



2020–2023 Impact Report

**Expanding horizons  
through Cultural  
Relations, Education,  
and English Proficiency**

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# Message from our Country Director

As we reflect on our journey, it is evident that times have significantly changed since 2020. The pandemic brought unprecedented challenges, affecting every aspect of our lives and work. Yet, despite these hurdles, the British Council has tirelessly ensured the continuation of our mission. Our resilience and commitment have allowed us to adapt and thrive, reinforcing our role as one of the Philippines' cultural relations leaders.

Since 2020, we have embraced change and innovation, ensuring our work in Education, English, and Arts remains impactful and relevant. Our efforts have contributed to significant policy-making and cultural and academic development in the country. We have influenced the legislation of the Transnational Higher Education Act of 2019 and the Philippine Creative Industries Act of 2022. We have pioneered 15 UK-Philippines academic postgraduate degrees and empowered over 30 research activities and 90 academics through our education programmes.

Through our English and Exams work, we have supported over half a million Filipinos, helping them achieve their dreams of living, working, and studying abroad. We have opened numerous test centres, with our operations growing year on year. Behind these impressive numbers are countless stories of transformed lives, representing our work's most meaningful and lasting impact.

In 2023, we proudly celebrated our 45th anniversary. Over the last four and a half decades, the Philippines has become a dynamic hotspot for opportunities in English language teaching and assessment, higher education, creative industries, and cultural exchanges. As the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities, we will continue to forge more profound and meaningful ties, supporting the aspirations and ambitions of the Philippines.

This impact report hopes to highlight our work and tell the story of the British Council. Our core values—

supporting peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding, and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide—are central to everything we do. We combine the UK's deep expertise in arts and culture, education, and the English language with our global presence and relationships in over 100 countries.

I sincerely thank those who have been with us throughout this remarkable journey—from our partners, stakeholders, and the excellent British Council team who worked hard to make this all a success. Here's to celebrating diversity, collaboration, and many more exciting opportunities in the future!

**Lotus Postrado**  
Director Philippines  
British Council



2020–2023 in review

# Collective cultures, shared futures

Despite the pandemic and other global challenges, the British Council in the Philippines has demonstrated remarkable resilience over the past three years. In 2023, we proudly celebrated our 45th year, a testament to our unwavering commitment and sustained presence in the country. Our dedication to cultural relations and educational opportunities has led to a series of initiatives, bolstering the creative economy, supporting sustainable development, and strengthening educational ties between the United Kingdom (UK) and the Philippines.

This section is a celebration of our joint achievements: key milestones that have shaped our cultural landscapes and paved the way for future collaborations. These are the collective cultures that the Philippines and the UK have worked on together. As we look ahead, we are filled with optimism and excitement for the potential to build an even stronger shared future between the two countries.

2021

## Artistic and creative industries strengthened

Our Design Economy Mapping Initiative with the Design Center of the Philippines (DCP) informed the country's National Design Policy, which contributed to creating the Philippine Creative Industries Development Act (PCIDA) by mapping the creative economy to promote sustainable development. Alongside this initiative, the Creative Innovators Programme supported and expanded creative hubs across the Philippines, enhancing the creative sector's growth and inclusivity.



## ACT-IHE Programme launched

Building on the success of the Joint Development of Niche Programmes through PH-UK Linkage (JDNP), our pilot project on transnational education (TNE), we launched its continuation and our current flagship education project, the Access and Competitiveness through Internationalisation of Higher Education (ACT-IHE), together with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). This collaboration aimed to provide Filipinos with access to quality higher education and improve the competitiveness of Philippine universities.



## Artistic collaborations launched

The Making Futures Conference in Cebu co-hosted by the Arts University Plymouth, the Design Center of the Philippines, and the Philippine Textile Research Institute brought together practitioners to address global challenges within craft communities. The three-day event was one of the British Council's last face-to-face activities before lockdowns were implemented due to the global pandemic.



## Creative Innovators Programme concluded

The Creative Innovators Programme, which concluded in 2021, successfully established hubs that have been instrumental in supporting and nurturing creative industries in the Philippines. This initiative is supported by partners such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Design Center of the Philippines (DCP), Apl.de.Ap Foundation, and Thames International.

## Woven Networks Programme started

The British Council launched the Woven Networks Programme with the Forest Foundation Philippines under our global Crafting Futures initiative. The programme aimed to initiate new collaborations and support projects that champion indigenous knowledge systems for sustainable resource management and improved livelihoods of craft communities.

## Justice Sector Reform Agreement signed

The European Union awarded the British Council a technical assistance contract for the GOJUST II programme to support the national government in enhancing the efficiency and accountability of the Philippines' justice system.





2020–2023 in review



2021



Expanding IELTS on Computer test centres

In 2021, we opened our centres at STI College (Pasay City), MFI Polytechnic Institute (Pasig City), Systems Plus Colleges (Quezon City and Pampanga), and Ateneo de Naga (Bicol). We also launched the first Partner Test Point within Southeast Asia (SEA 2 cluster) with our partner, CARE Immigration Services Dipolog, bringing IELTS closer to test takers nationwide.

2022

English as a Medium of Education (EME) Programme rolled out

Under the ACT-IHE Programme, the British Council launched its first English as a Medium of Education (EME) initiative to respond to the growing demand for educational institutions to pursue internationalisation. This initiative provided essential professional development to 49 Master Trainers and over 1,000 university academics across 17 regions in the Philippines.

Philippine Creative Industries Act passed

One of our key partners from the House of Representatives, Hon. Christopher De Venecia, led the passage of the Philippine Creative Industries Development Act (PCIDA) in 2022. This law mandates the integration of development efforts to build the creative economy in the Philippines.



2023

45th anniversary in the Philippines

In 2023, we celebrated our 45th anniversary in the Philippines, marking a significant milestone as a testament to our work in the country.

