

Violent Conflicts and Displacement in Central Mindanao

Challenges for recovery and development

Key Findings



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December 2011 – Data Collected in November and December 2010

'Key Findings' is written by Ed Bell, Coordinator of the World Bank's State and Peacebuilding Fund in the Philippines, based on the full report written by Patrick Vinck, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, Harvard University, with Ed Bell.

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www.emindanao.org/conflict-and-displacement
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The full dataset can be accessed at
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World Food Programme



THE WORLD BANK GROUP



MESSAGE

Cycles of conflict in Central Mindanao have repeatedly destroyed people's lives and livelihoods. Tens of thousands have been uprooted from their homes. Some families have been displaced several times over the past decade.

For relief and recovery efforts to be more effective, policy makers and development agencies need more information on what drives displacement and how people adapt to it. Government institutions and international partners must better understand people's experience of governance, security and access to services in the conflict-affected communities. It is also important that decisions are based on detailed knowledge of livelihoods and access to land, credit availability and food supply. Relatedly, these indicators vary from place to place.

For this reason, in November and December 2010, the World Bank and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) collaborated on a general population-based survey in Central Mindanao. Its findings provide important insights on the inter-related dimensions of conflict and displacement and economic growth. The data will enable the relevant branches of government and their international partners to identify and provide extensive targeted support in the affected areas, most especially the vulnerable households. We would like to commend the World Bank and WFP team for this initiative. We hope this collaborative work will continue to encourage sustainable recovery and development efforts in Mindanao.

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Key Findings

Summary

1. Mass displacement is one of the defining characteristics of violent conflict in Central Mindanao. Between 2000 and 2010, over 40 percent of families were displaced at least once. One in ten was displaced five times or more. 30 percent had been displaced for more than a year during that time.¹
2. Displacement exacts an immense socio-economic cost. Displaced people were consistently worst off and least secure compared to the rest of the population. They were least optimistic about the future.
3. The impact of displacement does not end when people return home. Returned households were almost as vulnerable as those who were still displaced and their problems of food insecurity, income poverty and poor access to services were almost as severe.
4. As many as 82 percent of households in Maguindanao had been displaced at least once in the past decade. Maguindanaons had the highest exposure to violence and suffered the worst poverty, food insecurity and access to services. People in Lanao del Sur had the worst access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Access to information was worst in these two provinces, as was the reported level of trust in state institutions.
5. Almost four times as many Muslims as Christians were at risk from unprotected water sources. Muslims travelled twice as long to access a health clinic and elementary school. They were almost three times more likely to have experienced displacement.
6. In times of need, the family is the main source of support. Remittances and family credit were important backstops for livelihoods. 8 percent relied on money sent home, while 58 percent had borrowed money in the previous two months to buy food, largely from their relatives. Only 3 percent accessed credit from banks.
7. Although half of respondents had received some kind of aid, it was not well targeted. Displaced households were least likely to have received assistance in the year prior to the survey. A higher proportion of food secure households had been assisted than those with poor food security.
8. In North Cotabato (76%) and Maguindanao (70%), a large majority saw the struggle for self-determination as the main cause of conflict. Among Muslims, 59 percent proposed signing a peace agreement as the best means to end the violence (93% in Maguindanao). This compares with 36 percent of Christians. The latter gave more emphasis to the need to improve the economic situation (74% vs. 56); end impunity (45% vs. 40%) and resolve land conflicts (35% vs. 28%).

¹ The findings apply to the population of the five provinces covered by the population survey commissioned by the World Bank and WFP: Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Lanao del Norte, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat, as well as Cotabato City.

1. Introduction

The people of Mindanao have long been hit by cycles of violent conflict and displacement and these have intensified in the past decade. “All Out War” in 2000 and hostilities in 2008 each led to the displacement of nearly a million individuals. Tens of thousands were displaced by military operations in 2003 and, more recently, thousands of families had to leave their homes when fighting escalated in parts of Zamboanga Sibugay and Basilan in October 2011. Currently, several thousand people across Mindanao remain displaced, particularly in Maguindanao.

To better understand the development challenges caused by violence and displacement in Central Mindanao, the World Bank and the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) commissioned a random cluster population survey. This was conducted in November and December 2010 and covered 2,759 adults in a total of 231 barangays across five provinces: Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), as well as Lanao del Norte, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat. A smaller urban sample was taken in Cotabato City. The sample was designed and the data weighted so as to provide findings that would be representative of the whole population within each of the selected provinces.

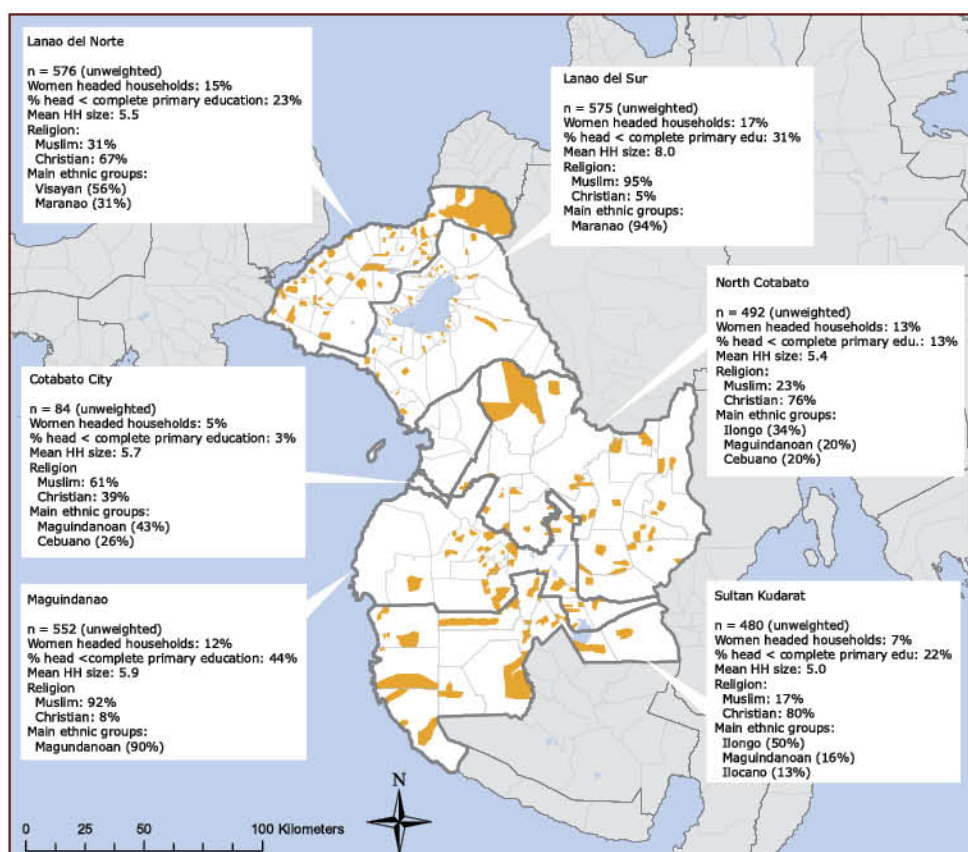


Figure 1: Sample distribution and characteristics in selected areas of mainland Mindanao, Philippines

The objective of the study was to provide a detailed evidence-base for recovery and development strategies in the conflict-affected areas. The study sought to investigate the nature, scope and impact of a range of vulnerabilities.² In particular, it explored people's experience of displacement, as well as the complex factors that have driven and shaped the settlement decisions of IDPs. It asked all respondents their views of state and non-state institutions and what government and donors should prioritize in their efforts to support peaceful, sustainable development.

