

FOREWORD

Community and Family Services International (CFSI) is a non-profit, social development organization. Established in 1981 and based in the Philippines, CFSI has two major goals. The first is to empower and equip uprooted persons and others in exceptionally difficult circumstances to address and prevent social and health problems. The second is to prevent children, women, and men from becoming displaced by promoting peace, respect for human rights, and the equitable distribution of resources.

CFSI has worked with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Mindanao since 2000. These people were displaced by armed conflict between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The most significant element of this work thus far was a pilot project funded by the World Bank's Post Conflict Fund.

The project, which began on 01 January 2001 and was completed on 31 July 2003, had two general objectives:

- 1. Make a difference in the lives of Filipinos displaced by armed conflict by working with the affected communities to develop enabling conditions that encourage safe return or settlement, facilitate the process of transition and stabilization, and provide a foundation for peace building and sustainable development.
- 2. Contribute to the existing knowledge base by developing and testing models that will inform approaches to the transition from conflict to peace.

The coverage of the project included 6,759 families (33,550 persons) in the municipalities of Pagalungan and Pagagawan in the province of Maguindanao and the municipalities of Carmen, Kabacan, and Pikit in the province of North Cotabato. Maguindanao is part of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

CFSI contracted Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT) and Notre Dame University (NDU) to carry out the major research tasks, including the validation—at the community-level—of the preliminary findings. Their efforts were coordinated by CFSI's Senior Research Officer, Dr. Donna Doane.

This report summarizes the research processes, findings, conclusions, and recommendations. For additional information, please contact:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Internal conflicts within a nation, and the resulting displacement of people from their homes along with the loss of their assets and livelihoods, necessitate transition interventions that aim at helping the displaced return home or settle in new areas and then begin to rebuild their lives. These interventions should be linked to broader efforts toward the attainment of peace and development in the affected areas.

Mindanao, in the southern Philippines, has had a long history of conflict. The most recent was war in 2000 between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). This brought about the displacement of more than 900,000 people and the destruction of properties in much of Mindanao. Sporadic periods of recurrent armed conflict have continued to exact a heavy toll on the life and property of the populace in this "land of promise." In response to this situation, various government and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) organised a number of different relief, return/settlement, and recovery interventions. Some of these focused on the plight of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Community and Family Services International (CFSI) secured a grant from the World Bank Post Conflict Fund in late December 2000 to carry out a pilot project amongst the IDPs of Central Mindanao. A community-based, return/settlement and reconciliation programme for the displaced communities was initiated in January 2001. It continued through mid-2003 with an emphasis on community organising, psychosocial services, peace building, information, start-up livelihood assistance, and other strategic interventions. Parallel to these efforts was a research component to document the process of project implementation and to study the specific interventions. The aim of the research component was to move toward an understanding of programmes that can be most effective in helping displaced communities recover and rebuild their lives.

The research effort focused on understanding the experiences, problems, needs, and priorities of the displaced—based on the perspectives of the IDP communities themselves, and of specific vulnerable subgroups within the IDP communities. Much of the research was carried out from mid-2001 through mid-2002 in selected sites of the Pilot Project in three municipalities: Carmen (in the province of North Cotabato), and Pagalungan and Pagagawan (in the province of Maguindanao). Data were obtained through focused group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). This complemented and built upon the Pilot Project's extensive household survey effort undertaken in October 2001.

Among the major goals of the research was the generation of baseline information regarding priority need and problems, community-based development strategies as perceived by the IDPs, and the identification of lessons learned and "best practices" in post-conflict interventions. The researchers returned to the selected sites during the first half of 2003 for the purpose of validating—again from the perspective of the IDPs communities themselves—the findings of this research initiative.

Impoverishment is a usual consequence of displacement, as has been argued in Cernea's Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model, and elsewhere. However, in the case of the IDPs in Central Mindanao, it was found that both this statement and the IRR model have certain limitations and are not fully applicable for several reasons, including the fact that deep poverty was more of a reality than a "risk" in Central Mindanao, even prior to the period of conflict and displacement. Taking these limitations into consideration, the research process was designed less as a means of applying a predetermined model, and more as a means of "listening to the displaced," thus providing a mechanism that enabled the IDPs to express their felt needs, problems, and priorities amidst their impoverished state. This state was indeed compounded by political and military conflict and the resulting trauma of displacement and loss as well as continuing fears and uncertainties about the future.

Generally, the IDPs identified sources of livelihood as their major problem, such that their most immediate need is for livelihood assistance. Surprisingly, however, the resounding plea of the children and the youth to the government and the international community was not for food or medical attention, but for their education because it is their hope for a brighter future. The other vulnerable sectors of the IDP communities, including women and the elderly of the communities, also identified education of the children and youth as one of their top priorities, although they also emphasised the need for facilities that cater to the preservation of the health and life of their communities and their family members. Each of the vulnerable subgroups expressed somewhat different perspectives regarding their needs, problems, and priorities, but the study concludes that in their own ways the women, children and youth, and elderly IDPs of the area were among those most directly and adversely affected by the violence and displacement in the three municipalities. They were, therefore, among those with the most immediate (and sometimes unrecognised) needs of all.

Regarding their experiences following the period of conflict and displacement, the community members surveyed argued that the few evacuation centres that still exist are heavily overcrowded, which aggravates the problem of poor sanitation and an inadequate supply of food, medicines, and other basic necessities for survival. For more than two years now, the IDPs (including women, children, and the elderly as well as others in the communities) have been of one voice in saying that they want to go back to their sites of origin. However, return is hampered by the uncertainty of the peace and order situations in many of their communities of origin. Further, many of the IDPs fear that they will not be able to survive once they return home or settle in new areas.

Many of those surveyed noted that the initial assistance efforts of the government agencies were limited in scope and focused mainly on meeting immediate humanitarian assistance needs such as food, medicine, and other basic provisions. In some of the project sites, however, it was argued that the too-limited presence of the government in the settlement and recovery process of the IDPs was very noticeable, and has been detrimental to the process of return and recovery.

Although the vast majority of the IDPs were eventually able to return to their communities, they face formidable barriers and problems to the rebuilding of their lives. These are in addition to the security concerns. Among the most pressing of these are: the lack of livelihood opportunities; the extremely poor conditions of housing, health and sanitation; the lack of access to education and recreational facilities for the children; and the lack of farm inputs and farm support infrastructures.

It has been noted that in the municipality of Carmen—where the IDPs are predominantly Christians and Lumads (indigenous communities)—the people are happy with the presence of the AFP in their communities. In contrast, however, the IDPs of Pagalungan and Pagagawan, who are mostly Maguindanao Muslims, feel more secure if the AFP leaves their communities. The IDPs did not always say who they thought was behind the destruction in the communities (loss of life, property, and the community itself), but their wariness of the different factions engaged in fighting is certainly a product of their experience of being caught in the middle of violent conflict.