Great British Festival returns

This year marked the return of the Great British Festival (GBF), a unique collaboration between the British Embassy, the British Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines, and the British Council. This two-day celebration immersed its audience in the rich UK culture, offering various informational talks, mesmerising performances, and a showcase of UK brands.



Creative economy support through a strengthened partnership with DTI

As part of our ongoing work with DTI, the British Council signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department to boost the creative economy and support the implementation of Philippine Creative Industries Development Act (PCIDA) nationwide. We also held the first mission visit to the UK in November 2023 with Philippine policymakers and legislators.

Advancing education reform with EDCOM II

The British Council signed an MOU with the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) to advance the Philippine education system through research and policy support. This collaboration focuses on the internationalisation of higher education, including study visits to the UK and pilot studies on transnational education (TNE).





2020–2023 in review



2023

**Justice Zones built**

Through our GOJUST Programme, we facilitated the establishment and operationalisation of 12 Justice Zones across various cities in the Philippines, including Angeles City in Pampanga province, Bacolod City in Negros Island, and Cebu Province to streamline and improve the efficiency of the justice system in the country.

**IELTS One Skill Retake introduced**

Launched to enhance English language proficiency assessment, this new feature allows test takers to retake only one section of the International English Language Testing system (IELTS) if needed, improving the test experience and outcomes.



2024

**Study UK Alumni Awards inauguration**

The British Council started its Study UK Alumni Awards in 2014. In 2024, the Philippines launched its first national awards, recognising outstanding Filipino alumni who studied in the UK.



**Hosted the first Cities of Culture Conference**

The British Council hosted the Cities of Culture Conference at the Metropolitan Theatre in partnership with the National Commission for Arts and Culture. We invited representatives from various local government units for a Philippine-UK conversation about establishing the LGUs of Creativity in the country and discussing the different ways to catalyse LGUs through Creativity and Culture.



**Newton Agham Programme wrapped up**

After nine successful years, we concluded the Newton Agham Programme, which produced 27 PhD scholars and alumni, 21 multi-year research partnerships, 11 co-delivered workshops, five travel study grants, and two years of STEM education programme.

**Growing IELTS on Computer**

We opened more IELTS on Computer test centres in key locations in Metro Manila, such as Makati, Mandaluyong, and Manila. We also launched Dagupan, Vigan, Tuguegarao, Cabanatuan, Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Tacloban and Davao centres.



2020–2023 in review

# Looking ahead

As the British Council moves forward, we continue strengthening our commitment to fostering deep and impactful cultural and educational exchanges. Our focus remains on amplifying creative economies, enhancing academic quality, and promoting inclusive practices to extend the benefits of our programmes in both the Philippines and the UK.



## Our ongoing initiatives

### ACT-IHE

The ACT-IHE programme remains a key focus for the British Council as we continue our commitment to enhancing the global status of Philippine Universities. In partnership with CHED, we aim to further strengthen TNE in the country by fostering extensive international collaboration between UK and Philippine universities, supporting the professional development of Filipinos in priority subject areas, and shaping the TNE ecosystem in the Philippines.

### International Student Mobility and Marketing (ISMM)

We continue to work on the mission of the British Council's ISMM global programme, helping improve the international student experience through programmes such as Study UK and working with partners such as School Counsellors, Agents and Pathway providers. The initiative aims to ensure that prospective students come to the UK well-informed as they make key decisions about the future of their education.

### Alumni UK

We continue strengthening our links with UK graduates through the Alumni UK initiative, the British Council's global network for international students who have studied in or with the UK.

### Women in STEM Scholarships

We continue our dedication to gender equality in science and technology by promoting and increasing opportunities for women in STEM fields, supporting their education and professional advancement in the UK and globally.

### Collaboration with EDCOM II

This collaboration supports the Philippines' initiative on education reform and seeks to promote innovation in the country's higher education system, fostering improved educational quality and accessibility that align with global standards.

### International Science Partnership Fund

Building on the success of Newton Agham Programme, this fund enhances international collaboration in research and innovation, focusing on critical areas such as health, technology, and environmental sustainability.

### Collaboration with DTI

This partnership aims to enhance cultural and economic landscapes by implementing insights from our design ecosystem mapping initiative, supporting the execution of PCIDA both locally and nationwide.

### IELTS expansion

To enhance accessibility and convenience for test takers, we are expanding our reach by opening more test centres nationwide. To enhance accessibility and convenience for test takers, we are expanding our reach by opening more test centres nationwide. We have test centres available in key cities across the Philippines, and we hope to open more in the coming months.

### GOJUST II completion

In its final year, GOJUST will continue implementing projects and preparing its interventions for sustainability and institutionalisation. We will continue supporting the Justice Sector Coordinating Council, strengthening coordination within the justice system. We will also continue to support the digital transformation of justice services, access to justice, and legal empowerment through grants for civil society organisations. Our ongoing studies also aim to inform policy making and enact reforms and development guidelines for a more accessible and inclusive justice system.

**These cultural and educational initiatives will drive us forward as we pursue further efforts to empower individuals and communities in the Philippines and the UK.**



## Programme highlights

# Looking back to move forward

We delve into our past initiatives that have significantly influenced cultural and educational interactions between the UK and the Philippines.

In this section, we provide a retrospective look at our major projects, such as the Creative Innovators Programme, which transformed Philippine urban centres into dynamic creative hubs, and the Design Counts initiative, which mapped the country's design ecosystem.

This exploration emphasises our enduring commitment to enriching lives and expanding cultural horizons through innovative and collaborative endeavours.



## Strengthening cultural connectivity through Arts

Drawing from our ongoing dedication to bridging the cultures of the UK and the Philippines, the **British Council in the Philippines** celebrates years of substantial impact in enhancing cultural connectivity through the arts.

This strategic engagement reinforces mutual appreciation and understanding with our partners and strengthens long-standing partnerships across the creative industries. In this section, we will explore how these initiatives have responded to global challenges and catalysed growth and inclusivity to position the UK as a leader in the global creative economy.