It is hoped that this summary, and the full report it accompanies, can serve to shape the operational choices of humanitarian, recovery and development agencies and improve outcomes for the population on the ground. The findings it presents shed considerable light on the nature and extent of vulnerability in the affected area – across provinces, population categories and livelihood groups.³

2. Patterns of Vulnerability

Settlement Status

Vulnerability in Central Mindanao has been shaped by the long and repeated experience of violent conflict and displacement. Across virtually every key indicator – from food security to access to services, income poverty to housing – displacement is detrimental to livelihoods, welfare and social cohesion. It has been experienced by large swathes of the population in recent years.

Four in every ten households (41%) in the surveyed area reported having experienced displacement between 2000 and 2010. Over one in five (22%) had been displaced twice or more. As many as one in ten had been forced to leave their homes five times during the decade. A quarter of people had been displaced from one to six months and almost a third (30%) had been displaced for a continuous duration of over one year.

Households who have experienced displacement in the last decade have been frequently exposed to violence. Over a quarter of people (29%) reported that they had been displaced by the movement of armed groups⁴, the biggest driver of displacement in the area.⁵ Over half of those displaced by armed group movements had been displaced more than once (17% of all the households). 9 percent identified clan conflict or *rido* as the cause of their displacement.⁶ In armed group- and *rido*-induced displacement, equally significant numbers of people reported economic losses (respectively 42% and 43%), loss of home (37% and 34%), and loss of cattle (20% and 21%).

² 'Vulnerability' is used here in relation to income, ownership of assets and access to services. It denotes a high degree of exposure to natural, social and political forces that can destroy or harm lives and livelihoods.

³ The report does not purport to define specific recommendations, since the various agencies to which it is targeted have highly varied mandates, capacities and resources.

⁴ Armed group movements include those of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the MILF, MNLF and others.

⁵ The causes of displacement were not mutually exclusive and individual households may have reported more than one cause of displacement. Other than the movement of armed groups and clan conflict, 9 percent noted causes such as economic displacement (3%) or natural disasters (2%)

⁶ The main (sometimes overlapping) reasons for *rido* were killings (53%), fight over power (30%), and land issues (11%).

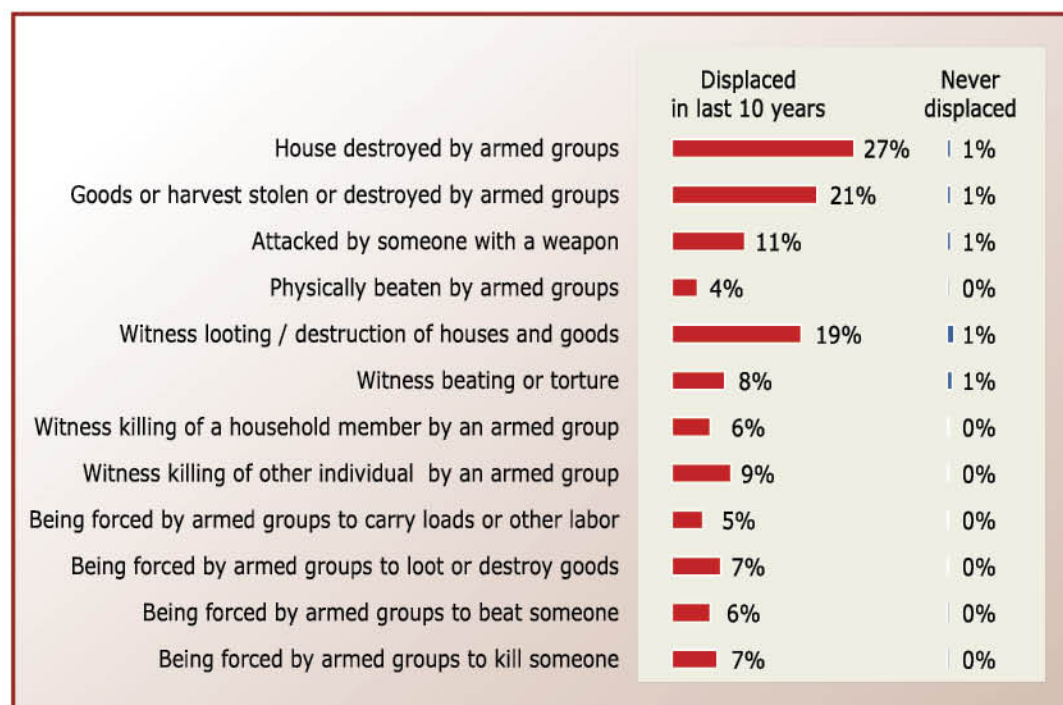


Figure 2:
Exposure to
violence by
displacement
status

Across the settlement categories, **the greatest vulnerability is experienced by households displaced at the time of the survey, closely followed people who have returned home to their place of origin** (respectively 4% and 29% of the population). Those who have chosen to resettle somewhere else other than their place of origin (7%) and those who had never been displaced (59%) recorded higher levels of welfare across the board.

Currently displaced households were consistently the worst off and felt the least secure. Three quarters of them were in the poorest two wealth quintiles and one in three was in the poorest quintile. One in ten had a poor Food Consumption Score (FCS) ⁷ and 45 percent were borderline food insecure. Over half of these households (56%) reported having had their house destroyed due to the conflicts and 42 percent had had their possessions looted. These households reported the lowest levels of trust toward individuals from other clans, ethnic groups, or religion. Although the level of trust in non-state armed groups was recorded as being low in the surveyed area as a whole, relative to the rest of the population it was higher amongst currently displaced households.

⁷ FCS was computed to reflect the diversity, frequency, and nutritional value of the food items consumed by the household during the 7-day recall period. Each food group was assigned a standardized weight representing the nutritional importance of the food group. The FCS is the sum across food groups of the product of the frequency by the weight.