The effects of displacement on several vulnerable groups were documented through interviews, case studies, and the analysis of survey data. For example, it was found that children and youth suffered from such consequences of displacement as interrupted studies, trauma, poor health, and the need for child labour. Many have also been polarised, and are likely to harbour strong feelings against "opposing" communities, by the experience of conflict and loss. Some of the community members interviewed discussed the "crisis of the children" as one of the most significant consequences of war and displacement, with very troubling implications for the future.

Moreover, as in most cases of displacement, women are among those who have had the heaviest burden to bear. They have had the responsibility of trying to hold their families together even as social structures have eroded, family resources and livelihoods are lost, and family members are forced to disperse in order to find work. Above all, the loss of family members due to war has had a tremendous psychosocial impact, affecting the women physically, psychologically, and emotionally.

The elderly as well were not spared the tragic consequences of displacement, especially with respect to its effect on their health. Weakened by advancing age and illness, they too had to find work to support themselves and their immediate relatives. Given their long memory of the past and the realities of the present, some of the Muslim and Christian elderly have developed fear and mistrust towards each other's group. As elders, they wield enormous influence in transmitting and reinforcing or eliminating cultural prejudices and biases.

The indigenous Manobo IDP community, as with other impoverished communities in the region, also suffered the consequences of displacement, particularly with respect to their access to land. Basically a farming community, their attachment to land and its resources had been cut off, marginalizing them further. The experience of violence on the part of the Manobo women and children is reported to have resulted in notable psychosocial trauma and fears.

The study finds that strategies for return or settlement and then recovery can be effective when the groundwork for the transition interventions is laid down at the grassroots level. In other words, it is argued that the IDPs must be properly prepared to accept the intervention programmes. Sustained community organising, among other important interventions, is found to be an effective groundwork. The utilisation of the services of community organisers who are natives and familiar to the culture of the displaced communities elicits trust and acceptance among the IDPs. Through this, the IDP communities can be led toward the formulation of community-based and community-initiated projects for peace and development.

The study also concludes that transition interventions with internally displaced persons must be sustained not only at its initial stages at the evacuation centres with the provision of the basic human necessities, but should proceed through to the return and settlement process at the communities or sites of origin. It is argued that without both effective and equitable support, displaced communities will not be able to return home or settle in new areas and rebuild their lives in a way that will contribute to peace and stability in the area. Moreover, without sustained and ongoing support, even sheer survival in the highly uncertain and unstable environments of many of the communities of origin is called into question, and the "crisis of the children" so eloquently identified by the displaced is very likely to continue, with serious implications with regard to continuing instabilities and conflict in the region.

ACRONYMS

ABC Association of Barangay Captains AFP Armed Forces of the Philippines

ARMM Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao

BHW Barangay Health Worker

CAFGU Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Unit

CBO Community Base Officer

CFSI Community and Family Services International

CO(s) Community Organizer(s) COO(s) Community(ies) of Origin

CVO Civilian Volunteers Organization

DA Department of Agriculture
DAR Department of Agrarian Reform

DENR Department of Environment and Natural Resources

DOH Department of Health

DOLE Department of Labor and Employment

DSWD Department of Social Welfare and Development

EC(s) Evacuation Centre(s)
FGD Focus Group Discussion
GO(s) Government Organization(s)

GRP Government of the Republic of the Philippines

GSV Go and See Visit

IDP(s) Internally Displaced Person(s)

INC Iglesia Ni Cristo

IRRP Integrated Return and Rehabilitation Program

KFI Kadtuntaya Foundation Incorporation

KII Key Informant Interview

LAUR Livelihood Assistance Upon Return

LGU Local Government Unit
MALMAR Malitubog and Maridagao

MAPD Malugasa Association for Peace and Development

MILF Moro Islamic Liberation Front MNLF Moro National Liberation Front

MSF Medecins Sans Frontieres

MSU-IIT Mindanao State University-Illigan Institute of Technology

MSWD Municipal Social Welfare and Development NDCC National Disaster Coordinating Council

NDU Notre Dame University

NGO Non-Government Organization NSO National Statistics Office NIA National Irrigation Agency

NPA New People's Army

PHC Primary Health Care PO Program Officer PPM Pagkain Para sa Masa

PSWD Provincial Social Welfare and Development

QIP Quick Impact Project
RHU Rural Health Unit
SDA Seventh Day Adventist
SDAs Special Development Areas

SOO(s) Site(s) of Origin

SUCA Start-Up Capital Assistance

SZOPAD Special Zone of Peace and Development

TESDA Technical Education Skills Development Authority

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund USM University of Southern Mindanao

INTRODUCTION: CONFLICT IN MINDANAO, THE RETURN/SETTLEMENT PROCESS, AND "LISTENING TO THE DISPLACED"

Mindanao has long been the site of resistance movements, and in recent years has seen armed conflict, encounters, and skirmishes involving the military and secessionist groups, as many in Mindanao clamour for their independence and struggled for nationhood.

The signing of a peace accord between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in September 1996 brought hope to Mindanao. The peace accord involved two main components. The first was the provision for the establishment of a Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD) in the southern Philippines that comprised close to 10 million Christians, Muslims, and Indigenous Peoples/cultural communities (IPs). The SZOPAD was the focus of intensive peace and development efforts during a planned transition period from 1996 through 1999. The second component was the establishment of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD). This Council was charged with the promotion, monitoring, and coordination of peace and development programmes in the SZOPAD. In addition, the government committed to the holding of a plebiscite at the end of the transition period in 1999 to determine the prospects for expanded autonomy for Muslim Mindanao.

Despite the formal acceptance of the 1996 peace accord, a resurgence of armed conflict ensued for many reasons, as the second largest secessionist group—the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)—asserted its representation in the Mindanao conflict. It waged armed encounters with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) shortly after the signing of the peace agreement and continued its armed confrontations from then on.

The GRP continued to engage in sporadic negotiations with the MILF. The initial meetings were conducted in April, May, and June 1997. The fighting, however, continued and adversely affected these meetings.

In 1998, the newly elected Estrada administration placed new people in the GRP negotiating body. The peace panels never made it to the negotiating table. In April 2000, President Estrada called declared "all-out war" against the MILF. He instructed the AFP to take over all MILF bases (i.e., camps).

Renewed and heightened clashes between the AFP and the MILF began immediately thereafter. Military offensives were waged in Central Mindanao areas, aiming to mass up military forces at various MILF camps, mainly Camp Abubakar, the largest camp of the MILF in Matanog, Maguindanao. Fighting quickly spilled over to many other areas in North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur, South Cotabato, and the cities of Cotabato and General Santos. Fighting also broke out in Western Mindanao.

As hostilities continued, the number of displaced families escalated. Hundreds of thousands of people fled their homes. School buildings, gymnasiums, mosques, churches, markets, day care centres, town plazas, warehouses and other facilities were rapidly declared "evacuation centers." By November 2001, more than 900,000 people had been displaced by the war. Others were also affected by the war, but not displaced.

