external donor expectations with local ownership of peace initiatives<sup>22</sup>.

Within this broader context, faith-based INGOs such as CRS and Muhammadiyah introduce additional dimensions to peacebuilding. While secular INGOs often emphasize legal and institutional mechanisms, faith-based organizations incorporate religious values that resonate with local communities, enhancing their legitimacy and acceptance<sup>23</sup>. CRS, rooted in Catholic teachings, prioritizes humanitarian relief and reconciliation, aligning its efforts with broader social justice principles. Muhammadiyah, as an Islamic organization, integrates faith-based reconciliation efforts and community development, leveraging its religious networks to promote peacebuilding initiatives<sup>24</sup>. Their faith affiliations enable them to engage in interfaith dialogue, which is crucial in conflicts where religious identity plays a role in shaping grievances and alliances. However, their religious character can also present challenges, as they must navigate sectarian tensions and ensure their interventions remain inclusive rather than favouring specific groups<sup>25</sup>.

By examining CRS and Muhammadiyah's strategies, this study highlights the hybrid nature of peacebuilding, where international frameworks intersect with local religious and cultural norms. The findings contribute to ongoing debates about whether INGOs function as external agents of change or as facilitators of local peace efforts. While hybrid peace models suggest that INGOs must adapt their strategies to local conditions, CRS and Muhammadiyah illustrate how faith-based INGOs may offer an alternative pathway to peacebuilding—one that combines moral legitimacy, grassroots engagement, and institutional support<sup>26</sup>. Their experiences in Timor-Leste and Mindanao provide empirical insights into how religiously affiliated INGOs navigate complex socio-political landscapes and whether their approaches can offer sustainable models for peace in other conflict-affected regions.

## Methodology

---

<sup>17</sup> Papagianni, "Mediation, Political Engagement, and Peacebuilding"; Nick. Ross, *Civil Society's Role in Monitoring and Verifying Peace Agreements: Seven Lessons from International Experiences Geneva* (Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, 2017).

<sup>18</sup> Sanam Naraghi Anderlini and Judy El-Bushra, "Post-Conflict Reconstruction," *Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action*, 2004, 51–68.

<sup>19</sup> Lilli Banholzer, "When Do Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs Succeed?," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2013, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2367307>.

<sup>20</sup> Et.al Teskey, Graham, "Guidance for Supporting State- Building in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States : A Tool-Kit" (Washington: The World Bank Group, 2012).

<sup>21</sup> Capacci and Pozniak, *Creating Partnerships, Educating Children Case Studies from Catholic Relief Services*.

<sup>22</sup> Lilja and Höglund, "The Role of the External in Local Peacebuilding: Enabling Action—Managing Risk."

<sup>23</sup> McGregor, Skeaff, and Bevan, "Overcoming Secularism? Catholic Development Geographies in Timor-Leste."

<sup>24</sup> Latief and Nashir, "Local Dynamics and Global Engagements of the Islamic Modernist Movement in Contemporary Indonesia: The Case of Muhammadiyah (2000-2020)."

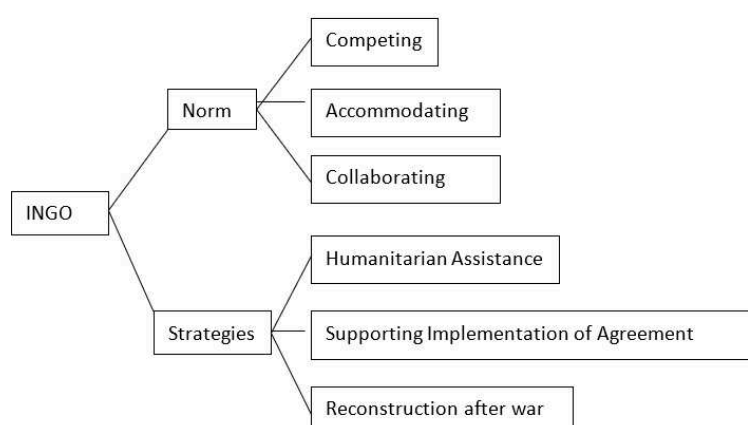
<sup>25</sup> Love, "Partnering for Peace in The Philippines: Military and Religious Engagement."

<sup>26</sup> Mac Ginty, "Hybrid Peace: The Interaction Between Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peace."

This study employs a qualitative research design with a document analysis approach to examine the peacebuilding strategies of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Muhammadiyah in Timor-Leste and Mindanao. Qualitative research is well-suited for exploring the complexities of peacebuilding, allowing for a deeper understanding of how INGOs navigate local conflict dynamics (Creswell 2014). Document analysis is the primary method used, drawing from official reports, policy documents, academic publications, and secondary sources to assess how these INGOs engage in humanitarian assistance, mediation, and post-conflict reconstruction (Bowen, 2009). To ensure the validity and reliability of findings, a triangulation approach is employed, cross-referencing multiple sources to identify patterns and consistencies in CRS and Muhammadiyah's interventions (Denzin, 1978). This method provides a structured way to examine how INGOs operate within different conflict settings while ensuring that findings are based on diverse and

The study is guided by a conceptual framework that defines peacebuilding in three key dimensions: (1) alleviating human suffering, (2) negotiating and implementing peace agreements, and (3) post-conflict reconstruction<sup>27</sup>. These dimensions serve as indicators to systematically assess CRS and Muhammadiyah's contributions to peace efforts. The research model (Figure 1) further refines this analysis by incorporating two key variables—Norms and Strategies—which shape how INGOs interact with local actors. The Norms variable classifies INGOs' engagement approaches as competing, accommodating, or collaborating, while the Strategies variable outlines their methods, including humanitarian assistance, support for peace agreement implementation, and post-war reconstruction. By examining the interplay between these variables, this study determines whether CRS and Muhammadiyah's peacebuilding approaches align with theoretical expectations and contribute to sustainable conflict resolution.

Data is analyzed using a thematic approach, identifying recurring patterns and evaluating INGOs' peacebuilding strategies against predefined indicators from existing literature. Each peacebuilding strategy is assessed based on specific criteria, such as the extent of humanitarian aid, mediation effectiveness, and post-conflict recovery initiatives<sup>28</sup>. This structured approach ensures that the findings remain theoretically grounded and empirically valid, providing insights into how CRS and Muhammadiyah engage with local communities and institutional actors. Ultimately, this study not only evaluates the effectiveness of faith-based INGOs in Southeast Asian peacebuilding but also offers a comparative perspective on their unique approaches, illustrating how ideology, context, and operational strategies shape their impact.



**Figure 1. Research Model**

<sup>27</sup> Bah, "Civil Non-State Actors in Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding in West Africa."

<sup>28</sup> Heideman, *Pathologies in Peacebuilding: Donors, Ngos, and Community Peacebuilding in Croatia*; Papagianni, "Mediation, Political Engagement, and Peacebuilding"; Banholzer, "When Do Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs Succeed?"