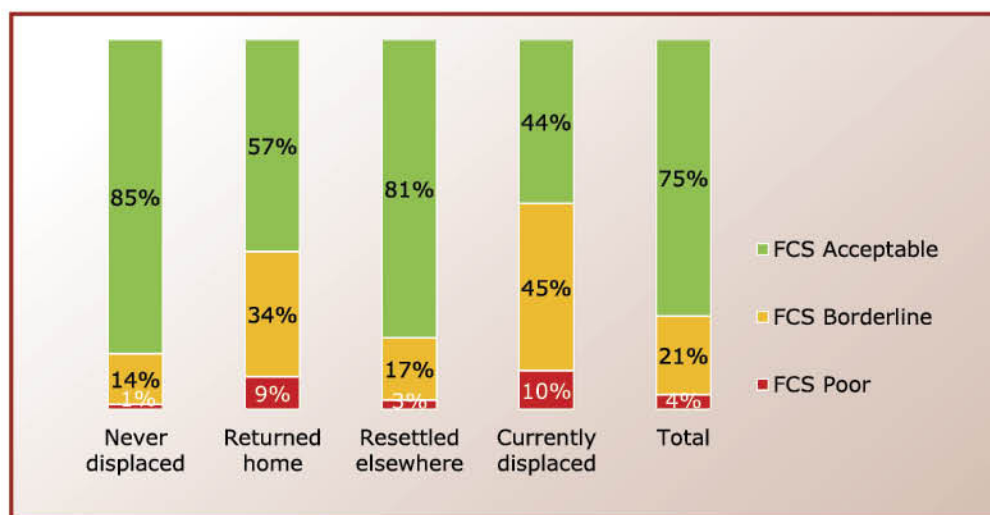


Figure 3: Food consumption by settlement status

Households who have been able to return home were almost as vulnerable as the currently displaced. Over half belonged to the two poorest wealth quintiles (53%) and they scored similarly badly on food consumption (9% poor and 34% borderline levels). In comparison, 20 percent or less of the households who were never displaced or who had resettled in a new location had a poor or borderline FCS. Among those who had returned home in Maguindanao, 31 percent of households had not been able to retrieve their farmland. In Lanao del Sur, a similar proportion had not retrieved their residential plot.

Access to basic services was equally bad amongst the currently displaced and those who have returned home. Their children were furthest away from the school: 33 minutes on average for the currently displaced and 26 minutes for those who returned home, compared to 14 minutes for those never displaced. Households that had returned home reported the longest average walking distance to a health facility (61 minutes as opposed to 27 for those never displaced). Education accounted for 7 percent of the expenditures among currently displaced households and 13 percent among households that returned home, compared to 25 percent and 34 percent for households that were never displaced and those who resettled elsewhere. Poor access to education demonstrates how displacement causes the inter-generational transmission of poverty and lack of opportunity.

The settlement groups most exposed to a weather-related shock were also the currently displaced and those who had returned home. Floods had affected 13 percent of the former and 15 percent of the latter. Crop disease had adversely affected 7 percent and 10 percent of respondents, respectively.

Displacement also places pressures on host families – constituting 11 percent of households in Central Mindanao over the period since 2000.⁸ Almost half of them reported the financial cost involved (49%), while 15 percent said that they had to sell goods or assets to provide food and support to the displaced.

⁸ The highest proportion of host families was in Lanao del Sur (17%), followed by Maguindanao (13%), and North Cotabato (11%).

Findings by geography

Vulnerability was particularly concentrated in Maguindanao, the province that has been most affected by displacement. Between 2000 and 2010, displacement affected four out of every five households in the province (82%). 75 percent of those experienced displacement twice or more. Nearly half the adult population was displaced at some point in time between 2000 and 2004, and again in 2008. One in five households in the province were displaced at the time of the survey (21%), compared to 4 percent or less elsewhere.

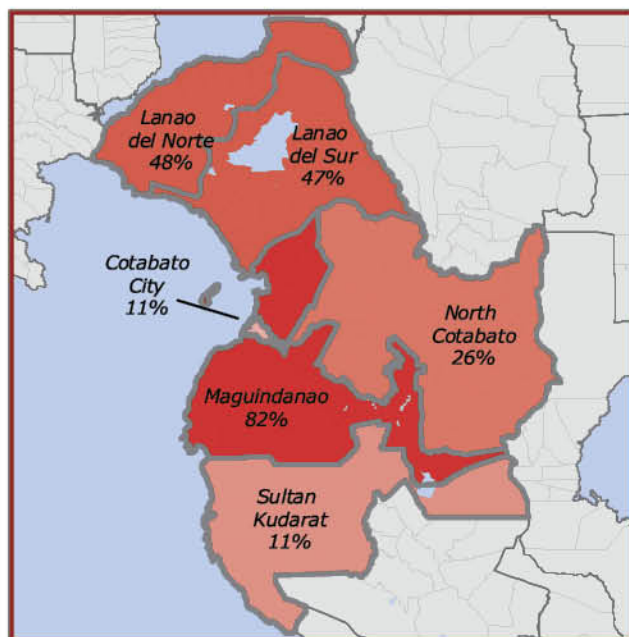


Figure 4:
Percentage of
people who
experienced
displacement
between 2000
and 2010.

The findings on Maguindanao clearly illustrate the association between displacement and a range of forms of vulnerability. Two thirds of people in the province belonged to the two poorest wealth quintiles (66%), compared to 36% or less elsewhere. Households suffered the highest levels of food insecurity and the lowest average monthly expenditures (3,000 PhP compared to an average of 5,750 PhP). In the one year period prior to the survey, people in the province were particularly affected by weather events. 13 percent of people were affected by drought or irregular rains, and 30 percent by floods. Crop pests and diseases were also a particular problem, with nearly a quarter of people saying they were affected (23%).

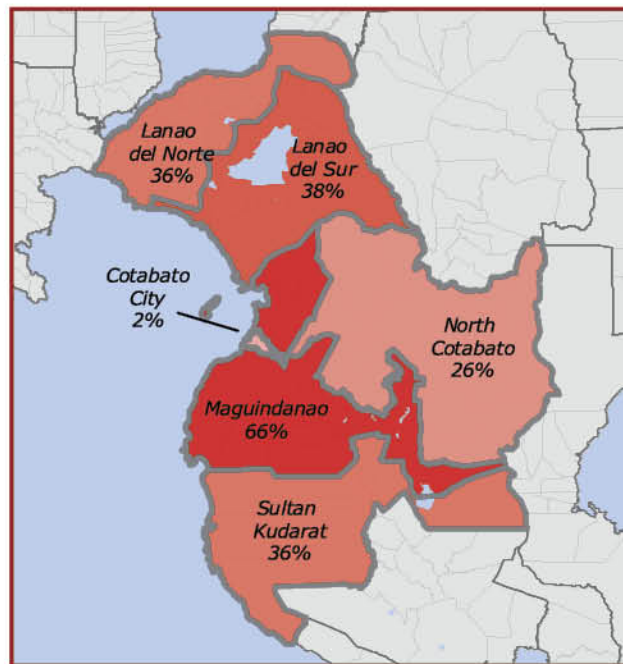


Figure 5:
Distribution of
the two poorest
wealth quintiles

Maguindanaons reported the worst access to land and to services. Just over half (51%) ranked their access to farm land as being bad or very bad, compared to a survey average of 33 percent. Commuting time in the province averaged 36 minutes to school and 73 minutes to a health facility (almost twice longer than in any other area). Two in five households in the province said they did not use a toilet.