Although disagreements about the precise number of people affected by the war continue even today, there was and is little doubt that the area most adversely affected was Central Mindanao, particularly the provinces of Maguindanao and North Cotabato. Maguindanao is in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). North Cotabato borders the ARMM.

Response to Conflict: New Initiatives

In response to the war, many government and non-governmental organisations introduced various initiatives to protect and assist the displaced, while others offered transition interventions towards the attainment of peace and development in the conflict-affected communities. The outcomes of these interventions have depended to a large extent on the approaches used by these organisations and the reactions of the IDPs towards the programmes. One measure of positive response is the active involvement of the affected populations themselves in mobilising and developing strategies for the socio-economic advancement of their communities.

Community and Family Services International (CFSI) Philippine-based, nongovernmental organisation committed to undertaking community-based protection, assistance, return/settlement, and reconciliation programmes for uprooted communities in the Asia and Pacific Region. Established in 1981, much of its work in Mindanao—and the specific subject of this research effort—was, and is, in the form of a pilot project funded by a grant from the World Bank Post Conflict Fund. (See www.cfsi.ph for more information on CFSI and the Pilot Project.)

The Pilot Project aims to make a difference in the lives of the displaced by promoting enabling conditions that will facilitate returns, reintegration, and stabilisation. In addition, the Project aims to contribute to the knowledge base through action research. Programmatic efforts focused in particular on (1) community organising, and (2) special intervention such as information dissemination, peace building, psychosocial services, and start-up livelihood assistance. The livelihood component included several aspects, most notably Livelihood Assistance Upon Return from the evacuation centres, otherwise known as LAUR.

CFSI began the pilot project by focusing on ten evacuation centres (ECs) in three municipalities as its areas of intervention, with six of these in the two municipalities of Pagalungan and Pagagawan in Maguindanao Province, and four in the municipality of Carmen in the province of North Cotabato. The general objectives included: (1) helping those who were displaced by conflict in these war-affected areas either return to their homes or settle in new areas, and (2) helping them to begin to rebuild their lives,

including through community organising, livelihood, psychosocial, peace building and reconciliation efforts.

Research Goals and Methodology

Throughout most of 2001, the security situation was such that it appeared a return to their communities of origin (COOs) from the evacuation centres was not an option for many of the displaced. However, in late 2001 and early 2002, families began returning to their communities of origin or settling in new communities. The present study thus attempts to "listen to the displaced", both in evacuation centres and in the communities to which the displaced have returned or settled, as well as to gain their perspectives on the various parts of the return/settlement effort.

More specifically, the goal of the research is to examine the experience of displacement, the factors involved in deciding to move out of the evacuation centres and try to return home or settle in new areas, and then the experience of return to the communities of origin for those who could do so. The ultimate aim of the study is to try to identify local "best practices" for helping those displaced return to their homes or to new communities, and begin to rebuild their lives. The study attempts to identify which programmes and efforts are seen as working well in helping the displaced in the return/settlement and community development process; which do not appear to work as well as expected; and why they appear to have succeeded, or fallen short, in each case.

Not only CFSI, but also other organisations, programmes and activities have been operative in the evacuation centres and, to varying degrees, in the communities of origin. The study has thus also attempted to identify the dynamics of interventions associated with local government units (LGUs), national line agencies, local and international NGOs, and other organisations working in the area for the displaced communities. The study begins to analyse how their efforts as well influence the process of the displaced communities' return and settlement.

The overall aim of this research is to provide information to the communities that will be useful to community members in the months and perhaps even years that follow the period of research. The intention is not to produce a purely academic study or an internal NGO assessment of best practices, but rather to produce descriptions and analyses that will help those displaced rebuild their lives and pursue peace and development in a meaningful way.

The research methodology used in this study centres on intensive interviews (focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and other forms of inquiry) with community members, community organisers, and others involved in the return/settlement and development effort. These interviews have first aimed at understanding community-wide perspectives (presented here in Part I), and then focused in on the differing perspectives of specific subgroups within the community that are seen as particularly vulnerable in the context of conflict and displacement (women, youth, the most impoverished, and other subgroups; this is presented in Part II).

General Approaches to Peace Building Efforts and Violence Reduction

Household survey data and other local documents served to inform and help shape questions asked, but no specific predetermined model was applied since it was not clear that existing models of conflict transformation, violence reduction, and return and (re)settlement—mostly derived from the experiences of refugees in other parts of the world—would be able to capture the circumstances and dynamics of the local communities in the Mindanao context. Much of the literature on conflict, reconciliation, reconstruction, and violence reduction is very general in nature, whereas other studies of return and resettlement tend by their very nature to be location-specific, without necessarily a great deal of transferability or applicability to other country contexts.

For example, the general literature on the transformation from conflict to peace discusses conditions that will help promote trust and reconciliation in a post-conflict context. Many of the policy prescriptions center on questions of how to improve the functioning of government institutions, private sector institutions, and civil society organisations in order to build trust and move towards a lasting peace.

Although the identification and achievement of conditions that will result in a lasting peace in Mindanao is obviously at the core of solutions to displacement, it is for the most part outside of the scope of the present study. Certainly the local and national governance issues, among others, are critically important and need to be analysed carefully to improve the prospects for peace. However, it is precisely these crucial "macro" issues—of governance, access to resources, bias and prejudice (on all sides), ongoing discrimination, and other unresolved sources of conflict—that cannot be adequately addressed in the present study. A longer study might attempt to tie these "macro" issues to the "micro" issues of return/settlement and community development addressed here, but the larger environmental (contextual) issues cannot be addressed in a more limited study that focuses on research in evacuation centres and communities of origin in Central Mindanao.

For similar reasons, it is difficult to apply the general literature on violence reduction directly to the current study. Although some former combatants are among the displaced, most of the members of the displaced community were not directly involved in creating the violence that resulted in their displacement. Because the IDPs were displaced involuntarily by armed conflict that was not of their making, the most effective approaches to reducing violence in Mindanao would not be immediately through the displaced communities, but rather might best be approached by addressing the root causes of (and main agents involved in) the violence that is in large part "external" to those displaced. In the long run, of course, education and development in certain senses will tend to reduce violence, but they could also contribute to it, depending on the content of education and the "development" processes that are going on.

Community organising, peace building initiatives, and other programmes examined here may help reduce interpersonal frictions, which is a significant achievement in itself for those undergoing the trauma of armed conflict and displacement. Moreover, these

programmes do have some elements in common with the conflict transformation, human rights, and social capital approaches to violence reduction, although less in common with the criminal justice and public health approaches (cf. Moser and Shrader, 1999, regarding these different traditions). Still, the programmes discussed here are again not designed to address the root causes of conflict and violence, and are aimed primarily at the persons suffering from armed conflict, rather than the combatants themselves.

