

# Use of GECARR in conflict contexts

## Case Study: Marawi, Philippines

### The ‘Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response’ (GECARR) tool

The Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR) is a World Vision context analysis tool that provides a macro-level analysis of a country or a specific region during or in anticipation of a crisis. GECARR is designed to be an inter-agency tool and it's adaptable, so that it can be used in unpredictable and conflict-prone contexts.

GECARR draws together the views of a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders, including local community members and produces a snapshot of the current situation and likely future scenarios. It generates actionable and practical recommendations for key stakeholders involved in humanitarian responses. Between 2014 and 2019, World Vision conducted 30 GECARR analyses in locations including the Central African Republic, Syria, Jordan, Kurdish Region of Iraq, Sierra Leone (Ebola), Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and the Philippines.



Marawi



**GECARR**  
Good Enough  
Context Analysis  
for Rapid Response

# Use of GECARR in conflict contexts

## Case Study: Marawi, Philippines

### The Process

In May 2017, a non-state armed group entered Marawi city in the southern Philippines. In response, the government launched a military and law enforcement operation. This escalated to a deadly conflict between government troops and the non-state armed group, causing the urban population to flee and seek refuge in nearby towns and provinces such as Iligan city, Lanao Del Norte, Lanao Sur, Misamis Oriental, and Cagayan de Oro. By August 2017, the conflict had displaced an estimated 360,000 to 400,000 people from Marawi city and surrounding municipalities.

World Vision in the Philippines commissioned a Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR) in August 2017, to inform its new response in the area. This involved interviewing 125 people through 10 focus group discussions (FGDs), and 13 key informant interviews (KIIs) in Lanao Sur/Iligan city, Lanao Norte, and Cagayan De Oro city. Those interviewed included displaced people from Marawi, local host communities, women, children and youth, religious and traditional leaders (both Christian and Muslim), and representatives from local businesses and the local government. A scenario planning workshop was held in order to decide upon three likely scenarios. There was participation from 11 World Vision staff and 11 external participants representing local

organisations (CSOs) and faith based organisations (FBOs) mainly working in the fields of education, social services, child protection, youth development and participation.

The three GECARR scenarios from this exercise (the delay or absence of passing the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL)- which gave more autonomy to the region; the slow disbursement of aid; and the return of internally displaced people, IDPs) materialised in different ways. For scenario one, the Bangsamoro Basic Law was eventually passed. However, interviewees felt the delay meant there were still some negative impacts as predicted in the GECARR. For the second scenario, most interviewees felt that the disbursement of aid was timely in general, although there were some delays to the start of education activities. There were also some complaints as well as a limit on the available resources at the government level because of disasters in other parts of the country at the same time. Although these two scenarios did not materialise exactly, their being predicted by the GECARR meant staff were then better able to put in place contingency plans. Most agreed that the third scenario of IDP returns was still ongoing and relevant for the response, as although many had returned some were still living with relatives and others were not yet back in their place of origin.

Princess joins thousands of children inside evacuation centers who could not go to school because of the ongoing armed crisis in Marawi.



# The Impact

The Marawi GECARR was useful for the World Vision office for several reasons. GECARR became the foundation the team used to provide context and cultural sensitivity to build and formulate their overarching strategy. This helped them in three ways:

- by focusing their efforts and prioritising programming choices
- by raising awareness of the need for a new way of working (i.e. transitioning from their normal development focus to a humanitarian response)
- and by pre-empting a conversation about the resources necessary to meet their response targets and helping to shape their grant acquisition strategy.

Marawi was the first time World Vision had responded to a very fragile context, and so the GECARR exercise was paramount in providing an effective response, especially in terms of security awareness and conflict and cultural sensitivity.

As a result of the GECARR recommendations, World Vision created a food security and livelihoods programme, whereas previously, their focus has been on non-food items (NFI's) and water and sanitation (WASH). The findings of the GECARR shifted their focus towards the more immediate issues at hand. A recommendation in the GECARR to work more on psychosocial support was also then reflected in

the response strategy. World Vision developed its programming to include faith and traditional leaders, empowering children and youth as peace advocates and provision of cash based assistance, school facilities and enabling provision of psychological support by faith leaders.