Exposure to violence over the last ten years was also highest in Maguindanao and perceptions of safety were correspondingly lowest (59%). 45 percent of the population reported the destruction of their house. One in five had experienced being attacked by someone with a weapon (20%) or had witnessed a looting (32%) or a killing (16%). The proportion of households reporting disputes over power and clan disputes was highest in Maguindanao (92% and 66%, respectively).

The use of unprotected sources of water was especially high in Lanao del Sur, where 60 percent of households relied on unprotected sources, including 40 percent who relied on open bodies of water, and 13 percent who relied on open dug wells. 28 percent of households in the province had very poor sanitation. Lanao del Sur had the second worst FCS, with 4 percent of the population rated poor and 36 percent rated borderline. Overall, households in the two ARMM provinces were 2.7 times more likely to be food insecure compared to those in Lanao del Norte, for example.

Findings by religious identity⁹

Muslim respondents were significantly more likely to have experienced displacement (59%) compared to Christian respondents (20%). They were also significantly more likely to be displaced at the time of the survey (8% vs. 1%).

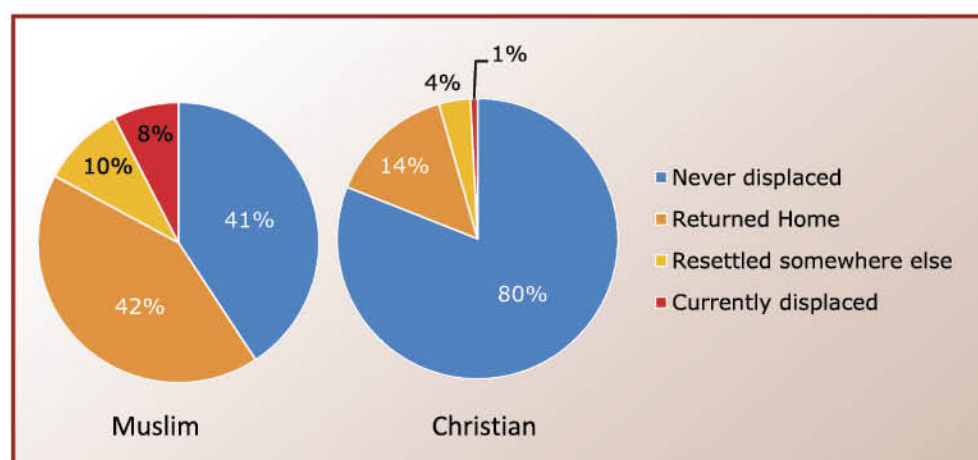


Figure 6: Settlement status by religion

Muslims had poorer welfare indicators and worse access to services relative to Christians. Almost four times as many used unprotected sources for their water supply (41% vs. 11%) and twice as many had to travel for 10 minutes or more to get water (33% vs. 16%). Five times as many used a drop/overhang toilet or no toilet at all (15% vs. 3%, 28% vs. 5%). Muslims, on average, travelled twice as far to the nearest elementary school and health facility (22.5 minutes vs. 12.5, and 50.7 minutes vs. 26.2). In addition, Muslims were also less likely to feel safe in daily situations, such as going to work or fetching water (54% felt safe or very safe vs. 76% of Christians) or walking alone at night (33% vs. 55%).

Findings by livelihood group

Principal component and cluster analyses were used to group together households that share similar patterns of activities based on the relative importance of those activities to their overall livelihood.¹⁰ The analyses resulted in a total of eight groups: (i) Farmer, (ii) Day laborer, (iii) Skilled worker, (iv) Alternative livelihood¹¹, (v) Natural resources exploiter, (vi) Trader, (vii) Fisher, and (viii) Transporter. Farmers alone accounted for 39 percent of the population. Day laborers (14%) and skilled workers (11%) were the second and third most frequent group.

⁹ 53 percent of respondents identified themselves as Muslim and 46 percent Christian. 82 percent of Muslims cited religion as the most defining factor of their identity (as opposed to clan, ethnicity or nationality) compared to 46 percent of Christians.

¹⁰ Households sampled in the survey were asked to name up to three activities, by order of importance.

¹¹ This group (9% of the population) clusters households that rely on remittances (providing a mean livelihood contribution of 31%), handicrafts (12%) and a range of less frequent activities (24%) to support their livelihood.

Natural resource exploiters and fishers were the two worst off livelihood groups. More than half of each group was in the two poorest quintiles (56% and 55% respectively).¹² The latter had one of the lowest average monthly incomes at 4,800 PhP/month, second only to day laborers (4,750 PhP/month). This compares to an overall average of 6,500 PhP/month. Farmers had the third lowest estimated monthly income at 5,150 PhP/month and had the highest proportion of households with a poor or borderline FCS. These same groups also recorded the worst scores on educational attainment, with around one-third of heads of household having incomplete primary education or less (39% for fishers, 35% for natural resources exploiters, and 32% for farmers).

Indicators of vulnerability were worse among women headed households compared to those headed by men. They were more likely to have a poor FCS (5% vs. 3% for male-headed households) and to be in the poorest wealth quintile (33% vs. 21%). Women head of households were also 1.5 times more likely to be illiterate compared to their male counterparts. They were also less likely to have access to land (49% vs. 56%) and had on average a higher dependency ratio (i.e., more dependents per working adult).

Across the surveyed areas, **a low level of education was associated with higher vulnerability.** The highest proportion of households with a poor or borderline FCS was found among households with a head that had no education (11% and 41% respectively), and those with incomplete primary education only (7% and 36% respectively). Overall, one in four head of households had no formal education (6%) or did not complete primary education (18%).

3. General characteristics of vulnerability

Sense of security

A lack of security continued to prevail in most communities in many daily life routines. Less than half the respondents felt safe going to the nearest market (47%) and complaining to authorities (37%) or to the police (37%) if a victim of a crime. Less than a quarter of people (17%) felt safe meeting a stranger. With regards to experience of domestic violence across the survey area, 7 percent of the respondents indicated having ever been slapped or beaten violently by their spouse or partner in general. 2 percent indicated that it had happened in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Access to services

About one-third of the households in the surveyed areas ranked their access to services negatively, including access to education (22%), health (35%) and roads (37%). Over one in four households (27%) used unprotected sources of water, most frequently drawing their water from lakes and rivers, open wells or unprotected springs. On average, 18 percent of households in the study area had no access to sanitation facilities.