Specific Studies of "Best Practices" Regarding Return and Settlement Efforts

As opposed to the *general* approaches to the transition from conflict to peace or to violence reduction, then, the more *specific* studies of practices that help refugees, the internally displaced, and other uprooted persons to return home or settle in new areas is more immediately relevant to the present study. An extensive body of literature has emerged in recent years (cf., for example, Hampton, 1998; UNHCR, various years) that details "best practices" that have worked in particular areas. However, because these practices respond to very localised conditions and needs, they are by their very nature *location-specific* and may not be transferable to a very different location and set of conditions. Nonetheless, these studies are very useful in that they can provide ideas that may prove helpful to others developing similar projects in other parts of the world.

For example, in Mozambique, a life-skills building programme was established through a local community association in a rural village. Supported by an international NGO, the programme offered basic numerical and literacy skills, recreation, access to viable trade skills, and "mentor" relationships with adult role models. This programme included but was not restricted to IDPs. In Nepal, Rwanda, and Malawi, among other countries, environmental projects were also coupled with community development projects as a way to stabilise conditions for agriculture and forestry and provide employment opportunities for local refugees, IDPs, and residents alike.

In Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar, among other countries, programmes for food, as well as medical, educational, and other forms of assistance were provided to IDPs. These programmes sometimes focused on particular subgroups (e.g., farmers, women, or children). In Bosnia, for example, the Bosnia Women's Initiative (BWI) initiated counselling and psychosocial services for women, as well as employment generation and legal training for displaced and returnee women (particularly widows and single heads of households). Health projects, day care facilities for children and the elderly, a women's community radio project, and a "cow bank" also help the displaced women and their families.

Some of these ideas are readily transferable, while others may not be as transferable to different contexts. For example, in Mozambique, ceremonies related to reunification, thanksgiving, and purification rituals were supported. In the Sudan, a youth-oriented sporting league and employment programme (the latter involving street postal deliveries) were instituted to respond to the particular needs of the local youth groups. In South Africa, Bosnia, and Central America, different programmes (involving truth and reconciliation commissions, the establishment of new bus lines, and other measures) were

undertaken as a means to help bring together ethnic groups that had been in conflict with each other.

Programmes designed within the same national or cultural contexts and facing similar challenges may be directly applicable. For example, in the Philippines, peace zones have been established at the initiative of the people to free the communities where they have resettled or are residents from armed conflict, either through requests not to carry arms and weapons of destruction within the area, or to cease using civilians as unwilling participants in the armed conflict between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the New People's Army (NPA). In 1993, the four peace zones in Tulunan, Cotabato; the Cantomanyog peace zone in Candoni, Negros Occidental; the town of Sagada, Mountain Province; and Bangilo, Abra were declared as Special Development Areas (SDAs). The four peace zones in Tulunan were subjected to sophisticated and coordinated intervention from the outside through the local government unit, and with the willing, if not active, support from external forces, NGOs, and even the NPA. However, some observers think that the Cantomanyog peace zone may have been more successful than those in Tulunan in terms of having strong internal processes (community reflection, collective decisionmaking, and crystallised group thinking) as well as non-interventionist and cooperative external forces (including governmental, NGOs, and other outside forces).

Similar to the peace zones set up under the aegis of the Coalition for Peace, an NGO, are the "sanctuaries of peace: being established by the church-initiated Tabang Mindanaw. Its Integrated Return and Rehabilitation Programme (IRRP) in Mindanao was designed to facilitate the safe return of the "tri-people" IDPs—Christians, Muslims, and Lumads (indigenous peoples)—and assist them in the rehabilitation of their lives and communities. The IRRP lists the following roles and responsibilities: (1) the partner communities with the assistance of the LGUs, NGOs and the Church are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the return and rehabilitation process; (2) the "tri-people" will develop a mechanism for the protection of their "sanctuaries of peace"; and the military command as well as the MILF will provide guarantees for the safe return and preservation of the "sanctuaries of peace." The IRRP has ten components, namely: (1) education/functional literacy and awareness building; (2) capability building and community organising; (3) shelter; (4) sustainable agriculture; (5) water system; (6) livelihood; (7) health services/feeding; (8) psychosocial intervention; (9) infrastructure; and (10) land tenure.

Certainly, many of the ideas cited above are complementary to and overlap with the interventions that have been initiated by NGOs, government agencies, and others in Central Mindanao. The comparisons will become clear as the interventions that have been implemented in Central Mindanao are discussed and evaluated in the following sections of this report.

However, it is argued that there are very few initiatives that will be appropriate to *all* situations in which IDPs attempt to return home or settle in new communities. Instead, it is argued that each situation requires a very specific combination of "best practices" that are appropriate to the local context. For this reason, the "best practices" that are the focus

of this study are assumed to be relevant to other similar locations in Mindanao, but no immediate claims are made that they are suitable to all country contexts. We view these are *local* "best practices" that may generate ideas that could be useful in some form in other national or international locations, but they may have to be modified substantially in order to be effective in those very different contexts.

In sum, because of the location-specific nature of "best practices," it was decided not to try to apply a predetermined formal model of conflict and reconstruction to the Mindanao situation, or speculate about which ideas derived from other country contexts *might* be relevant *if* attempts were made to apply them in Central Mindanao. Instead, this study adopted the general approach of research aimed at "listening to the displaced" (Demusz, 2000 and similar studies) and documenting the "voices of the poor" (Narayan et al., 2000) in order to understand the community members' perceptions and priorities, and work towards an understanding of what appear to be local best practices that aid in return/settlement and community development efforts in Mindanao.

Cernea's IRR Model: Strengths and Limitations

One formal model that does seem to have some relevance to the experiences of the displaced in Mindanao is Michael Cernea's "Impoverishment Risk and Reconstruction" (IRR) model for resettling displaced persons. Although the research teams were encouraged not to be constrained by this or any other particular model as they conducted their fieldwork, but rather to follow the community members' leads in trying to understand the perspectives of the displaced regarding problems, priorities, and experiences in the return/settlement process, the teams were nonetheless able to reflect on the relevance of this model to their work (presented here in Part III, and elsewhere in the study).

Cernea, in brief, argues that the IRR model is designed "(1) to explain what happens during massive forced displacements—a task very important in itself, and (2) to create a theoretical and safeguarding tool capable of guiding policy, planning, and actual development programmes to counteract these adverse effects" (page 14). His model is constructed with a focus on (displacement) *risks*, (resulting) *impoverishment*, and (strategies for) *reconstruction*.

Although this model was designed and applied to the cases of people displaced by development projects and international refugees, among others, it is general enough to touch on many points common to the circumstances faced by those internally displaced by conflict as well. For example, the key *risks* cited, as potentially leading to the greatest *impoverishment* of the displaced population, include the following:

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¹ This version of the model can be found in Michael M. Cernea's 'Risks, Safeguards, and Reconstruction: A Model for Population Displacement and Resettlement.' (The article appears as Chapter 1 in Cernea, 2000.) The model is also presented in several other publications by the same author.