Another impact of the GECARR's collaborative approach was that external invitees became partners in the response. Access to the affected area was restricted and having a group of different partners across sectors helped minimise issues around lack of access in an area relatively unknown to the team. These critical partnerships also helped the team to clarify some of the local context that needed to be considered in the response. Another effect of looking at the context with other stakeholders in the response was an increased understanding amongst the team of the importance of these partnerships across all the World Vision programmes in the Philippines.

Finally, the GECARR analysis reflected on connectors and dividers (what unites/divides) in the community, and this was useful for the response's stakeholder engagement. It pointed to specific sensitivities that World Vision needed to navigate carefully when relating to community members, local and national organisations and government, especially around ethnic and political issues. It also gave ideas on how to strengthen community cohesion.

World Vision relief efforts for the displaced families of Marawi.



# Learnings

- **Good communication enabled senior leadership buy in**
- **Using GECARR as a starting point and following up with further analysis where necessary**

Several interviewees noted the strong support and trust of senior WorldVision leaders was critical to enabling the team on the ground to move forward with the GECARR. One key aspect of getting this ownership and buy in was regular communication.

The GECARR process was helpful as a framework for the response to organise their thinking, go deeper in some areas, listen to the community and come up with new ideas.

The GECARR process was helpful as a framework for the response to organise their thinking, go deeper in some areas, listen to the community and come up with new ideas. However, the GECARR provided mainly a macro analysis of the context and a more in-depth analysis was needed to understand the deeper dynamics between community members affected by the conflict. WorldVision then put this in place through a three-hour community-based analysis as part of its cash-based programming. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the community and complemented the GECARR findings. Due to the ever-changing situation on the ground, the team also acknowledged the need to keep checking the findings to ensure that they were still relevant as much as possible.

World Vision, through its local partner Rawaten, reached 400 families through provision of hygiene kits and non-food items. 400 children also received learner's kits.



Image © 2017 Florence Joy Maluyo/World Vision



## • Broadening participation for better diversity

Identifying the right people to give accurate information at the correct time during the conflict was challenging for this GECARR. Some World Vision facilitators reflected that unfortunately the exercise did not have participation from certain external actors such as the military, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and peer international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), which could have further improved the analysis.

There was also a limitation because some potential participants were afraid to speak openly or participate in the process due to the conflict and fear of those in power. The challenge of getting a diversity of views is not new to GECARR but reinforces the need for a discussion of who should be involved and invited at the start of any GECARR, so the whole team can be aware of potential gaps or limitations and brainstorm for solutions if appropriate.

## • Supporting the transition from a development to humanitarian mindset

Most of the organisations operating on the ground, especially in the beginning of the conflict, were development organisations. They did not have much emergency relief experience related to conflict, and so the GECARR was helpful in giving them guidance and context moving forward.

Most of the organisations operating on the ground, especially in the beginning of the conflict, were development organisations. They did not have much emergency relief experience related to conflict, and so the GECARR was helpful in giving them guidance and context moving forward.



## • The right capacity

The GECARR required a variety of people and resources to come together for a successful exercise. World Vision staff in the Philippines had previously been trained in research and Do No Harm (DNH)<sup>1</sup>, which enabled them to understand and lead on the GECARR process. Without this existing capacity, the exercise might have struggled, especially as tensions were high mid-conflict. However, not all members of the team had previously been trained, and staff felt more time and support in terms of tool orientation would have given them increased confidence during data collection. Those interviewed also noted the need for flexibility when implementing the GECARR, both in terms of process, as it was new to many, in addition to being able to put the tool into practice in a fragile context.

1. <https://www.wvi.org/peacebuilding-and-conflict-sensitivity/do-no-harm>

## • Acknowledging mental health within a GECARR

As World Vision processed the GECARR information, the level of emotion was quite high amongst the IDPs and the team who interviewed them. Considering this, these FGDs and KIIs were triangulated with other data, including during the scenario planning workshop, to check any biases and assumptions. Debriefing was done with each team at the end of the day to review the results and to share experiences as a way of processing what they had heard. The fact that four out of the eight team members were already trained on conflict sensitivity was helpful as they had prior experience collecting and analysing information from highly sensitive contexts.

World Vision, through its local partner Rawaten, reached 400 families through provision of hygiene kits and non-food items. 400 children also received learner's kits.