¹² Natural resource exploiters were households (about 5% of the population) that relied directly on the exploitation of natural resources to sustain their livelihoods, such as the sale and preparation of charcoal (providing a mean contribution to their livelihood of 38%) combined with some agriculture (22%) and livestock (17%). Fishers made up an average of 7 percent of total households but 20 percent of those in Maguindanao. Day labourers amounted to 14 percent of the population.

Access to land

A third of households scored their access to land negatively and less than a quarter reported it to be good or very good. Although more than half the selected households reported having access to land (60%), only 55 percent of them indicated having documents that guaranteed ownership / access. One third (32%) simply said “the clan knows”. The proportion with documented access to land was lowest in Lanao del Sur (19%) compared to over half of households elsewhere. Six percent of people reported having ever experienced a land dispute, equally distributed between disputes over farmland and residential plots, and three percent had experienced land dispute in the year prior to the survey.

Variable trust in institutions

Respondents largely expressed at least moderate trust in barangay, municipal and national government officials (in each case, on average, over 80%), notwithstanding their limited access to basic services and poor senses of security. Taking the survey area as whole, a majority also trusted the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), police and Civilian Volunteer Organizations (CVOs) (68%, 72% and 59%, respectively).

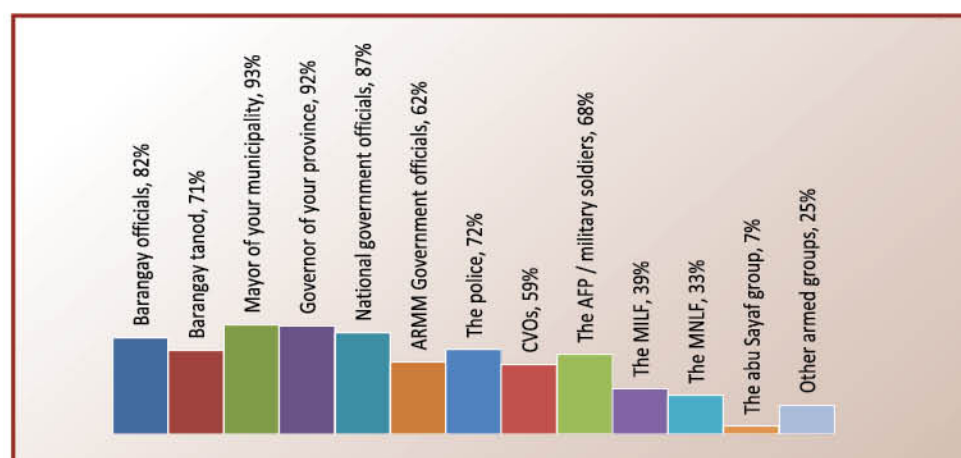


Figure 7: Trust levels (% moderate to extremely trusting)

There were significant geographic variations in the proportion of people reporting trust (or a lack of it) in key institutions. The people of Lanao del Sur were the least trusting of national government officials (27% either a little or not at all), while Maguindanaons were the least trusting of barangay officials (32%) and the AFP (60%). Levels of trust in the MILF were broadly higher in those two provinces compared to other provinces, although, in each case, about a third of the population expressed little or no trust in that group. The variations point to areas affected by relative weakness in the social fabric and in the relationship between citizens and institutions of the state.

Table 1: Trust in selected actors

	Lanao del Norte	North Cotabato	Sultan Kudarat	Lanao del Sur	Maguindanao
National Government					
Not at all	0%		1%	5%	
A little	9%	4%	13%	22%	13%
Moderately	39%	61%	61%	59%	52%
A lot	37%	33%	23%	13%	34%
Extremely	15%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Barangay officials					
Not at all	0%	0%	1%	2%	2%
A little	11%	9%	8%	27%	30%
Moderately	28%	64%	65%	42%	35%
A lot	53%	25%	25%	27%	33%
Extremely	8%	1%	2%	2%	1%
AFP					
Not at all	5%	2%	3%	12%	10%
A little	15%	15%	11%	41%	50%
Moderately	46%	53%	63%	42%	32%
A lot	33%	19%	21%	4%	6%
Extremely	1%	10%	2%	0%	2%
MILF					
Not at all	49%	44%	72%	4%	6%
A little	29%	35%	18%	29%	26%
Moderately	17%	13%	8%	39%	44%
A lot	6%	8%	2%	24%	14%
Extremely	1%	0%		3%	9%

The efforts of different groups to end the violence in Mindanao were also perceived differently from place to place. Overall, **a little under half of respondents believed the MILF was working moderately, greatly or extremely hard to end the violence** (42%). Much lower numbers of people in Sultan Kudarat (8%), North Cotabato (22%) and Lanao del Norte (26%) felt the MILF was working at least ‘moderately’ to that end, compared to Lanao del Sur (70%) and Maguindanao (72%). Overall, the national government scored an average of 83 percent in the surveyed area, including 70 percent and 71 percent, respectively, in Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao. In those two provinces, however, 19 percent and 15 percent, respectively, said the AFP was not working at all to end the violence, while 49 percent and 28 percent saw only ‘a little’ effort.

Disaggregating by religion, Muslims were less likely than Christians to trust the AFP (47% vs. 15% said they did not trust the military at all or trusted only “a little”), but more likely to trust the MILF (65% vs. 9% said moderately to ‘a lot’) and MNLF (56% vs. 7% said moderately to a lot). 71 percent believed that the MILF is committed to peace (55% for MNLF).

Mistrust of other identity groups

Respondents reported less trust in identity groups other than their own. In general, respondents had higher trust in people from their own clan (89% vs. 62%), religion (87% vs. 53%) and ethnic group (82% vs. 56%) compared to outsiders.

Access to Information

A significant proportion of people were unaware or distrustful of news in their province and on Mindanao. Overall, about one third of the respondents reported being not at all or little informed about events in their province (35%). The scores were worst in Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur, where 64 percent and 49 percent said they had no or little information. People in those two provinces were also most poorly informed about events in Mindanao (58% and 49% compared with an average of 33%).

Reliance on informal channels of information was high, especially in Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao, where friends and families were the most frequent sources of information (53% and 44% respectively). Households that were displaced at the time of the survey were most likely to rely on informal sources of information (i.e. friends and family – 53%) and to report that they were not at all or little informed about events in their province (68%) and in Mindanao (63%).