### Creative Innovators Programme

Through our Creative Innovators Programme from 2018–2021, we transformed urban centres in the Philippines into sustainable creative hubs—spaces where professionals can pursue both career and personal development.

Supported by our regional Creative Hubs for Good strategy, we focused on building the capacity of these creative hubs by equipping creative professionals in the Philippines and the UK with organisational skills, fostering inclusivity, and building connections between the creative sectors in the two countries.



### Mapping out the Philippine Design Ecosystem

We partnered with the Design Center of the Philippines in the pioneering project Design Counts to map the country’s design ecosystem. Covering nine key areas in the Philippines (Manila, Makati, Quezon City, Taguig, Baguio, Pampanga, Cebu, Davao, and Cagayan de Oro), this project analysed the economic contributions and value chain of the design industry in the country.

Policymakers also received data and evidence from this project to aid in developing a robust National Design Policy under Republic Act No. 10557, or the Philippine Design Competitiveness Act of 2013.

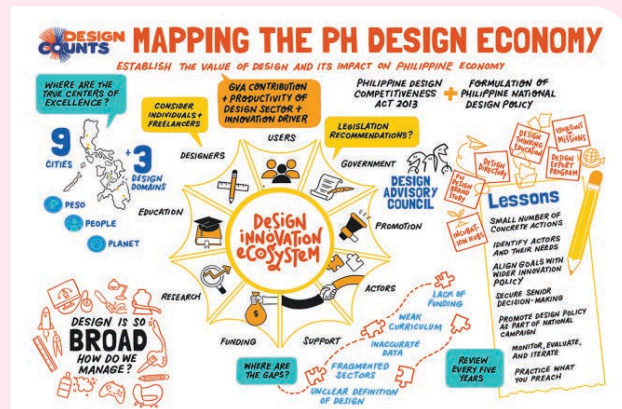
Reflecting on the project’s extensive scope, we organised a scoping workshop to delve into the diverse local design ecosystems in the Philippines. This was to ensure that the project is grounded in local realities while contributing to the global discourse on design-driven economic growth.

The British Council facilitated the professional development of

# 12,665

hub leaders, artists and entrepreneurs in the Philippines; increased the resilience and sustainability of the creative hubs during the peak of the pandemic and made significant progress in policy advocacy that shaped national priorities in arts and creativity in the Philippines.

This enabling environment has positioned the British Council as a key cultural broker that catalyses lasting impacts across various sectors.



This mapping initiative has also been valuable in our support to the Department of Trade and Industry in implementing the Philippine Creative Industries Development Act.

### Woven Networks

Woven Networks, a collaboration between the British Council and the Forest Foundation Philippines, forms a crucial part of our global initiative called Crafting Futures.

This project aims to empower indigenous Filipino weavers by focusing on sustainable practices and improving livelihoods. It involves creating eco-friendly crafts, such as traditional handwoven textiles and handmade artisan crafts.

In Phase 1, the initial engagement reached over 78,000 people on social media, and a virtual exhibit concluded the scoping grants, attracting over 10,000 viewers.

The virtual exhibit, titled From Land to Loom, from Fibre to Form, was curated by Tessa Guanzone and presented in collaboration with the National Museum of the Philippines. The virtual exhibition draws from the grantees’ engagement with their partner communities. It presents the highlights of the nine research grants on a digital platform. The grantees’ projects contribute to approaches for inclusive sustainability of our forests and forest-linked livelihoods. The virtual exhibition is among several educational materials related to the Woven Networks initiative.

Phase 2, on the other hand, culminated with an in-person exhibit entitled “Re-STORY-ation: Weaving Creators, Communities and Connections” hosted at the University of the Philippines Diliman. The exhibit displayed various works, showcasing the expertise of each of the grantees’ partner communities.

The project led to the development and production of over 100 eco-friendly products, the delivery of eight workshops and educational activities, and the organisation of exhibits in the UK and the Philippines.





Through Woven Networks, we were able to promote responsible forest management in our project sites and facilitate innovative collaborations. The British Council also contributed to sustaining local economies by partnering with artisan communities while championing gender-sensitive practices in forest conservation.



**Phase 1**

Scoping grants were awarded to the following:

- Emmanuel Andaya
- Patricia Araneta
- Twinkle Ferraren
- Carmen Lopez
- Happy Weaves Artisan (Palawan)
- Life College Inc
- Panublix Innovations Inc
- Rurungan sa Tubod
- UST Graduate School Centre for Conservation of Cultural Property and Environment in the Tropics

**Phase 2**

Support for implementation were provided to:

**Carmen Lopez**

*Project* — Next in Line: capacitating artisans and youth to ensure sustainability of craftsmanship and conservation in Samar and Leyte

**Life College Inc**

*Project* — Karubwatan It Tina: Community-based enterprise, in collaboration with Tagbanua Indigenous People of Tina, Aborlan, Palawan

**Nola Andaya**

*Project* — Ready to Act (Abaca, Crafts, Tourism): Enabling the Kalandang Weavers and Hamog Higaonon Cultural Group to Advance Sustainable Livelihoods in their community

**Panublix Inc**

*Business for Forest and Fashion: Developing a business model of social enterprise and community partnership focused on the bamboo textile industry linked to conservation work with a rural weaving artisan in Isabela*



**Memorandum of Understanding with the DTI on Partnership on Creative Industries**

In 2023, the British Council signed an MOU with the DTI to boost the creative economy in the country. This collaboration represented a mutual commitment between the Philippines and the UK to nurture the creative sector based on the insights from its design ecosystem mapping initiative. Following this memorandum, we aim to join local and nationwide efforts to enhance the cultural and economic landscapes of the Philippines.



As part of this MOU, the British Council and DTI led two missions to the UK – one in November 2023 and another in May 2024.