- a) Landlessness
- b) Joblessness
- c) Homelessness
- d) Marginalization
- e) Food insecurity
- f) Increased morbidity
- g) Loss of access to common property resources
- h) Community disarticulation

These are seen as processes that are very common in cases of displacement (from whatever cause). Moreover, it is argued that "the convergent and cumulative effect of these processes [if unchecked] is the rapid onset of impoverishment." (p. 23).

In order to prevent or overcome these processes, Cernea "turns the model on its head" and recommends striving for a reversal of the risks involved by devising strategies that can lead the displaced communities:

- a) From landlessness to land-based resettlement
- b) From joblessness to reemployment
- c) From homelessness to house reconstruction
- d) From marginalization to social inclusion
- e) From food insecurity to adequate nutrition
- f) From increased morbidity to improved health care
- g) From loss of access to restoration of community assets and services
- h) From social disarticulation to networks and community rebuilding.

The research team found several limitations to the model. For example, because the displaced in Mindanao come primarily from communities that are already among the most impoverished in the country, one could argue that many of the impoverishment risks cited here have already been more of a reality than a "risk" to most rural community members—this reality, in fact, is one of the many causes of conflict. (In some ways, the model seems to be a simple description of endemic problems commonly faced by the most impoverished of rural residents in developing countries, with its focus on food, shelter, health, employment, and assets/resources/services, along with interpersonal and community cohesion.)

Still, the model may be very relevant in the sense that the process of displacement can compound these endemic problems, and certainly finding solutions to these problems would greatly benefit the communities whose lives have been torn apart by poverty, conflict, and displacement. Therefore, programmes designed to help the displaced return or settle in new communities, such as those examined in this study, can be evaluated by the extent to which they address and help reduce some of the massive risks the local communities face on a daily basis, and work to eliminate the reality of their impoverishment.

This study thus did not simply 'apply' the model to the Mindanao case (additional limitations to the model are addressed in Part III). However, points addressed in the model are referred to and discussed in several parts of the study as they relate to the research findings.

The Importance of "Listening to the Displaced"

Finally, as noted above, the other body of literature that informs this study is that concerned with "listening to the displaced" and hearing the "voices of the poor." Too often, programmes are designed without the input or participation of the intended beneficiaries, and they often fail because they do not take sufficient account of the needs and priorities of the communities themselves, and different groups within the communities. The existing literature offers guidelines for listening, and provides examples of what can be learned when the "target groups" are allowed to speak on their own behalf.

Hearing what community members have to say is also important because perceptions of who benefits, and who is hurt by (or at least left out of), the programmes to assist the displaced critically influence the success or failure of the programmes. Moreover, because development aid has often created as much conflict as it was supposed to overcome, *not* listening to the displaced (and the "beneficiaries" of development programmes in general) is in itself a very risky undertaking.

What follows, then, is an attempt to begin to understand the perceptions of these particular displaced communities in Mindanao. The study begins in Part I with an analysis of *community-wide* perceptions in Pagalungan and Pagagawan municipalities, and then the municipality of Carmen, all of which are in Central Mindanao. Following this, the perspectives of specific *subgroups* within the displaced communities in Pagalungan, Pagagawan, and Carmen are presented and examined (in Part II of the study). Part III presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations based on the findings presented in Parts I and II. A summary of community-based validation efforts comprises Part IV.

It should be noted that the findings of this study were not easy to come by, as the situation in Mindanao is not yet by any means a calm and peaceful one. For this reason, the authors are very grateful to those who helped arrange the fieldwork for this study, and first and foremost, the authors are grateful to the community members, community organisers, and others interviewed who offered both their insights and their time. More detailed acknowledgements may be found in Appendix A.

PART I. LISTENING TO THE DISPLACED: COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON RETURN AND SETTLEMENT

1. IDP EXPERIENCES IN PAGALUNGAN AND PAGAGAWAN

Background

Conflict has long been a part of the political and social fabric in Mindanao. Conflict between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) escalated in 2000 with the declaration of an all-out offensive war against the latter. This aggravated the existing animosities between these two groups. This spate of armed confrontation brought destruction to the land and caused suffering to the people, especially the displaced. As a result of the ensuing violence, more than 900,000 people were displaced. Others were also affected, but not displaced.

Pagalungan and Pagagawan municipalities of the Province of Maguindanao in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) were heavily affected by the armed conflict. Pagagawan, originally a part of the municipality of Pagalungan, was separated to become another municipality in 1998 as a settlement of territorial disputes among the reigning Maguindanao *datus* in the area. The total population of Pagagawan is 23,957 persons, of which 92% are Maguindanaon Muslims and 8% are Christians. Pagalungan has a population about twice that size—46,401 persons—as reflected in a 1995 report of the National Statistics Office. Continuing armed conflict among clans in the area and the more recent "all-out war" of the AFP against the MILF caused the displacement of the constituents of these two municipalities.

The agonies and sufferings of the displaced are beyond any description, especially in terms of health and sanitation needs. According to Fr. Eliseo R. Mercado (2000) "there is a common understanding that most of the displaced are MILF partisans ...(who are) housed in school buildings, tent 'cities'..." and other community-based convertible structures. The government and non-government organizations (NGOs) have been trying to provide many forms of assistance to the displaced to alleviate their conditions, but due to a lack of funds these services have dwindled more recently.

Community and Family Services International (CFSI) is one of the NGOs that have responded to the needs of the displaced. According to the figures provided by the municipalities, as of May 2001, 14,729 persons (2,918 families) were temporarily accommodated in 15 evacuation centers (ECs) in Pagalungan, and 4,108 persons (832 families) were accommodated in 11 ECs in Pagagawan. All of these received CFSI assistance. In October 2001, the figures of the displaced (based on detailed household surveys undertaken by CFSI) in Pagalungan had decreased to 10,430 persons (2,113 families) in 18 ECs and the figures in Pagagawan decreased to 1,688 persons (307

Transition Interventions with Internally Displaced Persons: From Conflict to Peace and Development in the Southern Philippines Community and Family Services International, Pasay City, Philippines, October 2003

¹ Datu is the head of the political structure of a Muslim tribe in Mindanao, Philippines.

families) in 6 ECs. These individuals and families continued to be assisted by CFSI, both in the evacuation centers and then as they returned home or settled in new areas.

The original concept for research in Maguidanao envisaged six CFSI-assisted evacuation centers as project sites (three in Pagalungan and another three in Pagagawan). However, as displaced families returned home, the research team was able to change the research sites from looking only at evacuation centers, to including both evacuation centers and sites of origin (SOOs) in this study. As a result, this research was actually conducted in three SOOs and one EC in the said municipalities, namely: Sitio Sambulawan in Barangay Nabundas, Pagagawan; Sitio Bai Tonina, Barangay Bulit, Pagagawan; Sitio Agakan, Barangay Inug-ug, Pagalungan; and Central Elementary School evacuation site in Pagalungan.