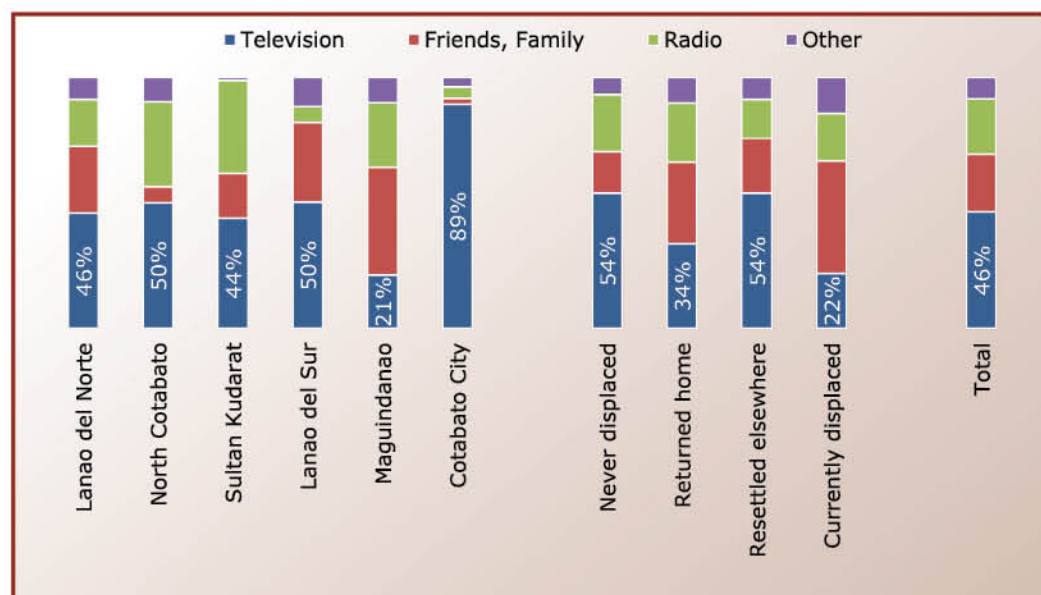


Figure 8:
Respondents’
main source of
information

Respondents held mixed views as to how much they trusted the news sources. Television was cited as the most trusted source (41% said they trusted information on TV a lot or extremely), followed by radio (25%) and newspapers (15%). Respondents in Maguindanao were the least trusting with 18 percent trusting information on television a lot or moderately and even lower proportion trusting radio (8%) and newspapers (10%).¹³

4. Coping Strategies

Whether still displaced, resettled somewhere else or located in (or returned to) their place of origin, households adapt to vulnerability with strategies for their livelihood and food security. They may also make choices with a view to avoiding violence and improving their sense of safety in their surrounding environment. In some cases, they are assisted by development or humanitarian aid.

Livelihoods

The most common form of livelihood was agriculture which featured in the top three activities of 56 percent of households. This was followed by trade (25%), day labor (19%), and transportation (13%). Trader and households with an alternative livelihood¹⁴ had the highest proportion of woman-headed households (respectively 25% and 27%). Among those who had returned home, 51 percent identified themselves as farmers.

Currently displaced households were more likely to have relied on the production of charcoal to sustain their income (26%) compared to less than 6 percent among those who had returned home or resettled elsewhere. This is consistent with the finding that currently displaced households were more likely to turn to exploitation of available natural resources than the rest of the population. With 89 percent of households using wood or charcoal as their main fuel for cooking (98% in Maguindanao), the cutting of wood for charcoal and directly for their stove is likely to be leading to hillsides denuded of trees, a contributing factor to floods.

Almost one in ten saw remittances as one of a main source of support for their livelihood (8%). 12 percent of the households indicated that they received them. The money was sent primarily by women (62%) and from either abroad (60%) or Manila (21%). The proportion was highest in Lanao del Norte (20%) and Sultan Kudarat (16%), compared to 6 percent in Maguindanao. Remittances generally benefitted the relatively better off, with only 3 percent of the currently displaced receiving them compared to 14 percent among those resettled elsewhere and those never displaced.

A high percentage of people in all provinces occasionally borrowed money to purchase food. Credit accounted on average for 9 percent of all expenditures. Over half the households (58%) said that they had borrowed money to buy food at least twice in the last two months. 86 percent of them said their family and relatives were their main sources of credit. A smaller proportion of households (10%) went to

¹³ In the survey area, more than half of households indicated owning a television (55%) and/or a radio (55%). In Maguindanao, ownership was, however, significantly lower (42% and 20%).

¹⁴ The alternative livelihood group is constituted by households that rely on remittances (31%) and a range of less frequent activities (24%) to support their livelihood

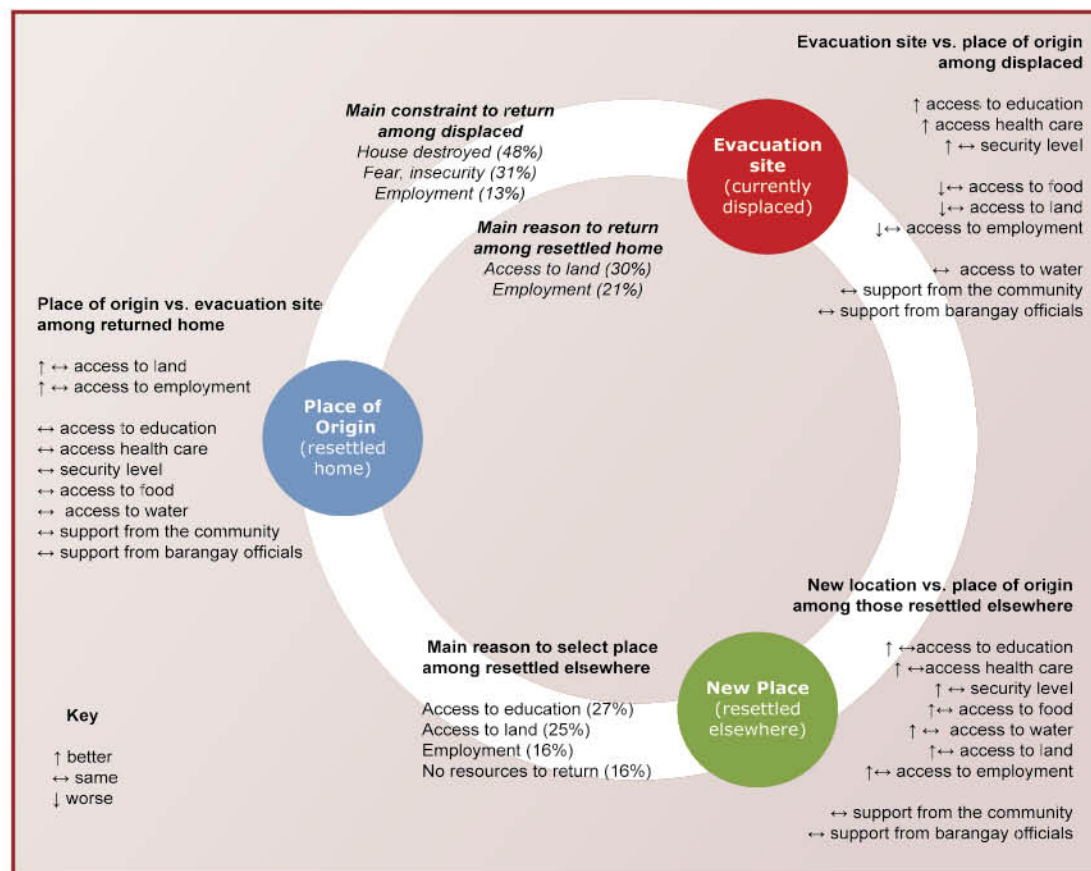
local moneylenders. Only 3 percent accessed banks. Even among households in the wealthiest asset quintile, just 9 percent accessed banks. **One in ten households in the poorest wealth quintile were reported as having no access to credit at all**, even from family/relatives.