**November 2023**

**Legislators and policymakers visit**

The November 2023 visit focused on understanding the policy environment and ecosystem for the creative industries in the UK, particularly how the UK government supports the sector to innovate and reach its growth potential. Members of the House of Representatives attended this initial visit. The main goal was to learn, reference and draw from the UK’s strategies, models and practices to inform government-wide support for implementing the Philippine Creative Industries Development Act (PCIDA).

The high-level delegation identified thematic areas in creative industries that the Philippine government would prioritise for the long-term: (1) engaging non-government stakeholders to support the sector, (2) funding framework, and (3) positioning and capacity building. These thematic areas are for the Philippine government to pursue in the long term, leveraging existing platforms and programmes.

**May 2024**

**DTI and the Philippine Creative Industries Development Council (PCIDC)**

Informed by the first legislator’s group visit outcome, the May 2024 delegation focused on gaining first-hand experience and a deeper understanding of the UK’s models on placemaking, Cities of Culture, Creative Zones, and cultural tourism. It also allowed the delegates to discuss with UK players how these models can be replicated in the Philippine context, identifying collaborative areas where the British Council and DTI can pursue.

The visit included discussions with the Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI), Creative Scotland, ScotGov, Department for Business and Trade (DBT), Screen Scotland, CoSTAR Realtime Lab, Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA), and V&A Dundee, among many others.

These missions signified a crucial step towards fostering international partnerships and expanding the horizons of the Philippine creative industry with the support and expertise of the UK.



## Connections Through Culture



Launched in 2019, the Connections Through Culture initiative aims to build dynamic cultural collaborations between East Asia and the UK through a grant programme that supports artists and cultural organisations in all art forms. In turn, this creates innovative connections and projects such as Leeroy New’s “The Arks of Gimodukan: Vessels of Transformation.”

Grants are available for projects at any stage of development. We encourage a variety of artistic expressions through digital, face-to-face, or hybrid formats to enable transformative cross-cultural partnerships. Specifically for 2023–2024, the British Council supported 10 collaborations through this initiative. The grantees for 2023 are listed here:





### Connections Through Culture Grantees 2023/24



#### Biosignals

-  UK: Dr. Amy Holt
-  Philippines: UPOU-FICS, Dr. Diego S. Maranan



#### Comics Create a Better World

-  UK: Lakes Arts Festivals
-  Philippines: Komiket



#### God Save The Queers, Bless The Badings

-  UK: INFERNO LONDON
-  Philippines: Elephant



#### Inspiring Creative Action to Help Artisan Communities Surmount Climate Change Induced Disaster

-  UK: League of Artisans CIC
-  Philippines: Twinkle Ferraren



#### Listen: Can you hear the fish cry? An embodied audio project with writers in the UK and the Philippines platforming voices impacted by Climate Crisis

-  UK: Michelle Roche
-  Philippines: Binhi Creatives



#### Performing Diwata: eco transfeminism in precolonial Philippine mythology

-  UK: Giulia Casalini
-  Philippines: Ram Botero



#### Song and Sovereignty: Food Justice and the Preservation of Local Farming Culture

-  UK: Tilted Axis Press
-  Philippines: Gantala Press, Inc



#### The Possibility of Forests: Twin Installations in a Celtic Rainforest and a Tropical Cloud Forest

-  UK: Curtis Cresswell
-  Philippines: Mica Cabildo

#### Where The Flowers Bloom: Transforming the Colonial study and artistry of Philippine-U.K. Botanicals through weaving identity in the retelling of Biodiversity amidst the Ecological Crisis

-  UK: Beatriz Gemperle
-  Philippines: TAYO House of Culture & Creativity

#### Wild Patch

-  UK: Ligaya Salazar
-  Philippines: Derek Tumala

## Five Films for Freedom

Five Films for Freedom is an annual global event that celebrates LGBTQIA+ cinema and advocates for diverse sexual and gender identities through film. This event is organised in partnership with the British Film Institute (BFI) and its annual BFI Flare: London LGBTQIA+ Film Festival.

The 2024 lineup features powerful stories from around the world, focusing on family, identity, and acceptance, such as “Ili-ili (Little One)” from the Philippines. These stories offer viewers a chance to experience and understand the various lives of LGBTQIA+ individuals. In 2024, over 600 people attended our in-person screenings at Baguio, Cebu, and Manila.

Five Films for Freedom has been running for 10 years globally. Aside from “Little One,” we featured another short film from the Philippines, titled, “Swirl” in 2016 directed by Petersen Vargas.



## Conclusion

Our initiatives have enriched cultural exchanges and been instrumental in shaping the creative landscapes in both the Philippines and the UK.

From fostering vibrant creative hubs and mapping the design ecosystem to nurturing international artistic collaborations and advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights, our programmes have significantly promoted inclusivity and understanding across diverse communities. These achievements are a testament to our unwavering commitment to creating a lasting impact, demonstrating the power of culture in building bridges and empowering individuals globally.



# Supporting access and national competitiveness through Education

Education is a key priority area at the British Council. We started working in the Philippines in 1978, partnering with academic institutions and government agencies to implement inclusive and innovative education programmes.

In an increasingly interconnected global landscape, the British Council remains committed to enhancing educational access and boosting the national competitiveness of our partner countries, leveraging the exponential growth of partnerships with academic and government collaborators.

Our initiatives focus on creating avenues for inclusive education and establishing

frameworks that empower countries through knowledge sharing and innovative technologies and practices.

We proudly showcase our key educational programmes and collaborations from the past years. These initiatives delivered lasting impacts on national development in the Philippines and contributed to the growth and success of our target stakeholders.

Our transnational education partnerships and scholarship programmes reflect our dedication to shaping a world where education transcends borders and nurtures global citizens equipped to face the challenges of tomorrow.



## Internationalisation efforts

Transnational Education (TNE) offers a unique opportunity for students to study and receive degrees accredited by both Philippine and UK institutions.