## **Finding and Analysis**

To comprehend the role of CRS and Muhammadiyah in peacebuilding in Timor-Leste and Mindanao, ideology and strategy are key attributes. The first variable is ideology, which is a collection of beliefs based on certain social, cultural, and religious values. Organizations use ideology to define their roles and perceptions in understanding and implementing their agendas<sup>29</sup>. Ideology explains what peacebuilding is and how a peacebuilding effort should be implemented within the context of peacebuilding. According to Abu Bakarr Bah<sup>30</sup>, the peacebuilding strategy encompasses easing human suffering, negotiating, and executing enduring peace agreements, and post-war reconstruction.

### **a. CRS Peace Initiative in Timor Leste**

As the name suggests, the set of ideas that form the foundation of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in carrying out its humanitarian agenda originates from values rooted in the teachings of the Catholic religion. These values exemplify Jesus Christ as a benevolent figure credited with reducing suffering, assisting others, and fostering a culture of charity and justice in society<sup>31</sup>. This has shaped the attitudes of CRS members, who view themselves as a group with the duty and responsibility to provide assistance to anyone in need. Their humanitarian commitment is rooted in a fundamental understanding of life's reality, which reveals that many people around the world continue to suffer and require urgent aid<sup>32</sup>.

Structurally, CRS's ideology is not restricted to Catholic teachings and identity, as the organization also upholds universal human principles that align with other religious traditions<sup>33</sup>. CRS explicitly states that assistance is provided to anyone in need, regardless of ethnicity, religion, race, or socioeconomic status. Additionally, not all CRS members are Catholics, as the organization prioritizes universal human values derived from Catholic teachings over religious membership<sup>34</sup>. While CRS's ideology is shaped by Catholic principles, many of these values are universal and can be found in the ethical teachings of other religions and cultural traditions.

CRS's Catholic ideology serves multiple functions, each with a distinct purpose. First, the personal-social function offers justification for each CRS member's commitment to humanitarian aid, particularly in parts of the Global South and other developing regions<sup>35</sup>. While members may hold different perspectives on life, they share the belief that helping others is a moral and essential endeavor. Second, the organizational function ensures continuity in CRS's humanitarian work by using symbolic representations of Catholic identity and universal human values. As a unified organization, CRS responds to global humanitarian crises collectively rather than through individual initiatives. In this regard, CRS aligns with the mission of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the body that founded CRS, in carrying out its humanitarian work in over 100 nations worldwide<sup>36</sup>.

Third, the distribution function presents Catholic teachings and humanitarian values through symbolic and persuasive communication in social interactions. Internally, these teachings shape and

---

<sup>29</sup> Jamil Anwar and SAF Hasnu, "Ideology, Purpose, Core Values and Leadership: How They Influence the Vision of an Organization?," *International Journal of Learning and Development* 3, no. 3 (2013): 168, <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijld.v3i3.3642>.

<sup>30</sup> (2013)

<sup>31</sup> Catholic Relief Service, "About Catholic Relief Services," CRS® faith. action, results., 2021.

<sup>32</sup> Catholic Relief Service, "Mission Statement," CRS® faith. action, results., 2021.

<sup>33</sup> John P Hackett Ken, Piraino Dave, and Rivera, "Catholic Relief Services : One Organization ' s Journey with Catholic Social Thought and Corporate Social Responsibility," in *The Good Company: Catholic Social Thought and Corporate Social Responsibility in Dialogue*, 2006, 1–19.

<sup>34</sup> Catholic Relief Service, "About Catholic Relief Services."

<sup>35</sup> Alina Sajed, "From the Third World to the Global South," *E-International Relations*, 2020.

<sup>36</sup> William Francis Murphy, "The Social Initiatives of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops," *Catholic Social Science Review* 18 (2013): 45–61, <https://doi.org/10.5840/cssr2013185>.

sustain the perspectives of both new and long-standing CRS members, reinforcing the significance of their responsibility to aid those in need. Externally, these principles encourage broader public engagement, urging individuals and groups to contribute through donations, volunteerism, advocacy, and partnerships <sup>37</sup>. The ideology of Catholicism, as upheld by CRS, influences both internal agents—such as individual CRS members and the organization as a whole—and external stakeholders who do not operate directly within CRS but are impacted by its mission.

CRS and its Catholic ideology maintain a subject-source connection based on their organizational identity and structure. CRS, as a distinct social entity, brings together individuals from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds under shared humanitarian values rooted in Catholic teachings. Many CRS members, regardless of their religious affiliation, recognize that the human values emphasized in Catholic doctrine are also reflected in their own religious or ethical beliefs. This demonstrates that CRS operates not as an exclusively Catholic organization but rather as a faith-based humanitarian entity committed to universal principles of human dignity and social justice <sup>38</sup>.

In general, CRS's primary mission is to protect the sanctity and dignity of human life <sup>39</sup>. The following missions describe the vision. First, encouraging human growth through reacting to significant crises, combating disease and poverty, and preserving a peaceful and just society <sup>40</sup>. Second, helping U.S. Catholics who believe in their solidarity with their fellow human beings worldwide <sup>41</sup>. CRS partners with local, national, and international Catholic organizations, as well as other organizations, to provide humanitarian aid to people in need, regardless of their background, in order to achieve specific objectives on various agendas in various parts of the world, including the agenda for peacebuilding in Timor-Leste.

About the agenda for peacebuilding, CRS has certain goals to achieve. CRS's primary peacebuilding objective is conflict resolution and the modification of unjust structures, processes, and policies <sup>42</sup>. To do this, CRS combines peacebuilding, governance, and gender considerations into other program components. In this instance, peacebuilding is combined with disaster response, agriculture and natural resource management, health, water and sanitation, and education.

CRS has a number of specific objectives in carrying out peacebuilding in Timor Leste, namely: preventing domestic violence, promoting non-violent negotiations, ensuring the safety of women and other vulnerable people, designing peace projects that are inclusive and participatory, and promoting democratic decision making or policies <sup>43</sup>. To achieve these five goals, CRS believes the peacebuilding agenda cannot be carried out in a short period of time and needs to be carried out on an ongoing basis.

When it was founded under the name War Relief Services, CRS served primarily as a provider of aid to war victims (e.g., refugees and displaced people). In this instance, the CRS strategy is more focused on attempts to address the fundamental requirements of war victims, such as food, clean water, medical aid, housing, and sanitation infrastructure, in order to ensure the safety of war victims in life-threatening conditions <sup>44</sup>. In theory, the CRS's humanitarian response to conflict victims, including refugees, is also an emergency reaction. Responses to natural or man-made disasters can

---

<sup>37</sup> Capacci and Pozniak, *Creating Partnerships, Educating Children Case Studies from Catholic Relief Services*.

<sup>38</sup> Catholic Relief Service, "About Catholic Relief Services."

<sup>39</sup> Catholic Relief Service.

<sup>40</sup> Catholic Relief Service, "Mission Statement."