Return and Settlement Updates

As of early 2002, the majority of those who were displaced by the "all-out war" of 2000 had already returned to their sites of origin. They had no choice but to start rebuilding their lives, often without the assistance of others. In the CFSI-assisted ECs in Pagalungan and Pagagawan, most of the people who were displaced have gradually returned to their homes, facilitated by the CFSI programmes for settlement and return.

Regrettably, a number of internally displaced persons are still in evacuation centers and have been there for more than two years now. The echoing desire is to return to their places of origin that they call "home." In the CFSI-assisted evacuation centre of Central Elementary School in Pagalungan, the people are longing to return to their sites of origin, but the presence of a military outpost on one side and MILF partisan families on the outskirts of their houses has prevented them from going back.

"Gusto na talaga naming bumalik sa aming lugar. Magulo kasi dito sa Evacuation Center at walang hanap-buhay ang mga magulang namin."

(We really want to go home. The evacuation centre is too crowded and our parents have no source of income).

13-year old boy at the Evacuation Center

By the end of the first quarter of 2002, a total of 432 families (2,228 persons) had left CFSI-assisted ECs in Pagagawan and returned to their sites of origin that are located in Sitios Sambulawan, Bulikay, Tatag, and Bual in Barangay Nabundas. In Pagalungan, 352 families (1,767 persons) had returned to their communities of origin in the sitios of Barangay Inug-ug. Presently, only two evacuation centers remain open in Pagagawan while there are still four in Pagalungan.

Those who have returned home still feel insecurities regarding not only the peace and order situation, but also and perhaps more importantly, insecurities regarding their daily subsistence and humane existence. Though Pagagawan and Pagalungan are relatively peaceful, the people have resounding fears that armed conflict will take place again.

Healing the wounds of war-torn societies is a long and difficult undertaking. The war isn't over when the war is actually over. The task now at hand is addressing the needs of the IDPs through a comprehensive plan to provide these communities with sustainable solutions to include means of livelihood, education for children, health services and others. But recent experiences have underlined the importance of other tasks, such as healing the psychological wounds of war, restarting schools, and embarking on education for peace.

Problems, Needs, and Priorities: The Community Perspective

"When the fighting stops, the war is over" is not a notion applicable to the people displaced by armed conflict in Central Mindanao. The displaced communities of Pagalungan and Pagagawan are faced with the battles of economic instability and social insecurity. Even though there is assistance extended to them by some institutions, their primary concern is still trying to meet their minimum basic needs—their right to survival.

The displaced people in both the communities of origin and the ECs in Pagalungan and Pagagawan have identified sources of livelihood and livelihood assistance as their number one problem and need. Farming and fishing are the dominant sources of livelihood but they do not have the capability to acquire farm implements and inputs (such as solar dryers, *carabao* [water buffalo used as farm animal], seeds, fertilisers, and others) or fishing gear (such as *pukot* or fish net, *banca* [small wooden fishing vessel], and other requirements).

These concerns were expressed during the preliminary focus group discussions conducted with selected representatives of the different sectors in the three sites of origin and one evacuation centre identified as research sites in these two municipalities. Aside from this, the people have identified a number of significant problems and needs that have been confronting them. Foremost of these are education for their children, and health and sanitation facilities, including a community health centre. (Please refer to the matrices of identified needs and problems in the communities of origin and evacuation centers presented as Appendices B and C.)

Listening to the Displaced Children and Youth

It is important to note that in listening to the displaced through the focus group discussions, it was found that "the resounding plea of the children and the youth to the government and the international community was not for food or medical attention, but for their education." According to the Department of Education (DepEd) figures in 1994, the proportion of people aged 15 years or more who had not completed even one year of schooling in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)—which includes encompasses these two municipalities—was 27.8% while the national average was 3.7%.

The data reveal that the respondents in the four research areas considered education as their topmost priority. Apart from the imperative of re-establishing credible security and peace, the "crisis of the children" is seen by most as the most important challenge facing the areas affected by war.

"Sana mayroon kaming eskwelahan dito. Malayo kasi ang eskwelahan, tatawid ka pa sa ilog. Halos lahat sa amin, di nakatungtong ng elementarya. Ang iba hanggang Grade 1 lang."

(I wish that there will be a school site in our place. The nearest school is some kilometers far. One needs to cross a river in going there. Almost all of us have no opportunity for schooling. A few were able to step into Grade I level only.)

26 year old at a SOO

The rehabilitation if not construction of services that benefit children, especially educational and medical facilities in rural areas, should constitute a clear priority in any post-conflict recovery programme in this area. Basic social facilities and services were largely destroyed during the war in 2000. Housing, water systems, recreational facilities, sources of income, and health centers were among those identified by the children as problems and needs at the same time. There is also a clear manifestation of government neglect in the areas affected by war in terms of providing basic infrastructure support, health and educational services, and livelihood support.

Key Issues Affecting Women and the Elderly

The women were particularly affected by the violence and displacement in these two municipalities. Women generally had to play a critical role in the post-war years. They were forced to deal with finding shelter for their families, providing food, and adapting to new conditions that hardly could be defined as "normal" or "acceptable." Other problems included taking children to school, looking after the elderly, and helping men overcome stress, as well as overseeing everyday domestic chores related to the feeding and clothing of family members.

Without effective government agencies to channel help to these communities, initial assistance efforts were limited and mainly focused on immediate humanitarian needs such as food and basic medicine. International efforts through NGOs were more substantial, but most of these dwindled through time. The people said there were a number of organisations that assisted them in the evacuation centers, but it was only CFSI that has been following through with them to their communities of origin and continually visible in their communities.

The Communities of Origin in Crisis

Although the IDPs were able to return to their sites of origin (SOOs), the returnees face formidable barriers to rebuilding their lives, and a number of immediate problems and needs have been identified for their return. These problems and needs are related to the following, among other concerns:

- Sources of livelihood
- Lack of jobs and working places (for women, men and children)
- Housing facilities
- Child labour (as a response to poverty, and the lack of educational facilities)
- Health and sanitation
- Potable water systems
- High percentage of illnesses, especially in children, women, and the elderly
- Inability to sustain medical treatment (due to expensive medications)
- No access to health centers
- No access to education, inability to pay for children's education
- Inability to provide recreation to children
- Problems created by lack of farm to market roads and transportation systems

Generally, the male respondents in the sites of origin (SOOs) regard the problem of livelihood and the lack of jobs as very essential. The women similarly consider the lack of livelihood as their main problem, aside from concerns related to their primary responsibilities within their homes, including rearing their children. As previously noted, education is seen as the first and foremost need.