Our educational initiatives in the country are deeply rooted in internationalisation. The British Council is collaborating closely with the national government to develop a TNE Strategy, initiated through the enactment of Republic Act No. 11448 or the Transnational Higher Education Act of 2018.

This law served as a guiding reference for the British Council in crafting its educational programmes, particularly its flagship, Access and Competitiveness through Internationalisation of Higher Education (ACT-IHE). This initiative aligns with global standards and emphasises the development of higher education as a key driver for competitive knowledge economies.

By facilitating international collaborations between the Philippines and the UK, we aim to enhance the quality of education available to Filipinos and ensure that their learning transcends borders. We'll be able to equip Filipino students with skills that match UK qualifications, improve their expertise and skills, and enhance their global competitiveness.





### Access and Competitiveness through Internationalisation of Higher Education (ACT-IHE)

The British Council, in partnership with the Commission on Higher Education, implements the ACT-IHE initiative. This multi-year project builds upon the foundations laid by the Joint Development of Niche Programmes through Philippine-UK Linkages (JDNP), enhancing the global status of Philippine universities and increasing local access to world-class education.

ACT-IHE works with its local and international partners to create innovative transnational education programmes, foster academic excellence, and facilitate international collaboration in its priority sectors.

As part of its commitment to academic development, the programme is supporting 21 scholars, providing them with opportunities for advanced studies and research, thereby contributing to advancing human capital and expertise within the Philippine education landscape.

### Through the ACT-IHE, the British Council was able to launch the following:

#### Ongoing TNE Scholarships

The ongoing scholarships encompass opportunities for university staff to study at partner universities in the UK, with the knowledge gained intended for the future development of TNE programmes at their home universities. These scholarships are offered in partnership with CHED.

Bicol University — University of Liverpool

Miriam College (including scholars from BARMM: Notre Dame University Cotabato and Sulu State College) — Goldsmiths, University of London

De La Salle University — Liverpool Hope University

Silliman University — Newcastle University

University of Santo Tomas — University of Leeds

#### Ongoing TNE Development

As of March 2024, these universities are actively engaged in developing new TNE programmes.

Batangas State University

Central Mindanao University

Mariano Marcos State University

Philippine Normal University

University of the Philippines Manila

### Memorandum of Understanding with EDCOM II on Internationalisation of Higher Education

The British Council signed an MOU with the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) to support its research and policy-making efforts in the Philippine education system.

EDCOM II is the country’s national commission mandated to recommend reforms to improve the global competitiveness of Philippine education.

Based on the MOU, the British Council will offer technical assistance and services to the Philippines, focusing on the internationalisation of its higher education system. This includes various initiatives planned from 2023–2025, such as organising a study visit to the UK, conducting a pilot study on the benefits of internationalising higher education and TNE. We also plan to host a Philippine-UK policy forum in higher education towards the end of this initiative.

This collaboration marks a significant step towards improving the quality of education for Filipinos and promotes innovation in the Philippines.



### Supporting scientific collaborations: Newton Agham Programme and the International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF)

The British Council is proudly advancing global scientific collaboration with the conclusion of the Newton Agham Programme.

Newton Agham Programme ran for nine successful years, in partnership with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the CHED, delivering programmes focusing on local development needs such as health and life sciences, environmental resilience, energy security, future cities, agritech and digital innovation.

Building on the success of the Newton Agham Programme, a new initiative aims to enhance the economic and social welfare of both the Philippines and the UK through stronger research partnerships.

### Newton Agham Programme in Numbers

**27**  
PhD scholars and alumni

**21**  
Multi-year research partnerships

**11**  
Co-delivered workshops

**5**  
Travel study grants

**2**

Years of STEM Education programme



The International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF) has been launched to enable potential and foster prosperity, placing research and innovation at the core of international relationships. The fund supports UK researchers and innovators to collaborate with global peers on major themes such as planet, health, tech, and talent.

Together with DOST, ISPF focuses on critical areas like health, technology, and environmental resilience to develop talents and drive innovation across borders.

This will be delivered by a consortium of the UK’s leading research bodies—including UK Research and Innovation (a funding agency including seven research councils in the UK, Innovate UK, and Research

England), the UK Academies, the British Council, the Met Office, the National Physical Laboratory, the UK Atomic Energy Authority, and Universities UK International.

In 2024, we are currently working on a scoping study on research translation in the Philippines. Aligned with the ISPF programme themes and the International Development Strategy, this initiative will focus on addressing country-specific capacity gaps in the development objectives of partner countries, specifically on the subject of research translation.



## Women in STEM Scholarships

We provide postgraduate opportunities for Filipinas interested in pursuing a career in STEM through our global scholarship programme, enabling them to undertake their preferred higher education studies in the UK.

From 2023–2024, the Programme supported **four scholarships** through the Women in STEM Scholarship Programme, comprising three master’s scholarships and one fellowship. These scholarships aim to empower women in STEM fields, providing them with the necessary resources and support to excel in their chosen fields of study and research.

Building on the programme’s success, the British Council, in partnership with the ASEAN Secretariat, launched the ASEAN-UK SAGE Women in STEM Scholarship in 2024 to address gender disparities in digital skills and employment, demonstrating a shared commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment across ASEAN and Timor-Leste. This initiative is part of the ASEAN-UK Plan of Action 2022–2026 and follows the UK’s Dialogue Partner status with ASEAN.

## Student mobility

The British Council’s student mobility initiatives facilitate the movement of Filipino students to the UK and open doors to personal growth and inspiration. These programmes exhibit the desirability of UK education among Filipino students and support their academic and professional development, empowering them to reach their full potential.