<sup>41</sup> Catholic Relief Service.

<sup>42</sup> Catholic Relief Service, "Peacebuilding and Justice," CRS® faith. action, results., 2021.

<sup>43</sup> Catholic Relief Service, "Timor Leste (East Timor)," CRS® faith. action, results., 2021.

<sup>44</sup> Leslie M. Wingender, *Humanitarian Response in Violent Conflict: A Toolbox of Conflict Sensitive Indicators*, ed. Aaron M. Chassy (Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services, 2013).

have both short- and long-term objectives<sup>45</sup>. For short-term objectives, emergency response focuses on reducing the effects of natural disasters and armed conflicts. For long-term objectives, emergency response serves as a preliminary stage in the recovery and reconstruction process.

Early in 2001, CRS performed a crucial role in ensuring the safety of victims of the war in Baucau. In March 2001, the CRS gave non-food goods to more than 6,000 households who had fled an attack by an armed group in Viqueque<sup>46</sup>. CRS assists refugees by establishing refugee camps that can house vast numbers of refugees<sup>47</sup>. This is done so that refugees can live in safety, security, and good health, and as an initial step toward rehabilitation and reconstruction whenever practicable. In relation to the civil conflict that occurred after the East Timor referendum and resulted in the migration of more than 150,000 East Timorese people to Belu Regency and Kupang Regency, Indonesia, CRS played a role in accommodating hundreds of refugee camps and providing food and non-food aid to refugees so that the majority of them could return to Timor Leste by the end of 1999<sup>48</sup>. CRS assists victims of civil unrest in Bacau with long-term aid. The humanitarian aid consists of (1) offering reconciliation training for religious leaders and local leaders; (2) supporting with the implementation of the "Culture of Peace" workshop in Fuloro, Ossu, and Laga; and (3) supplying equipment for the rehabilitation of agricultural land<sup>49</sup>.

CRS's involvement in the Latetek Bridge Project serves as a strong indication of its commitment to negotiating and implementing peace agreements in Timor-Leste (2010-2012). This project was a peacebuilding initiative aimed at fostering social cohesion, particularly among groups that had been engaged in civil conflict in Dili since 2006. By facilitating mutual understanding, the project sought to secure a cease-fire, allowing for further political and economic reform, reconciliation, and paving the way for international participation in post-war reconstruction<sup>50</sup>. To achieve this, CRS carried out several key phases: (1) the preparatory phase, which involved introducing the idea of the agreement, engaging conflicting parties, and securing broader community support; (2) the negotiation phase, which focused on managing the logistics of peace negotiation rituals and ceremonies; and (3) the implementation and maintenance phase, which ensured that the agreement's provisions were upheld on an ongoing basis<sup>51</sup>.

Beyond the Latetek Bridge Project, CRS has played an instrumental role in peace negotiations in Becora, Camea, and Mascarenhas, drafting a participatory social contract and educating communities on how such agreements align with their customary laws<sup>52</sup>. Additionally, CRS has worked to mediate conflicts between martial arts groups, specifically the *Perguruan Setia Hati Teratai* (PSHT) and the *Kmanek Oan Rai Klaran* (KORK)<sup>53</sup>. Despite these efforts, CRS has encountered challenges in maintaining peace agreements, including stakeholder resistance, reluctance to participate in peace processes, demands for financial compensation, and concerns about transparency<sup>54</sup>. These obstacles

---

<sup>45</sup> Aaron Chassy et al., *Engaging Government: A CRS Guide for Working for Social Change* (Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services, 2018).

<sup>46</sup> UN OCHA, "Catholic Relief Services' Response to East Timor Update: Spring 2001," ReliefWeb, 2001.

<sup>47</sup> Wingender, *Humanitarian Response in Violent Conflict: A Toolbox of Conflict Sensitive Indicators*.

<sup>48</sup> UN OCHA, "Catholic Relief Services' Response to East Timor and Indonesia Crisis: Update May 2000," ReliefWeb, 2000.

<sup>49</sup> UN OCHA, "Catholic Relief Services' Response to East Timor Update: Spring 2001."

<sup>50</sup> Neil Bolton and Liliana Amaral, *Laletok Project Manual Strategic Community Peacebuilding in Practice* (Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services, 2013).

<sup>51</sup> Catharina Maria, "Building Social Cohesion from Below: Learning from the Laletok (Bridge) Project 2010-2012," in *A New Era?: Timor-Leste after the UN*, ed. Sue Ingram, Lia Kent, and Andrew McWilliam (Acton: Australian National University Press, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.22459/ne.09.2015>.

<sup>52</sup> James Scambary, "Laletok Project Final Evaluation (Final Report)" (Canberra, 2012).

<sup>53</sup> Emile LeBrun, Robert Muggah, and James Turton, "Groups, Gangs, and Armed Violence in Timor-Leste On," *Issue Brief: Timor-Leste Armed Violence Assessment* (Geneva, 2009).

<sup>54</sup> Bolton and Amaral, *Laletok Project Manual Strategic Community Peacebuilding in Practice*.



highlight the complexity of peace negotiations and the importance of continued engagement and trust-building efforts.

Although CRS has facilitated peace agreements independently of the ruling elite, it acknowledges the crucial role of government institutions in ensuring sustainable peace. Strengthening the legitimacy and capacity of the Timor-Leste government is essential for addressing public concerns effectively<sup>55</sup>. CRS has contributed to this effort by influencing policy, forming strategic alliances, and integrating the Laletok project into government programs. The alignment between the Laletok project and Timor-Leste's Department of Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion and the Ministry of Social Solidarity underscores CRS's commitment to ensuring that peace initiatives are contextually relevant and adapted to national priorities<sup>56</sup>.

A key component of CRS's peacebuilding approach is monitoring and verification following mediation processes<sup>57</sup>. Through systematic data collection, CRS tracks conflict developments over time, mapping variables such as conflict type, status, resolution outcomes, involved stakeholders, and mediating actors. To analyze these data, CRS employs the Most Significant Changes (MSC) method, a participatory evaluation approach that allows stakeholders to assess and determine the most impactful changes in conflict resolution. This method is particularly useful for identifying patterns in post-mediation civil relations, enabling CRS to evaluate stakeholder commitment to peace agreements<sup>58</sup>. Additionally, ongoing monitoring and evaluation provide CRS and other peace agents with critical feedback on the evolving sociopolitical conditions in Timor-Leste, ensuring that interventions remain effective and adaptable.

CRS's post-conflict reconstruction strategy in Timor-Leste is structured around five key areas, with economic recovery being the primary focus. The goal of economic reconstruction is to revitalize trade and restore economic stability, addressing shortages of essential goods that persisted during and after the conflict. Microfinance initiatives have played a crucial role in this process. For example, CRS managed the NGO *Tuba Rai Metin* (TRM), which established a microcredit aid program benefiting 450 vulnerable women in February 2002, just months before Timor-Leste gained full independence<sup>59</sup>. CRS recognized that economic hardship, financial instability, and high poverty rates were among the root causes of conflict, making economic empowerment an essential element of long-term peacebuilding<sup>60</sup>.

