

Reference

I am more than happy to endorse ab2cd, inc.. The Global Fund for Women has given ab2cd 2 grants in the past two years, one for \$8,000 and the second for \$10,000. The primary focus of these grants was to enhance women's livelihood skills and create successful models of micro-business that are both economically and ecologically sound, as well as support education for women and children. ab2cd has worked on an innovative model of women's communal gardens, that are collective income generators for women and their families in marginalized communities in Mindanao, Philippines. I visited a few of their communities around Cotabato and Iligan in January this year, and was impressed to see how much legitimacy and respect ab2cd's staff have in these communities, as a result of their support. GFW believes strongly in the power of women's leadership in transforming communities, and ab2cd certainly uses this lens to build the agency and autonomy of women, at the same time as creating a communal model in which women, men and children can flourish.

I would like to add that ab2cd works in a very difficult and complex context in the Philippines, with Mindanao being the site of one of the longest running civil conflicts in the world and where families traditionally depend on farming and fishing to sustain their livelihoods, while continuing to face old and new challenges. In this unstable environment, illegal logging and mining and land grabbing has been prevalent, as has been the continuing threat of climate change and environmental disasters. Commercial and political interests have pitted different social groups and tribes against each other in the area that ab2cd works. This area is known for the "tri-people," referring to the Muslim, Christian, and Lumads (a group of more than twenty different ethno-linguistic tribes). ab2cd explains that these groups "long have harmoniously lived with each other until people bringing clear vested interests ... were successfully able to make the people hate each other." While women have a historical and traditional role of peacemaker in these situations, their roles have been challenged by heightened armed conflict, violence, abandonment, and material poverty. The group believes that it is important to focus on women to solve all these problems, as women "will have a crucial influence on transforming said conflicts. Women also are the ones nurturing their families – making sure children are sent to school, providing for their health care, insuring nutrition and food are available on their tables, while men go and do their chores." The group believes that economic empowerment and education are the root of the solution to these interrelated problems.

Our advisor in the Philippines has strongly endorsed ab2cd in the past, saying: "It is doing excellent work among women, children and some elderly in Iligan City. It has committed workers." We also received positive reports from one of the group's other international funders, who told us that the group was "committed, open-minded, punctual in reporting and collaborative." We have also found them to be transparent and clear in their reporting. In turn, we are pleased to recommend ab2cd to Europe Tiers Monde.

Please let me know if you have any more questions.

Warmly,

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