From 2023–2024

4

scholarships

through the Women in STEM Scholarship Programme

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Consisting

3  
 master's  
 scholarships

1  
 fellowship

Filipino students can access top-tier educational resources by choosing the UK, enriching their learning experiences and expanding their career prospects. Our programmes also strongly emphasise the value of student networks, fostering a sense of connection and support even after they graduate. We believe that building and maintaining these networks is crucial to their overall UK experience.

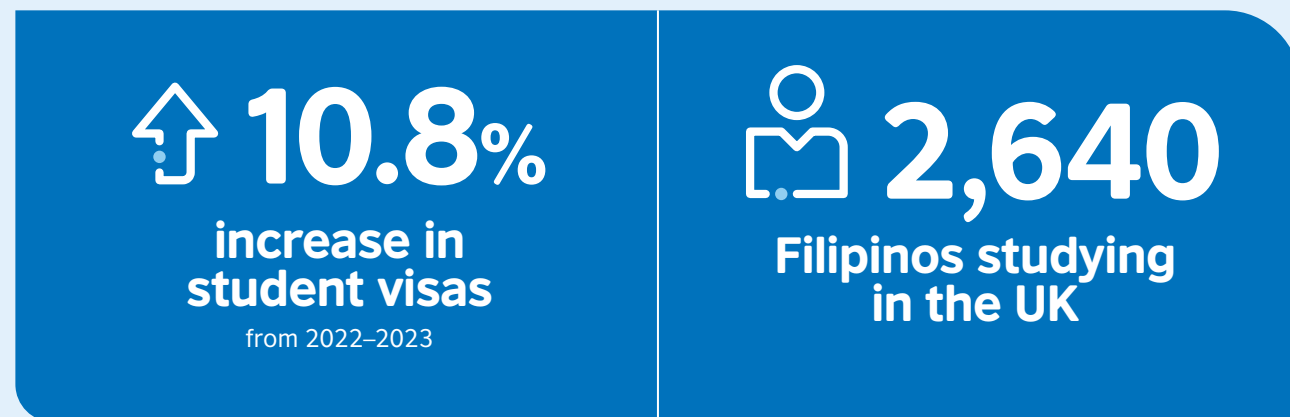


### Study UK

With a significant 10.8% increase in student visas from 2022–2023 and a current population of around 2,640 Filipinos studying in the UK, the UK continues to be a top choice for Filipino students. The British Council takes pride in its efforts to facilitate access to UK education through our global Study UK campaign.

Through Study UK, we not only showcase the UK's outstanding higher education offering and the

life-changing opportunities that it brings, but we also provide extensive support to our partner educational agents and counsellors. We equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively promote UK education to interested students. Additionally, we host activities such as pre-departure briefings, ensuring that students have all the information they need to make the most of their study experience in the UK.



### Alumni UK and Study UK Alumni Awards

Once they complete their studies, Filipino UK graduates will have the opportunity to join the British Council's Alumni UK platform. Launched in 2022, Alumni UK provides an opportunity for graduates to grow their networks, pursue lifelong learning, and share their experiences with colleagues and fellow alums worldwide. We proudly support graduates by enabling them to build networks which can open new opportunities in their home countries or abroad.

With thousands of outstanding UK graduates making significant contributions in their fields, the British Council celebrates their inspiring stories through the annual Global Study UK Alumni Awards. Since its inception in 2014, two Filipino graduates, Baby Ruth Villarama (Global Alumni Awardee for Social Impact, 2018) and Melvin Sanicas (Global Finalist for Science and Sustainability, 2023), have been globally recognised.

In 2024, as the programme celebrated its 10th year, the Philippines inaugurated its national Study UK Alumni Awards, recognising remarkable Filipino talents.



### Study UK Alumni Awardees (2023/2024)



#### Science and Sustainability Award

**Bryan San Juan**  
*University of Oxford, Hertford College and the Oxford Faculty of Law Scholar*

Atty. Bryan San Juan was recognised for leadership in legal battles against illegal reclamation and mining in Palawan, and advisory role in renewable energy development in the Philippines. His Notable achievements include involvement in a major solar power project in Leyte and recognition in Asia Business Law Journal's Top 100 lawyers list.



#### Business and Innovation Award

**Rowena Ruiz**  
*School of Oriental and African Studies – University of London, Chevening Scholar*

Atty. Rowena Ruiz was acknowledged for her contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic, including recommending efficient procurement policies and establishing online portals for transparency in public fund usage. She spearheaded digitalisation efforts at the Government Procurement Policy Board – Technical Support Office and played a significant role in securing the Philippines' observer status in the World Trade Organization.



#### Social Action Award

**Josephine Ambalada**  
*King's College London, University of Oxford*

Josephine Ambalada was awarded for her dedication to special needs education and mental health through Winged Wonder Institute of Education. Her contributions include providing free classes, mental health seminars, and medical missions to marginalised communities.



#### Culture and Creativity Award

**Catherine Lasam-Ballo**  
*University College London*

Catherine Lasam-Ballo was recognised for her multifaceted contributions as an artist, educator, and advocate. Notable achievements include co-writing the Arts and Design Track subject for the K12 Curriculum, founding ARTguro Philippines to promote positive change in education through arts, and exhibiting her works both locally and internationally with a focus on Filipino culture and narratives.



## University Roadshows

In 2023, the British Council launched its University Roadshows in collaboration with the Foreign, Commonwealth, & Development Office (FCDO). During

these events, we visit universities across the country to showcase our work and present British Council opportunities in education, arts, English and exams.

### University Roadshows (2023–2024)



**11** universities visited

- Ateneo de Manila University
- Ateneo de Naga University
- Bicol University
- Cagayan State University
- Cavite State University
- De La Salle University
- Silliman University
- University of Nueva Caceres
- University of San Carlos
- University of the Philippines Los Baños
- University of the Philippines Cebu



Over **600** stakeholders engaged

(students, academics, school and government leaders)

## Governance in Justice (GOJUST)

The Justice Sector Reform Programme: Governance in Justice (GOJUST), funded by the European Union, is dedicated to enhancing justice accessibility for all Filipinos to foster inclusive and sustainable development.