The second aspect of post-war reconstruction is social integration. The objective of East Timor's rehabilitation process was to reconnect its fragmented civil society, ensuring that communities previously divided by conflict could rebuild trust and cooperation. CRS employed mediation and dialogue-based approaches to facilitate nonviolent social integration, particularly in peace negotiations. For instance, through its Laletok project, CRS sponsored mediation efforts aimed at bringing together conflicting parties in inter-ethnic and inter-community conflicts<sup>61</sup>. However, challenges to social integration persist, including reluctance to engage in peace processes, the absence of local leadership, politicization of leadership roles, and expectations of financial or material

---

<sup>55</sup> Chassy et al., *Engaging Government: A CRS Guide for Working for Social Change*.

<sup>56</sup> Bolton and Amaral, *Laletok Project Manual Strategic Community Peacebuilding in Practice*.

<sup>57</sup> Chassy et al., *Engaging Government: A CRS Guide for Working for Social Change*.

<sup>58</sup> Rick Davies and Jess Dart, *The Most Significant Change Technique: A Guide to Its Use* (Geneva: Care International, 2005), [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0983-9\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0983-9_8).

<sup>59</sup> Domingas Soares Maia Tavares, "Program Micro-Finance Sebagai Sarana Pemberdayaan Perempuan: Efektivitas Dan Potensi Keberlanjutannya Studi Kasus Pada NGO Lokal Tuba Rai Metin (TRM) Dili -Timor Leste," *Gastronomia Ecuatoriana y Turismo Local*. (Universitas Sanata Dharma, 2017).

<sup>60</sup> Bolton and Amaral, *Laletok Project Manual Strategic Community Peacebuilding in Practice*.

<sup>61</sup> Robert Muggah and Emile Lebrun, *Special Report: Timor-Leste Armed Violence Assessment Final Report*, 2010, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/C-Special-reports/SAS-SR12-Timor-Leste-Armed-Violence-Assessment-Final-Rep.pdf>.

incentives for participation <sup>62</sup>. Despite these obstacles, social integration efforts in Timor-Leste have made significant progress compared to the widespread societal divisions that existed prior to the independence referendum.

The third aspect is health, which plays a critical role in post-conflict reconstruction. As a provider of humanitarian aid, CRS contributed to rebuilding Timor-Leste's healthcare and nutrition sector, focusing on equity, inclusivity, and long-term sustainability <sup>63</sup>. Given that Timor-Leste has one of the lowest nutrition levels in the region, CRS implemented programs to educate local communities on the importance of a balanced diet, teach methods for preparing nutritious meals, and support the cultivation of independent food sources. Additionally, CRS's involvement extended to strengthening healthcare infrastructure by expanding networks of healthcare providers, prioritizing community-based and integrated public health initiatives, and promoting faith-based healthcare support systems <sup>64</sup>. One of CRS's notable contributions was its ability to deliver healthcare services to remote and rural areas where government health facilities were either absent or insufficient.

The fourth aspect of CRS's reconstruction strategy is political reform, with the overarching goal of establishing a democratic and participatory political system that supports lasting peace in Timor-Leste. CRS actively promotes equality and inclusivity in governance, focusing on two key areas: (1) strengthening structures and systems responsible for resource distribution and community protection, and (2) enhancing policies and processes governing public administration for collective welfare <sup>65</sup>. A significant example of CRS's political engagement was its social integration program through the Laletek project, which aligned with the agenda of the Timor-Leste Department of Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion (DPSC) <sup>66</sup>. This alignment enabled CRS to facilitate peace negotiations between competing groups, reinforcing the government's ability to address internal conflicts with non-governmental support. Beyond mediation efforts, CRS's contributions to political reconstruction include public policy management, institutional.

The fifth aspect is education, a critical factor in long-term peacebuilding. CRS's post-war reconstruction efforts in Timor-Leste prioritized education at all levels, from early childhood education to primary, secondary, and tertiary schooling, in both formal and non-formal sectors. These programs were specifically designed to target vulnerable and marginalized populations, ensuring that communities most affected by conflict had access to educational opportunities that promote stability and social cohesion <sup>67</sup>. In 2021, CRS partnered with UN Women to implement gender education and conflict prevention programs for women and children, reinforcing the role of education in breaking cycles of violence <sup>68</sup>. Additionally, as part of the Laletek initiative, CRS expanded peace and civic education programs to eliminate deep-rooted superstitions that had historically influenced local perceptions of conflict. Due to low literacy and education levels, many communities in Timor-Leste believed that warfare was caused by supernatural.

## **b. Muhammadiyah Peace Initiative in Mindanao**

Muhammadiyah is an organization established in Yogyakarta in 1912 by Ahmad Dahlan. According to Amin Abdullah<sup>69</sup>, the creation of Muhammadiyah was Ahmad Dahlan's response to the

---

<sup>62</sup> Maria, "Building Social Cohesion from Below: Learning from the Laletek (Bridge) Project 2010-2012."

<sup>63</sup> Catholic Relief Service, "Timor Leste (East Timor)."

<sup>64</sup> Catholic Relief Service, "About Health System Strengthening," 2021.

<sup>65</sup> Chassy et al., *Engaging Government: A CRS Guide for Working for Social Change*.

<sup>66</sup> Bolton and Amaral, *Laletek Project Manual Strategic Community Peacebuilding in Practice*.

<sup>67</sup> Catholic Relief Service, "About Education," CRS® faith. action, results., 2021.

<sup>68</sup> José Belarmino De Sá, "UNW and CRS Held Spotlight on Conflict Prevention against Women and Children," Agencia Noticiosa de Timor Leste, 2021.

<sup>69</sup> (2017)

colonial condition of Muslims. While Ahmad Dahlan did not openly protest the Dutch East Indies administration, he recognized that colonialism had left the Indonesian economy in a state of backwardness, significantly affecting the well-being of the Muslim community. His reformist vision aimed to modernize Islamic education, social services, and religious practices, enabling Indonesian Muslims to adapt to contemporary challenges while remaining true to their faith.

As an international non-governmental organization (NGO), Persyarikatan Muhammadiyah operates based on Islamic principles derived from the Quran and Sunnah. The ideological foundation of Muhammadiyah is rooted in Surah Ali-Imran, verses 104 and 110, which emphasize the responsibility of Muslims to promote good and prevent evil (*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*). These Quranic teachings establish Muhammadiyah as a movement committed to moral and social reform, beginning with faith in God as its core motivation <sup>70</sup>. Every Muslim is called to uphold *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, as they are endowed with a conscience capable of distinguishing between righteousness and wrongdoing <sup>71</sup>. Muhammadiyah positions itself as a progressive Islamic social organization, promoting religious enlightenment as a reflection of transcendence, freedom, independence, and humanity <sup>72</sup>. This ideological framework distinguishes Muhammadiyah as a modernizing force within Islamic society, advocating for a rational and ethical approach to religious practice.