The SOOs are highly dependent on farming and fishing as the main sources of livelihood. However, farm productivity is hampered by such problems as the lack of capital, farm roads, means of transportation, and the lack of technical knowledge about farm production. On the other hand, the lack of fishing gear (e.g., fishnets and bancas) and the use of illegal fishing practices by others, have been limiting their fishing activities. Child labour is also a problem in the community for the children have no choice but to help their parents earn a living.

The Dilemma at the Evacuation Centers

The evacuation centers (ECs) are heavily overcrowded. Aside from the predicament of dilapidated houses (made of woven bamboo), they are also confronted with the problem of health and sanitation. Though there are support services extended by government agencies and institutions such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), OXFAM, and CFSI, the IDPs are apprehensive that the support will be terminated. Generally, the male respondents at the evacuation centre in Pagalungan Central School cite the lack of sources of livelihood as the topmost problem. It is imperative for them to be able to provide for the basic needs of their families.

"It is very hard for us to start again; our income is not enough to support the needs of the family. We are also confused on what to do since any time armed conflict may erupt again because there is no clear agreement yet between the military and the MILF."

Household Head in Pagalungan Central (EC)

Women, children and the elderly are one in saying that they want to go back to their communities of origin. They aspire to return to their respective areas, rebuild their homes and start all over again. They have not been able to return due to the continuing uncertainties that prevent their return, such as possible recurrence of war in their areas of origin because of the presence of warring parties, together with the lack of educational facilities and other social services in their communities.

The Problem of the Return

Despite the government's statements about its willingness to address the return/settlement process of those still living at the evacuation centers, there remain numerous structural and ground-level obstacles to achieving a sustainable return. It can be deduced from observations that the problem really is a combination of lack of political will, lack of resources, and lack of coordination among the concerned government line agencies. It appears that the community is just banking on the assistance extended by CFSI.

There are several other key factors that have not allowed the full-scale return of displaced families. For example, another impediment to return is the large number of houses that were damaged or destroyed as a result of the war. Moreover, since most returnees are going back to war-affected areas, they generally face a harsh economic environment.

The continued presence of the two warring groups (the AFP and the MILF) in their vicinities also contributes greatly to the fear of the IDPs to return to their communities of origin. In fact, the continued presence of the AFP and the MILF has also contributed to the policy of not allowing the IDPs to return to their community of origin.

On top of everything else, it has been noted by the IDPs that all the research areas of Pagalungan and Pagagawan enjoyed support from government agencies during the height of the war. However, after a few months, agencies such as the DSWD and the Department of Agriculture (DA) as well as nongovernmental organisations are nowhere to be found. As such, their assistance is considered by the IDPs as ceremonial and not sustainable. Furthermore, the poor economic situation, lack of livelihood opportunities and widespread corruption negatively contribute to potential return. Under the circumstances, return is not a viable option for many families in this region.

Intervention Practices: A Preliminary Discussion

Common Post-Conflict Interventions

The most common intervention of the government and NGOs is the provision of humanitarian aid in the form of food, shelter, clothing and medical care that usually does help the displaced people insofar as it provides their most basic human needs. This form of intervention helps empower them by enabling them to better deal with their own problems simply by obtaining the energy and support derived from these free provisions. Nevertheless, humanitarian aid may develop dependency among these people whereby they will be discouraged from becoming independent, rather than empowering them as intended. It may also become a very serious source of contention among the IDPs due to corruption or inequality in their distribution.

In the evacuation centers of Pagalungan and Pagagawan in Maguindanao Province, most of the intervention practices of the NGOs and government organisations (GOs) operating in the area, such as OXFAM and the DSWD, were focused on humanitarian aid. OXFAM, DSWD, Tabang Mindanaw, the Red Cross and others had provided the IDPs with community-based, convertible structures such as evacuation centers; potable water and toilets; housing units; and emergency relief goods including canned goods, basic household wares, clothing, and other necessities.

During the downpour of these provisions in the early part of the post-conflict situation, the displaced people were glad to have received these. Later, however, there were already complaints of unequal distribution; some of the people receiving the relief goods were not displaced; the number of housing units given was not enough; and other significant problems appeared. Then, on top of everything else, the relief assistance eventually dwindled due to a lack of funds, to the dismay of those displaced by the armed conflict who were still facing serious difficulties.

Reflecting the views of most community leaders in the evacuation centers and the communities of origin, a government planner had this to say about attempts to devise a coordinated plan for a Zone of Peace and Development in Mindanao: "Planners simply presented their own plans, drawn up without consulting the people on the ground. Plans were all to do with investments, but that is not what is needed. What are needed are poverty alleviation, employment and basic services."

Some of the IDPs in the research sites believed in their own capacities and have expressed an interest in providing the needed manpower if only the government or some other funding entities would give them the cement and other materials needed to build their own community solar dryer. They are even willing to plan their own community projects with the help of CFSI, and submit these to funding agencies.

A few NGOs had given them false hopes by making promises that were never kept. In one instance, a housing need survey was conducted to which the IDPs responded enthusiastically. Accordingly, as a result of this survey one hundred fifty (150) housing

units were, reportedly, to be distributed among the IDPs who had returned to their communities of origin in Barangay Inug-ug. Regrettably, not one among them received a housing unit. Instead, these were distributed among those "near to the heart" of the one in charge of their distribution, who were from the other neighbouring barangays.

The CFSI Intervention Model

The CFSI model of transition intervention has become popular among the IDPs, as they claim that it is only CFSI that has sustained its support to the evacuation centers and has followed through to their communities of origin/return for a prolonged period of time. The components of the CFSI's intervention model (namely, community organising, information dissemination, peace building, psychosocial services and start-up livelihood assistance) have gained acceptability among the displaced people in Pagalungan and Pagagawan as effective intervention practices. A very important aspect of CFSI's intervention strategy was its close co-ordination with community leaders prior to entry. CFSI's observation of proper protocol by informing the local power holders of the nature of its intervention programmes has avoided misunderstanding with the influential local people and prevented antagonising the powerful leaders of the community. This facilitated the harmonious relationship of CFSI personnel, particularly the Community Organisers, with the people of the locality.

They said they have learned to organise themselves as a community and have gradually developed unity among themselves. The peace advocacy training that some of them have undergone has taught them peaceful means of resolving internal conflicts. Although they have wished for the expansion and augmentation of the amount of CFSI's livelihood assistance programmes—Start-Up Capital Assistance (SUCA) and Livelihood Assistance Upon Return (LAUR)—they have been very grateful for they have been able to work on their farms and are now expecting their harvests, while the fishermen were able to have better fish catches. These have helped them earn and provide for their families' needs. In summary, the displaced people feel that all the programmes of the CFSI have been beneficial to them, but if CFSI should cease from assisting their communities they would have nobody to help them overcome the difficulties they face on a day-to-day basis.