Among households who had experienced a shock in the preceding year, **the most common coping mechanism was to rely on less preferred food, borrowing money, and borrowing food** (25%, 24% and 15%, respectively). Using less preferred food and borrowing food was more frequent among displaced households (32% and 20%). Among households who returned home, borrowing money was more common (28%).

Selecting a place of residence

When people leave their homes due to military operations, clan conflict or other causes, there are a number of factors that they consider in deciding where to go and how best to cope.

Family ties were the most important factor in selecting a site of displacement (67%), followed by perceived security risk (59%). People who had been displaced reported better security and access to services in their place of displacement relative to their place of origin. However, access to land, employment and food were reported as worse, demonstrating the challenges of securing a livelihood in the displacement location.



Most displaced households were located within the same barangay as their place of origin (i.e., in a different *sitio* or *purok* - 15%) or in another barangay of the same municipality (33%). A little more than one-third had moved to another municipality in the same province (36%). This was relatively more common in cases of rido-induced displacement.

Provision of security and justice

Most respondents saw the community itself as the provider of some level of security (70%), while barangay officials were the main authority contacted to resolve most types of disputes. About half of the respondents mentioned the police (53%) as the provider of security, followed by government (38%) and/or the military (22%). The MILF and MNLF were mentioned by only 9 percent and 4 percent of the respondents, respectively. Maguindanao was the only province where a significant proportion of people said that they looked to the MILF and MNLF to provide safety from crimes (40% and 24%, respectively).

Overall, few households referred disputes directly to the AFP, MILF, or MNLF. Barangay officials, chiefly Barangay captains, were commonly approached to help resolve disputes (52% where the case involved money, 65% for theft, and 60% for an injury). They and traditional leaders were generally perceived as fair (both 89%). Only for the most serious crimes of rape and murder did a significant number of respondents say they would approach the police (24% and 27%) or involve the formal court system (24% and 23%).

Development assistance

More than half of respondents reported that some kind of aid or relief had reached their barangay (53%), at least for some members of it. Most frequently, and for all groups, this came in the form of food (44%). Other forms of assistance, such as health care (7%), construction materials (3%), or farming support (3%), were also mentioned. The sources of assistance were identified (in roughly equal proportion) to be the barangay authorities, national government or foreign agencies.

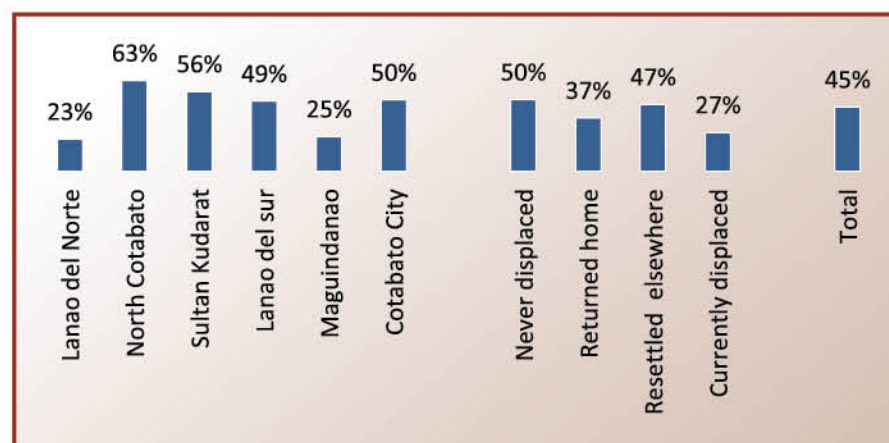


Figure 10: Percentage of households who received aid or relief assistance in the one year period prior to the survey

Although half of respondents had received some kind of aid, it was not well targeted. A little over one-quarter (27%) of the displaced households indicated having received aid or relief assistance, compared to 37 percent of those returned home, 47 percent of those resettled elsewhere, and 50 percent of those never displaced. Relief assistance went to a higher proportion of people with an acceptable level of food security (47%) than for those with poor or borderline Food Consumption Scores (both 40%). The proportion of households who received assistance in the poorest wealth quintile (40%) was also slightly lower than those in the richest wealth quintile (43%).

Development aid increased trust, but this is largely limited to village officials. While 68 percent of respondents were satisfied with how project decisions are made, and 63 percent were satisfied about how decisions on who receives assistance are made, the presence of aid and relief assistance largely had a positive impact on popular perceptions of local authorities. Compared to respondents who reported no assistance or development projects in their barangay, those where such projects took place were more likely to trust barangay officials (85% vs. 73% had moderate to extreme trust) and the barangay tanod (76% vs. 60%). Interestingly, development assistance made little difference to levels of trust in municipal, provincial or national government officials.

5. Priorities to improve welfare and build peace

Respondents were asked about their top priorities to improve welfare and build peace.

Improving well-being

The top three priorities identified by respondents were dominated by socio-economic needs. Money (74%) and employment (45%) ranked highest, followed by basic needs and services such as food (39%), health (27%), and education (20%). Those listed for government attention were broadly similar, but with roads (30%) and electricity (13%) placed higher than for respondents' own priorities. In Maguindanao and among the currently displaced, however, a third of respondents put the need to address the violence among their three main priorities.

Building Peace

There was considerable variation in how different groups assessed the main causes of violence and, by association, identified measures to address peace and security. In North Cotabato and Maguindanao, around three quarters identified the struggle for self-determination (76% and 70%, respectively). In Lanao del Sur and Sultan Kudarat, the root cause of conflict was most frequently identified as clans fighting for power (59% and 51%, respectively), with 27 percent and 41 percent, respectively, pointing to the struggle for self-determination.