Muhammadiyah fulfills three primary functions, each serving a distinct purpose. First, the personal-social function represents Muhammadiyah members' rationalization of life's realities and the necessary responses aligned with their agenda. The organization recognizes two major challenges that remain unresolved: (1) impure practices in Islamic worship and (2) the persistence of cultural traditions that contradict Islamic principles (*mafsadatan*) <sup>73</sup>. In this context, Muhammadiyah members value the purification of Islamic teachings and the modernization of *mu'amalah* (social and economic transactions) to align with contemporary societal needs.

Second, the organizational function ensures the continuity of Muhammadiyah's social action structure through the use of symbols that embody its progressive Islamic identity. In the context of peacebuilding efforts in Mindanao, Muhammadiyah operates as a single organizational unit, aligning its commitments with those of other international actors within the International Contact Group (ICG). Through this collaboration, Muhammadiyah contributes to facilitating the transition from conflict to peace in Mindanao, reflecting its broader mission of promoting harmony and justice in conflict-affected regions <sup>74</sup>.

Third, the dissemination function involves the propagation of Islamic ideology, where Muhammadiyah communicates its principles through language, discourse, and symbolic representations to persuade and influence social relations. The organization's progressive Islamic ideology shapes the perspectives of both new and long-standing members, reinforcing their commitment to seeking the common good. This function extends to diplomatic engagement, as Muhammadiyah's role in peacebuilding efforts in Mindanao garnered the support of the Bangsamoro

---

<sup>70</sup> Haedar Nashir, *Understanding the Ideology of Muhammadiyah* (Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press, 2015).

<sup>71</sup> Hanan Aslamiah Thoriq, "Makna Kata 'Minkum' Q.S Ali Imran Ayat 104 Dalam Tafsir Al-Manar," Suara Muhammadiyah, 2021.

<sup>72</sup> Nashir, *Understanding the Ideology of Muhammadiyah*.

<sup>73</sup> F A Budimansyah, "Muhammadiyah in International Humanitarian Mission" (Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, 2020).

<sup>74</sup> Dewangga Ricco Pratama, "Analisa Resolusi Konflik Gerakan Muhammadiyah Di Mindanao," *Dauliyah* 4, no. 2 (2019): 15–20.

community, enabling its direct involvement in mediation and conflict resolution <sup>75</sup>. This illustrates Muhammadiyah's ability to leverage religious diplomacy in fostering peace and reconciliation <sup>76</sup>.

Muhammadiyah's vision and mission underwent significant changes in 2005, marking a shift in its role beyond the traditional scope of state institutions. This vision remains grounded in the establishment of an Islamic society, which is conceptually equivalent to civil society. Muhammadiyah envisions a social system based on divine values that is democratic, just, autonomous, progressive, and rooted in noble moral principles. Its official vision statement reads: "Increasing the role of Muhammadiyah in national and global affairs in accordance with the mission and principles of the movement." <sup>77</sup> This vision was further reinforced during the 2010 congress, where it was affirmed that Muhammadiyah holds a responsibility not only within Indonesian society but also in global humanitarian dynamics. As a result, Muhammadiyah continues to expand its engagement in international peacebuilding, education, and social welfare, emphasizing its role in addressing contemporary global challenges.

Muhammadiyah's participation in conflict resolution cannot be separated from broader global conflicts. As Din Syamsuddin describes it, contemporary conflicts are often struggles between civilizations, with direct consequences for religious harmony and peace <sup>78</sup>. Meanwhile, according to <sup>79</sup>, the increasing expectation for Muhammadiyah to engage in conflict resolution is closely tied to Islamophobia—a condition in which trust in Islam has declined, and many perceive Islam as a source of potential threat. In its peacebuilding efforts in Mindanao, Muhammadiyah aims to achieve the following objectives: (1) facilitate a comprehensive peace between the Philippine government and Mindanao Muslims, (2) present a peaceful image of Islam based on non-violence, (3) advocate for the rights of Mindanao Muslims as equal citizens, and (4) contribute to improving the Human Development Index (HDI) of Mindanao Muslims.

Muhammadiyah's contribution to peace in Mindanao began with its role as a mediator in negotiations between conflicting parties. Its mediation efforts can be categorized into two approaches: participation within the International Contact Group (ICG) and independent peace initiatives. As an ICG member, Muhammadiyah actively participated in various mediation forums, including the ICG I International Forum held in Malaysia in 2012, where it sent delegates to engage with multiple stakeholders <sup>80</sup>. According to <sup>81</sup>, Muhammadiyah's involvement in the 2012 Framework Agreement between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was a key factor in its success.

On April 5-6, 2013, Muhammadiyah University in Surakarta hosted an independent peace forum titled "Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Bangsamoro." The forum brought together diverse participants, including representatives from the MILF, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), the Henry Dunant Center (Switzerland), the Indonesian Ambassador to the Philippines, and diplomatic representatives from Japan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the European Union. Additionally, the Government of the Special Region of Aceh and academic institutions also

---

<sup>75</sup> Fadri Ari Sandi And Syamsul Ma'arif, "Diplomasi Muhammadiyah Di Tengah Pusaran Konflik Mindanao Filipina Selatan" (Universitas Lampung, 2018).

<sup>76</sup> Afandi Afandi, "Tangani Konflik Mindanao, Bangsamoro Antusias Ingin Menjadi Anggota Muhammadiyah," Muhammadiyah Cahaya Islam Berkemajuan, 2021.

<sup>77</sup> Sudibyo Markus, *Masyarakat Islam Yang Sebenar-Benarnya* (Jakarta: Civil Islamic Institute, 2009).

<sup>78</sup> Alpha Amirrachman, "Dialog Antar-Agama Dan Kerja Sama Strategis Antar-Peradaban: Sebuah Pencapaian Soft Diplomacy," in *Islam Berkemajuan Untuk Peradaban Dunia: Refleksi Dan Agenda Muhammadiyah Ke Depan* (Bandung: Mizan, 2015).

<sup>79</sup> Latief and Nashir (2020)

<sup>80</sup> Muhammad Zahrul Anam and Surwandono Surwandono, "NGOs and Peace Building in the Philippines: Muhammadiyah's Reconstruction Plan for the Bangsamoro Post Peace Agreement," *Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta*, 2013, 1–12.

<sup>81</sup> Sandi and Ma'arif (2018)

took part. The forum successfully established a strategic peace plan for 2012-2021, aimed at promoting unity and stability in Bangsamoro<sup>82</sup>. In the same spirit, Muhammadiyah collaborated with CDCC, the Cheng-Ho Multicultural and Education Trust, and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) to organize the informal World Peace Forum in Bogor in late 2013, where participants successfully developed a Joint Road Map between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the MILF, and the Philippine government<sup>83</sup>.