This programme is critical to our non-formal education efforts, supporting community empowerment and social stability.

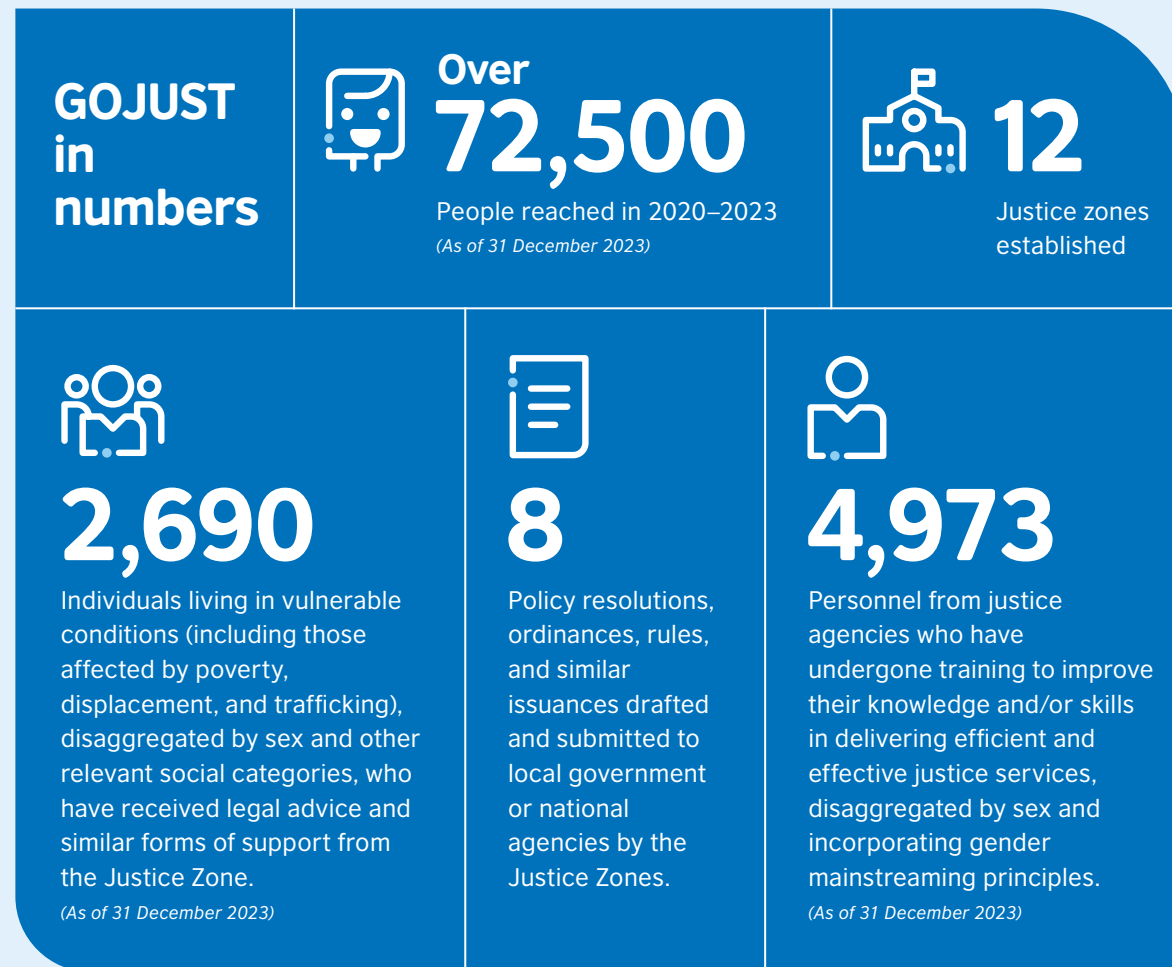
As part of the programme, GOJUST has successfully established and operationalised 12 Justice Zones all over the Philippines, improving stakeholder coordination within and between justice sector agencies in a local area, typically a city, to streamline justice delivery and address common challenges identified through common solutions.

Justice Zones are areas designated by the GOJUST Programme where relevant actors such as the police, judges, lawyers, prosecutors, and prison staff collaborate to improve justice delivery through increased communication, coordination, and cooperation.

This initiative focuses on supporting vulnerable groups to ensure they have fair access to justice services in the Philippines.







## Conclusion

The British Council's diverse portfolio of initiatives across the Philippines exemplifies our commitment to elevating global education and justice to meet contemporary global demands.

From enhancing transnational educational frameworks to pioneering judicial reforms, our initiatives align with our core mission to foster sustainable development and facilitate international collaboration.

By responding to the evolving needs of our partners and stakeholders, we strive to develop robust, inclusive systems that empower communities worldwide and prepare them for any challenge they may face.

This dedication stresses our focus on positively contributing to the educational and judicial landscapes of our partner countries and creating a long-lasting impact on global competitiveness and societal well-being.

## Unlocking opportunities through English Proficiency

We highlight the transformative power of English language proficiency in creating educational and professional opportunities globally.

This year, our focus has been on extending access to high-quality English education, ensuring that individuals in over 200 countries can leverage these skills to navigate a globalized world more effectively.

Through initiatives such as the widespread adoption of the IELTS and the innovative English as a Medium of Education (EME) programme, we have empowered millions to enhance their lives and careers, bridging communication gaps and fostering international connections.





### English as a Medium of Education (EME)

In 2022, in collaboration with the Commission on Higher Education, we launched the pioneering English as a Medium of Education (EME) initiative to advance higher education in the Philippines. This initiative addresses the growing demand for integrating internationalisation into curricula, enabling universities to enhance their capacity for international partnerships by using English as the medium of instruction.