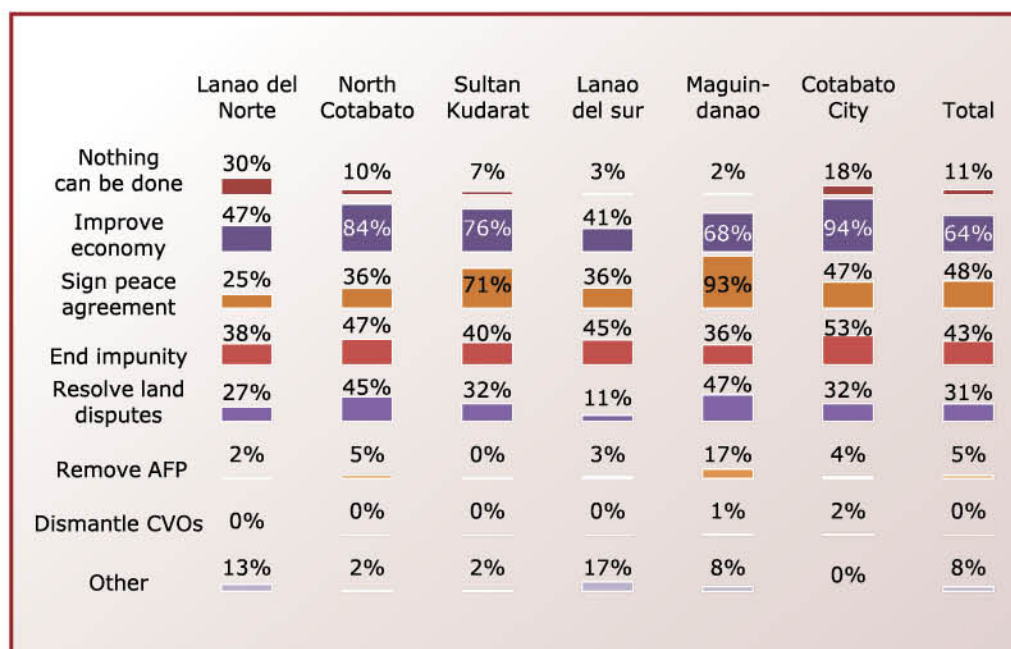


Figure 11:
Proposed means
to end the
violence

Respondents generally felt that violent conflict at some level was likely to persist in Mindanao. 40 percent of people did not believe that all the religious groups, clans, and people of Mindanao could live together peacefully, without violence. The peacebuilding interventions identified as important by respondents as a whole were economic development (64%), signing of a peace agreement (48%), ending impunity (43%), and ending land disputes (31%).

For Muslims, 59 percent believed that signing a peace agreement would end the violence, compared to just 36 percent of the Christian respondents. Christian respondents emphasized the need to improve the economic situation (74% vs. 56% for Muslims), end impunity (45% vs. 40%), and resolve land conflicts (35% vs. 28%). In Maguindanao, where self-determination was identified as the main root cause of violence, signing a peace agreement was proposed by about everyone (93%). In that province, 17 percent also wanted the AFP removed from the area.

6. Conclusions

Many efforts have been made in recent years to address humanitarian and long-term recovery needs in Mindanao. It is of particular concern, therefore, that three-quarters of respondents in the surveyed areas experienced little or no improvement in their daily lives over the past year, and expressed little optimism about the future. Currently displaced households were the most negative about both the past and their future prospects.

The following strategy and operational implications emerge from this study:

Displacement is not only a humanitarian concern. It is a significant, multi-faceted development issue

Displacement is more than a humanitarian crisis or short-term emergency. It drives long-term development problems such as poor access to services, lack of trust in institutions, reduced income and insecurity. The survey results draw a grim picture of livelihoods and well-being and point to numerous and complex barriers to resettlement and recovery.¹⁵ Dire education levels among populations who endure prolonged displacement underlines how displacement robs children of opportunity and perpetuates the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

The challenges of displacement do not end with a return to home

Following spikes in violence and associated displacement, the understandable response of most humanitarian assistance from government and the international community is to return people to their place of origin. Support often ends at this point, but the study demonstrates that populations returned to their place of origin were almost as badly off as those currently displaced. Thus, as a matter of priority, development assistance must be targeted also to those recently returned in their places of origin.

Urgently improve the targeting of assistance

Aid is not adequately directed at those who are suffering most. For example, displaced households were least likely to report having received assistance in the year prior to the survey, and, despite being the province with the worst indicators on access to services, only 36 percent of households in Maguindanao said that there had been a development project in their communities, compared to over 80 percent elsewhere.

The National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTSPR) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development provides an objective assessment of needs and is a good starting point for targeting assistance.

¹⁵ Because of the cross-sectional nature of the survey, it is not possible to establish whether the characteristics of displaced households result from displacement, or whether the households are still displaced as a result of these characteristics.

Pay more attention to the participatory process

Among the third or so of the population who were unhappy with development projects in their barangay, their dissatisfaction was generally due to the lack of popular involvement in making these decisions. Only 11 percent said that the decisions on development projects were made by the barangay assembly with most people present. The main reasons for not being satisfied with the projects included the lack of involvement of respondents (38%), the perception that decisions are made to benefit leaders (30%), or that ultimately, nothing is implemented (28%). These issues can be addressed through more effective community participation and through better implementation and monitoring.

The data suggests that international assistance agencies should be concerned about their engagement in Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao, in particular. In those ARMM provinces, 43 percent and 57 percent, respectively, of people indicated low trust in foreign agencies, compared to over 85 percent elsewhere.

Investigate needs that may not be self-identified by the population

There are certain disparities between, on the one hand, the priorities mentioned by households and/or the type of assistance provided in their community, and on the other hand, data about other needs.

The most striking example is water and sanitation. Just over half of households in the poorest wealth quintile rely on unprotected sources of water (52%), with all of the associated health implications. Yet only a minority of the survey respondents identified water as a priority: 2 percent mentioned it as their top priority, and 7 percent mentioned it among their top three priorities. In Lanao del Sur, 40 percent of people draw directly from lakes, rivers or streams and 13 percent on open dug wells. Yet, the community development activity reported by 44 percent of respondents in the province was the construction of a barangay hall.

Regular population surveys are essential for exploring people's concerns and preferences, but technical research and public awareness campaigns will also be necessary to try to ensure that underlying causes (for example of health problems) are not left unaddressed.

Apply more efforts to improve access to information

In Central Mindanao, a key building block to sustainable development will be to improve access to information which was shown to be highly unequally distributed between strata and settlement groups. For information on development, effective participatory processes can be particularly helpful. As indicated by the findings on the association between assistance and higher levels of trust, such processes can serve to bridge the gap between individuals and institutions. A continuing trend towards greater trust in state institutions would underpin public perceptions of their legitimacy. This has been highlighted by the 2011 World Development Report as a critical pathway out of conflict towards lasting peace.¹⁶

¹⁶ World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2011. See: wdr2011.worldbank.org



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