Following the ratification of the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro (CAB) in 2014, Muhammadiyah, along with other ICG members, joined the monitoring team tasked with overseeing the implementation of the peace agreement. However, several challenges emerged, both due to political resistance from Philippine government elites and security concerns in Mindanao. One of the major obstacles was the failure of the Philippine House of Representatives (DPR) to fully approve the agreement's implementation, delaying progress. Additionally, tensions escalated following the Mamasapano incident, in which 44 members of the Philippine military and dozens of MILF fighters were killed in a violent clash. This tragic event severely impacted public perception, leading many to question whether the agreement had meaningfully improved relations between the MILF and the Philippine government<sup>84</sup>.

After a series of negotiations and the implementation of the peace agreement, Muhammadiyah conducted post-war rehabilitation in Mindanao with an emphasis on five key issues. The first aspect is economic. Muhammadiyah proposed initiatives aimed at moderating political conflict between Bangsamoro factions and the Philippine government, ultimately leading to the establishment of peace in Mindanao. These initiatives are primarily based on microfinance. Specifically, Muhammadiyah realizes its microfinance aid through sharia-based institutionalization, notably through *the Baitul Maal wa Tamwil (BMT)* model, which is well-established in Indonesia<sup>85</sup>. The proposal to institutionalize microfinance assistance reflects Muhammadiyah's response to the economic mapping of the Bangsamoro people's livelihoods, which are predominantly based in agriculture, animal husbandry, and fishing<sup>86</sup>. The BMT concept is considered particularly suitable for distributing microfinance aid to individuals employed in these industries, ensuring that financial support is aligned with their economic activities.

The second aspect is social integration. Muhammadiyah plays an active role in uniting fragmented sectors of society amidst the separatist conflicts in Mindanao. This is particularly evident from Muhammadiyah's participation in organizing the 2013 World Peace Forum (WPF) in Bogor, which resulted in the creation of a Joint Road Map. This agreement reflects a mutual understanding between two key political forces in Mindanao: the nationalist-oriented MNLF and the Islamic-oriented MILF. The Joint Road Map symbolizes the consolidation of these groups into a unified entity, "Bangsamoro", and reaffirms the Bangsamoro agreement with the Philippine government<sup>87</sup>. To support the implementation of this agreement, Muhammadiyah collaborates with

---

<sup>82</sup> Muhammad Najib Azca, *Dua Menyemai Damai: Peran Dan Kontribusi Muhammadiyah Dan Nadhatul Ulama Dalam Perdamaian Dan Demokrasi* (Yogyakarta: Pusat Studi Keamanan dan Perdamaian Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2019).

<sup>83</sup> Sandi And Ma'arif, "Diplomasi Muhammadiyah Di Tengah Pusaran Konflik Mindanao Filipina Selatan."

<sup>84</sup> A Abubakar and K Askandar, "Mindanao," in *Comparing Peace Processes* (Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia: Taylor and Francis, 2019), 161–78, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315436616-10>.

<sup>85</sup> Surwandono, *Manajemen Konflik Separatisme: Dinamika Negosiasi Dalam Penyelesaian Konflik Mindanao*.

<sup>86</sup> Surwandono Surwandono, "Relevansi Pelembagaan Investasi Ekonomi Berbasis Syariah Pada Masyarakat Muslim Di Mindanao," *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional* 4, no. 1 (2015): 35–46, <https://doi.org/10.18196/hi.2015.0064.35-46>.

<sup>87</sup> Anam and Surwandono, "NGOs and Peace Building in the Philippines: Muhammadiyah's Reconstruction Plan for the Bangsamoro Post Peace Agreement."

Philippine NGOs such as the Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy<sup>88</sup>. Through these efforts, Muhammadiyah plays a significant role in social integration, specifically by reuniting previously segregated sectors of society and promoting reconciliation.

The third aspect is health. Addressing community health services is a core component of Muhammadiyah's 2020 Road Map for Bangsamoro, which includes step-by-step plans to improve the health sector. Muhammadiyah's role as an educator in Mindanao has been crucial, particularly in enhancing the human resources of the Bangsamoro community. One example of this is Muhammadiyah's deployment of medical personnel to the Philippines to meet the healthcare needs of the Bangsamoro people<sup>89</sup>. Additionally, sending medical personnel provides an opportunity for Muhammadiyah to share its expertise in hospital management, further strengthening the local health infrastructure<sup>90</sup>. This exchange of knowledge has generated interest among the Bangsamoro community, some of whom have been inspired to join Muhammadiyah as cadres, which in turn has contributed to health facility development in the region.

The fourth aspect is politics. Muhammadiyah has played a critical role in establishing a political climate in Mindanao that fosters peace while accommodating the needs of all parties. Muhammadiyah also voiced its position in forums that addressed the Bangsamoro demand for political autonomy and the Philippine government's reluctance to grant full sovereignty over the Mindanao region. For example, at the Multi Stakeholders Dialogue on Bangsamoro forum at UMS in 2013, Muhammadiyah facilitated discussions and shared its perspective, along with other ICG partners, regarding assistance to the Bangsamoro Transitional Committee. This committee was tasked with preparing the Bangsamoro ministerial autonomous government within the framework of the Philippine government's constitutional powers. Specifically, Muhammadiyah assisted in the development of fundamental law, reconstruction, and the implementation of development initiatives<sup>91</sup>. Furthermore, Muhammadiyah served as a conduit for communication between the Bangsamoro

The fifth aspect is education. In addition to its role in the health sector, Muhammadiyah actively leverages the human resources of the Bangsamoro community through its peacebuilding initiatives. Muhammadiyah's educational efforts focus on improving the quality of education at elementary schools, secondary schools, universities, and research institutions in Mindanao. By enhancing educational opportunities, Muhammadiyah seeks to empower future leaders within the Bangsamoro community who can contribute to sustainable peace and development<sup>92</sup>.

A key initiative in this effort was Muhammadiyah's scholarship program, launched at the start of the 2013-2014 academic year. Through this program, dozens of Muslim and non-Muslim Bangsamoro students were awarded scholarships to pursue postgraduate studies at Muhammadiyah-affiliated universities, including Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta, and Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY)<sup>93</sup>. This initiative provided Bangsamoro students with access to higher education, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to their community's development.

---

<sup>88</sup> Azca, *Dua Menyemai Damai: Peran Dan Kontribusi Muhammadiyah Dan Nadhatul Ulama Dalam Perdamaian Dan Demokrasi*.

<sup>89</sup> Sheila Medina, "Strategi Muhammadiyah Dalam Proses Perda Maian Konflik Mindanao" (Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, 2017).

<sup>90</sup> Anam and Surwandono, "NGOs and Peace Building in the Philippines: Muhammadiyah's Reconstruction Plan for the Bangsamoro Post Peace Agreement."

<sup>91</sup> Azca, *Dua Menyemai Damai: Peran Dan Kontribusi Muhammadiyah Dan Nadhatul Ulama Dalam Perdamaian Dan Demokrasi*.