The first-ever EME programme provided professional development opportunities to

**49** Master Trainers

and over **1,000** university academics

across **17** regions



Through the ACT-IHE programme, the EME training sought to enhance Philippine universities' international engagement and competitive stature, empower educators to deliver more effective online education and enhance their institutional capacity for international partnerships.



### The British Council has partnered with the following higher educational institutions in the Philippines to implement the EME project:



Batangas State University



Benguet State University



Bukidnon State University



Caraga State University



Catanduanes State University



Cebu Normal University



Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University



Leyte Normal University



Mindanao State University Marawi



Palawan State University



Philippine Normal University Manila and North Luzon



Tarlac Agricultural University



University of Southeastern Philippines Tagum-Mabini Campus



University of Southern Mindanao



West Visayas State University Lambunao Campus



Western Mindanao State University



### IELTS

Since the early 2000s, the British Council has offered the IELTS in the Philippines to support Filipinos who aspire to study, work, and live abroad. As of March 2024, the number of IELTS test takers in the Philippines has surpassed 65,000, reflecting the growing demand for English language proficiency certification among Filipinos.

Over the years, the British Council in the Philippines has expanded to over 30 test locations, offering paper- and computer-based tests, ensuring accessibility and convenience for test takers nationwide.



### IELTS Partners

**117**  
IELTS partners

**60**  
Partners are actively contributing test takers for British Council

**71**  
Receiving organisations, recognising IELTS in the Philippines





We are dedicated to supporting our test-takers by launching initiatives such as the IELTS Ready Premium, which gives access to exclusive resources designed to prepare them to make the most out of their exam. In 2023, we also launched the **IELTS One Skill Retake**, a new feature allowing test takers to reach their desired score without retaking the entire test. This means they can improve their score on a single skill by retaking any of the four IELTS tests: Listening, Reading, Writing, or Speaking.



### IELTS Prize

Outstanding IELTS passers who plan on studying abroad also have the opportunity to receive support through the **IELTS Prize**.

## 341

winners in the East Asia region

## 33

Filipinos on the roster

**Launched in 2011, we have supported**

## IELTS Fairs

Taking the IELTS is a strategic step towards future-proofing one's career. The British Council has organised IELTS Fairs to support this, providing opportunities to engage in face-to-face conversations with our representatives and partners.

In recent years, these fairs have been held in major cities nationwide, opening doors to diverse career opportunities and creating pathways to seize opportunities worldwide.



### IELTS Fairs

## Over 500 attendees

2023

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- Manila – Crowne Plaza Ortigas
- Baguio – Ion Hotel
- Cebu – Quest Hotel
- Davao – Pinnacle Hotel

## Almost 1,000 attendees

2024

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- Manila – Shang-ri La Plaza Mall
- Cebu – Ayala Malls Central Bloc
- Davao – Ayala Malls Abreeza

## Aptis

Aptis is a computer-delivered English proficiency test developed by the British Council in 2012 based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

In collaboration with Q2 HR Solutions, an integrated human resources solutions and recruitment company in the Philippines, the British Council launched Aptis in the country in 2014 and has since been adopted for BPO recruitment, ESL school assessments, and academic evaluations in higher education.

The British Council has continuously improved the Aptis test to provide reliable results that can enhance the decision-making of organisations in language training, benchmarking, and selection processes.

As a result, Aptis has turned into an ideal assessment tool for raising the English language standards of any organisation.

As of March 2024, the number of Aptis test takers has reached almost

# 35,000

highlighting its growing significance in assessing English language proficiency.

## Conclusion

The British Council highlights the essential role of English language skills in accessing global educational and professional opportunities. In 2023, we focused on expanding access not only to quality English education worldwide but also to comprehensive English assessments through IELTS and Aptis.

Through IELTS and Aptis, we facilitate not only their professional growth but also their cultural integration.

This ensures that wherever they go, they can confidently engage with their new communities, fostering mutual understanding and enhancing their personal and professional lives. Through its expansive network and support resources, the British Council continues to make IELTS accessible to Filipinos nationwide, ensuring they are well-equipped to take on the global stage.



# British Council in the Philippines

In 2023, the British Council in the Philippines marked its 45th anniversary, celebrating years of fostering cultural relations and educational opportunities. As part of the celebration, we organised an exhibit titled “Expanding Horizons Through Cultural Relations, Education, and English Proficiency.”

This theme is a retrospective look at our past achievements and a forward-looking perspective on the opportunities to deepen the cultural connections between the Philippines and the UK.

Our commitment to the Philippines has been steadfast, from enhancing English proficiency to bolstering educational and cultural ties. Previous years marked significant strides with the signing of policies such as the Philippine Creative Industries Development Act and the Transnational Higher Education Law, which supports our vision of stronger international collaborations in arts, education, and social justice.

The British Council stands as the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We believe in building connections, understanding, and trust worldwide. Our global presence spans over 100 countries, reaching 650 million people in 2021–22 alone. In the Philippines, our efforts have connected thousands of students, educators, policymakers, creatives, and entrepreneurs, enriching lives and broadening perspectives.

We are pioneers in combining the UK’s rich cultural and educational expertise with a global outreach, creating unique opportunities for personal and professional growth. Our work directly impacts individuals, helping them gain the skills, confidence, and connections to transform their lives and, by extension, shape a better future, in collaboration with the UK.

## Our global presence

Over **100** countries,



reaching **650 million** people in 2021–2022 alone





# Collaborate with us

## British Council in digital platforms

### Website

[www.britishcouncil.ph](http://www.britishcouncil.ph)

### Facebook

[www.facebook.com/phBritish](http://www.facebook.com/phBritish)

[www.facebook.com/ielts.britishcouncil.philippines](http://www.facebook.com/ielts.britishcouncil.philippines)

### Instagram

[www.instagram.com/phbritish](http://www.instagram.com/phbritish)

### YouTube

[www.youtube.com/user/britishcouncilphils](http://www.youtube.com/user/britishcouncilphils)

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