<sup>92</sup> Anam and Surwandono, "NGOs and Peace Building in the Philippines: Muhammadiyah's Reconstruction Plan for the Bangsamoro Post Peace Agreement."

<sup>93</sup> Medina, "Strategi Muhammadiyah Dalam Proses Perda Maian Konflik Mindanao."

Furthermore, Muhammadiyah ensures that Bangsamoro students enrolled in the International Relations department at UMY receive a strong emphasis on peace studies. The objective is to equip these students with a deeper understanding of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, so they may one day play an active role in preserving peace in their homeland. This initiative serves as a platform for Muhammadiyah to enhance the quality of Bangsamoro human resources while also sharing its expertise in educational and institutional management with the Bangsamoro community.

## Conclusion

Muhammadiyah and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) have effectively implemented their peace programs in post-conflict regions, positioning themselves as key international non-governmental organization (INGO) players. Both organizations base their visions of peace on religious principles that emphasize the universal value of humanity and the importance of peace for all people, regardless of ethnic or religious differences. This shared commitment to humanitarian and peace ideals has made Muhammadiyah and CRS widely accepted by all parties involved in Mindanao and Timor-Leste peace initiatives (as shown in Table 1 below). Their focus on human values influences peace efforts that aim to alleviate the suffering of conflict victims, addressing injuries, starvation, and homelessness in war-torn communities.

**Table 1. Comparison of CRS Peacebuilding Initiatives in Timor Leste and Muhammadiyah in Mindanao**

No	Variabel/Sub Variabel		CRS in Timor Leste	Muhammadiyah In Mindanao
1	Ideology		Catholic	Islam
2	Peacebuilding strategy: reducing human suffering	1. Assistance to refugees	√	√
		2. Emergency assistance	√	-
		3. Protection of conflict victims	√	-
3	Peacebuilding strategy: negotiating and implementing durable peace agreements	1. Mediation	√	√
		2. Involvement in monitoring the implementation of the agreement	√	√
4	Peacebuilding strategies: Postwar reconstruction	1. Economy	√	√
		2. Social Integration	√	√
		3. Health	√	√
		4. Politics	√	√
		5. Education	√	√

*Source: Processed from various sources.*

In socio-religious conflicts such as those in Mindanao and Timor-Leste, the ideological foundation of religion provided both organizations with significant negotiating strength. In Mindanao, the Moro nation entrusted Muhammadiyah with mediating peace talks with the Philippine government

due to its neutral stance and commitment to Islamic humanitarian principles. The Philippine government, in turn, recognized Muhammadiyah's moderate vision, enabling it to gain the trust of both conflicting parties. Similarly, in Timor-Leste, CRS benefitted from sociological connections to the predominantly Catholic population. As an organization closely associated with the Catholic Church—an institution highly respected in Timorese society—CRS was widely accepted by both warring factions, reinforcing its role as a credible mediator in peace negotiations.

Beyond their shared commitment to promoting human values, peace, and religion, Muhammadiyah and CRS also employed similar peacebuilding strategies. Their approaches can be categorized into three main areas: (1) reducing human suffering, (2) negotiating and implementing durable peace agreements, and (3) facilitating post-conflict reconstruction. In alleviating suffering, Muhammadiyah focused primarily on refugee relief, whereas CRS engaged in a broader range of humanitarian efforts, including refugee assistance, emergency aid, and victim protection. Both organizations also played crucial roles as mediators and monitors during peace negotiations, ensuring that agreements were effectively implemented and adhered to. In post-conflict reconstruction, Muhammadiyah and CRS engaged in similar initiatives, including economic development, social integration, healthcare, political engagement, and education. These overlapping efforts demonstrate that religiously motivated peacebuilding organizations can play a significant role in conflict resolution, fostering stability and sustainable development in post-war societies.

## References

- Abubakar, A, and K Askandar. "Mindanao." In *Comparing Peace Processes*, 161–78. Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia: Taylor and Francis, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315436616-10>.
- Afandi, Afandi. "Tangani Konflik Mindanao, Bangsamoro Antusias Ingin Menjadi Anggota Muhammadiyah." Muhammadiyah Cahaya Islam Berkemajuan, 2021.
- Amirrachman, Alpha. "Dialog Antar-Agama Dan Kerja Sama Strategis Antar-Peradaban: Sebuah Pencapaian Soft Diplomacy." In *Islam Berkemajuan Untuk Peradaban Dunia: Refleksi Dan Agenda Muhammadiyah Ke Depan*. Bandung: Mizan, 2015.
- Anam, Muhammad Zahrul, and Surwandono Surwandono. "NGOs and Peace Building in the Philippines: Muhammadiyah's Reconstruction Plan for the Bangsamoro Post Peace Agreement." *Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta*, 2013, 1–12.
- Anderlini, Sanam Naraghi, and Judy El-Bushra. "Post-Conflict Reconstruction." *Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action*, 2004, 51–68.
- Anwar, Jamil, and SAF Hasnu. "Ideology, Purpose, Core Values and Leadership: How They Influence the Vision of an Organization?" *International Journal of Learning and Development* 3, no. 3 (2013): 168. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijld.v3i3.3642>.
- Arsam, -. "Strategi Dakwah Dalam Menanamkan Nilai-Nilai Islam Rahmatan Lil'alamin Di Lingkungan Masyarakat (Studi Terhadap Dosen-Dosen STAIN Purwokerto)." *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 9, no. 2 (January 26, 2017): 276–301. <https://doi.org/10.24090/komunika.v9i2.854>.
- Azca, Muhammad Najib. *Dua Menyemai Damai: Peran Dan Kontribusi Muhammadiyah Dan Nadhatul Ulama Dalam Perdamaian Dan Demokrasi*. Yogyakarta: Pusat Studi Keamanan dan Perdamaian Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2019.
- Bah, Abu Bakarr. "Civil Non-State Actors in Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding in West Africa." *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 17, no. 3–4 (2013): 313–36. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18754112-1704008>.
- Banholzer, Lilli. "When Do Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs Succeed?" *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2367307>.
- Bolton, Neil, and Liliana Amaral. *Laletek Project Manual Strategic Community Peacebuilding in Practice*. Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services, 2013.
- Budimansyah, F A. "Muhammadiyah in International Humanitarian Mission." Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, 2020.



- Capacci, CC, and M Pozniak. *Creating Partnerships, Educating Children Case Studies from Catholic Relief Services*. Maryland: Catholic Relief Services, 2004.
- Catholic Relief Service. "About Catholic Relief Services." CRS® faith. action, results., 2021.
- . "About Education." CRS® faith. action, results., 2021.
- . "About Health System Strengthening," 2021.
- . "Mission Statement." CRS® faith. action, results., 2021.
- . "Peacebuilding and Justice." CRS® faith. action, results., 2021.
- . "Timor Leste (East Timor)." CRS® faith. action, results., 2021.
- Chassy, Aaron, Linda Gamova, Ruth Allen, Rebecca Benett, David Cortright, and Sarah Ford. *Engaging Government: A CRS Guide for Working for Social Change*. Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services, 2018.
- Davies, Rick, and Jess Dart. *The Most Significant Change Technique: A Guide to Its Use*. Geneva: Care International, 2005. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0983-9\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0983-9_8).
- Galtung, Johan. "Cultural Violence." *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no. 3 (1990): 291–305. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343390027003005>.
- Ginty, Roger Mac. "Hybrid Peace: The Interaction Between Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peace." *Security Dialogue* 41, no. 4 (2010): 391–412. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010610374312>.
- Heideman, Laura J. *Pathologies in Peacebuilding: Donors, Ngos, and Community Peacebuilding in Croatia. Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*. Vol. 36. Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2013. [https://doi.org/10.1108/S0163-786X\(2013\)0000036008](https://doi.org/10.1108/S0163-786X(2013)0000036008).
- Ken, John P Hackett, Piraino Dave, and Rivera. "Catholic Relief Services : One Organization ' s Journey with Catholic Social Thought and Corporate Social Responsibility." In *The Good Company: Catholic Social Thought and Corporate Social Responsibility in Dialogue*, 1–19, 2006.
- Latief, Hilman, and Haedar Nashir. "Local Dynamics and Global Engagements of the Islamic Modernist Movement in Contemporary Indonesia: The Case of Muhammadiyah (2000-2020)." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 39, no. 2 (2020): 290–309. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1868103420910514>.
- LeBrun, Emile, Robert Muggah, and James Turton. "Groups, Gangs, and Armed Violence in Timor-Leste On." *Issue Brief: Timor-Leste Armed Violence Assessment*. Geneva, 2009.
- Lilja, Jannie, and Kristine Höglund. "The Role of the External in Local Peacebuilding: Enabling Action—Managing Risk." *Global Governance* 24, no. 3 (2018): 411–30. <https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-02403007>.
- Love, Maryann Cusimano. "Partnering for Peace in The Philippines: Military and Religious Engagement." *GUISD Pew Case Study Center*, 2011.
- Maria, Catharina. "Building Social Cohesion from Below: Learning from the Laetek (Bridge) Project 2010-2012." In *A New Era?: Timor-Leste after the UN*, edited by Sue Ingram, Lia Kent, and Andrew McWilliam. Acton: Australian National University Press, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.22459/ne.09.2015>.
- Markus, Sudibyo. *Masyarakat Islam Yang Sebenar-Benarnya*. Jakarta: Civil Islamic Institute, 2009.
- McGregor, Andrew, Laura Skeaff, and Marianne Bevan. "Overcoming Secularism? Catholic Development Geographies in Timor-Leste." *Third World Quarterly* 33, no. 6 (2012): 1129–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2012.681497>.
- Medina, Sheila. "Strategi Muhammadiyah Dalam Proses Perda Maian Konflik Mindanao." Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, 2017.
- Muggah, Robert, and Emile Lebrun. *Special Report: Timor-Leste Armed Violence Assessment Final Report*, 2010. <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/C-Special-reports/SAS-SR12-Timor-Leste-Armed-Violence-Assessment-Final-Rep.pdf>.
- Murphy, William Francis. "The Social Initiatives of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops." *Catholic Social Science Review* 18 (2013): 45–61. <https://doi.org/10.5840/cssr2013185>.
- Nashir, Haedar. *Understanding the Ideology of Muhammadiyah*. Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press, 2015.
- Papagianni, Katia. "Mediation, Political Engagement, and Peacebuilding." *Global Governance* 16, no.

- 2 (2010): 243–63.
- Pratama, Dewangga Ricco. “Analisa Resolusi Konflik Gerakan Muhammadiyah Di Mindanao.” *Dauliyah* 4, no. 2 (2019): 15–20.
- Rees, Edward. “Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Peace Operations: ‘Improvisation and Confusion’ from the Field.” In *International Peacekeeping: The Yearbook of International Peace Operations*, edited by Harvey Langholtz, Boris Kondoch, and Alan Wells, 12:139–66. Amsterdam: Koninklijke Brill N. V, 2008. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18754112-90000059>.
- Ross, Nick. *Civil Society’s Role in Monitoring and Verifying Peace Agreements: Seven Lessons from International Experiences Geneva*. Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, 2017.
- Sá, José Belarmino De. “UNW and CRS Held Spotlight on Conflict Prevention against Women and Children.” *Agencia Noticiosa de Timor Leste*, 2021.
- Sajed, Alina. “From the Third World to the Global South.” *E-International Relations*, 2020.
- Sandi, Fadri Ari, and Syamsul Ma’arif. “Diplomasi Muhammadiyah Di Tengah Pusaran Konflik Mindanao Filipina Selatan.” *Universitas Lampung*, 2018.
- Scambary, James. “Laletek Project Final Evaluation (Final Report).” *Canberra*, 2012.
- Surwandono, Surwandono. *Manajemen Konflik Separatisme: Dinamika Negosiasi Dalam Penyelesaian Konflik Mindanao*. Yogyakarta, 2013.
- . “Relevansi Pelembagaan Investasi Ekonomi Berbasis Syariah Pada Masyarakat Muslim Di Mindanao.” *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional* 4, no. 1 (2015): 35–46. <https://doi.org/10.18196/hi.2015.0064.35-46>.
- Tavares, Domingas Soares Maia. “Program Micro-Finance Sebagai Sarana Pemberdayaan Perempuan: Efektivitas Dan Potensi Keberlanjutannya Studi Kasus Pada NGO Lokal Tuba Rai Metin (TRM) Dili -Timor Leste.” *Gastronomía Ecuatoriana y Turismo Local*. Universitas Sanata Dharma, 2017.
- Teskey, Graham, Et.all. “Guidance for Supporting State- Building in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States : A Tool-Kit.” *Washington: The World Bank Group*, 2012.
- Thoriq, Hanan Aslamiah. “Makna Kata ‘Minkum’ Q.S Ali Imran Ayat 104 Dalam Tafsir Al-Manar.” *Suara Muhammadiyah*, 2021.
- UN OCHA. “Catholic Relief Services’ Response to East Timor and Indonesia Crisis: Update May 2000.” *ReliefWeb*, 2000.
- . “Catholic Relief Services’ Response to East Timor Update: Spring 2001.” *ReliefWeb*, 2001.
- Verkoren, Willemijn, and Mathijs van Leeuwen. “Civil Society in Peacebuilding: Global Discourse, Local Reality.” *International Peacekeeping* 20, no. 2 (2013): 159–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2013.791560>.
- Walton, Oliver. “Conflict, Peacebuilding and NGO Legitimacy: National NGOs in Sri Lanka.” *Conflict, Security & Development* 8, no. 1 (2008): 133–67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14678800801977146>.
- Wingender, Leslie M. *Humanitarian Response in Violent Conflict: A Toolbox of Conflict Sensitive Indicators*. Edited by Aaron M. Chassy. Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services, 2013.