IDPs' Views and Perceptions

<u>Intervention Practices at the Evacuation Centers (ECs)</u>

In order to validate the family lists prepared by the LGU (local government unit), come up with a detailed profile of the displaced communities in Pagalungan and Pagagawan, and establish a database for baseline purposes, CFSI undertook in October 2001 a community profiling effort. The survey, according to the IDPs, also clarified the issue of numbers as there were some residents of Pagalungan and Pagagawan who posed as IDPs at the evacuation centers even if they were not, just to avail of the benefits given to the IDPs. This compounded the stress and trauma felt by the displaced because they had to compete for the limited supplies and services extended to them by CFSI and other donor agencies at the evacuation centers.

One outcome of the survey—specifically, age-specific sex ratios—revealed a declining number of older women at the evacuation centers. The IDPs attributed this to the vulnerable state of the older women in their community that was even aggravated by their displacement as an aftermath of the March 2000 conflict. They describe their older women to be of poor health, to suffer from lack of food, trauma and shock. Hence, only a few of them survived the physical, mental and emotional challenges as IDPs and now, at the evacuation centers, are able to share their experiences and tell of the travails that they went through during the war. Despite the fact that two years had already passed since the war, some of these problems continue to burden the older women, even in their return to their home communities.

At the evacuation centers, the IDPs were taught by the CFSI about the organising process through a series of training sessions, after which they were able to form community-based structures.

According to the IDPs, only CFSI had programmes other than relief services at the evacuation centers. While they are still wanting of more basic relief aid even up to the present, they found the organising activities of CFSI to be a new positive experience. They deem these programmes to be enlightening and empowering. They claim to have honed their skills in leadership, learned peaceful ways of handling conflict, and were assisted in earning a living. More importantly, they were taught how to communicate and were listened to as a people.

While the IDPs consider the close co-ordination and the continued organising efforts encouraging and felt that these efforts had enhanced unity among them, they sometimes feel frustrated when the COs fail 'to fulfil their promises' and postpone the implementation of the other trainings and programmes promised to them. Some IDPs were also not able to avail of the livelihood assistance programme that was granted to the other IDPs at the evacuation centers.

To them, the *sumpats* (i.e., CFSI-trained community volunteers) who function as CFSI's development partners are efficient community coordinators at the evacuation centers. The *sumpats* were instrumental in the formation of action committees and also in the community's struggle towards normalcy. The *sumpats* (who are themselves IDPs) feel that to be of better service to the displaced community, they need more training on leadership and other development skills, and they need to have a stable source of income.

The peace and information programmes of CFSI helped the IDPs better understand their plight and options. These programmes also provided them with a community-constructed venue—a *Pulungan Center* (information and assembly centre)—in which to discuss their common concerns. While the livelihood training and the Start-Up Capital Assistance (SUCA) at the evacuation centers might have provided them with an opportunity to earn a bit for basic needs, they found the capital to be too limited for families to survive on. They hope that a more realistic livelihood input will be extended to them in the future so that they can engage in a sustainable endeavour. They also wish that further peace

education and psychosocial training be given to them as soon as CFSI can provide these services.

The CFSI-organised "Go-and-See Visit" was to most IDPs a very important activity wherein they were able to temporarily leave the evacuation centers to visit their home communities and explore the possibility of return as a community. However, even if most of them were able to visit their sites of origin, some are still not able to return due to the precarious security condition of the place. Those who still remain at the evacuation centers sometimes go to their farms in their communities of origin during daytime hours, but find that they must reside at the EC because skirmishes between the MILF and the AFP still threaten the peace and security situation in the area.

The other agencies that also provided intervention programmes to displaced communities at the ECs are the Red Cross, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) of both Region 12 and the ARMM, the Diocese of Kidapawan, the Kadtuntaya Foundation, Inc., TRIPOD, and Tabang Mindanaw. As an immediate response to the displacement of thousands of affected families in Pagalungan and Pagagawan, their services included: the provision of basic relief goods (e.g., food, clothing, and assorted goods); rehabilitation services; shelter; and other personal and household necessities. The relief assistance given to the IDPs at the ECs relieved them of hunger for some time; however, food was still inadequate and was not enough for all the displaced. These services were administered by the personnel of the various organisations and, reportedly, only served the displaced for a short period of time.

Only the intervention programmes of OXFAM addressed basic educational needs for the children and water and sanitation needs of the displaced through the creation of day care centers with free school supplies for children, along with the construction of water pumps and toilets at the evacuation centers. Tabang Mindanaw and the DSWD also extended shelter assistance to the displaced. As a substitute for the homes they lost during the war, the IDPs stated that the shelter programme is basically good, but the structures are relatively small for their families and made only of very light construction materials such as bamboo and *nipa* (palm) wish do not effectively withstand heavy rains. They also observed that not all of the displaced were given shelter and found the distribution process to be unfair because some of those who were given shelter were not really displaced.

Return and Settlement

The IDPs who have returned and settled in their site of origin felt a sense of relief that they have finally gone back, but also felt anxious because so much is still uncertain. As part of their rehabilitation process, a few of those who returned were provided with shelter and livelihood assistance.

As noted above, the CFSI programmes compose of community organising/linking/networking, psychosocial services, information through the *Pulungan Center* and the *sumpats*, peace dialogues and education, and start-up livelihood

assistance. According to the displaced, only a few of the action committees are truly functional in the return and settlement areas. This may be due to the fact that the *sumpats* are struggling to survive and still need the assistance of the COs in making the committees work. The Pulungan Centers constructed by the communities at the return sites with support provided by CFSI served useful as the focal point of all the social gatherings and activities. Those surveyed recognise the fact that in the return and settlement areas, only CFSI has continued to extend assistance to the displaced communities, and most of them are very grateful for this.

At selected return sites, OXFAM has also provided water and sanitation facilities. The IDPs have been looking forward to owning a shelter after the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted a housing needs survey among them.

"We are happy with the prospect of having a house, but nothing has happened yet."

For some who have undergone psychosocial training through CFSI, they felt that they can now better handle stress and have developed a positive outlook for their future. They learned not to harbour anger, "huwag magtanim ng galit dahil sakit ang mabibigay nito", [Don't harbour anger, for anger will only bring about illness].

The communities who have returned celebrated their safe homecoming through a Peace Festival or "Peace *Kanduli*." To the IDPs, the *Kanduli* is a form of thanksgiving for safe return and prayer offering to Allah that they will not have to go through the same tragic events again.

Those who have availed of the livelihood assistance grant provided by CFSI through the Pilot Project, engaged in either fishing or farming. Some of the IDPs are very thankful to be able to earn a livelihood again after the war. However, others found the budget allocation too limited and felt it could not be relied upon to support the basic needs of their family. The IDPs who were not yet covered by the LAUR stated that the delay of this assistance programme compounded the sufferings that they have been going through since the war.

The flash floods that occurred in their area in the early part of 2002 greatly affected both those engaged in farming and in fishing. The floods damaged their crops and vegetables. Though the floods triggered the fish to surface from the marshland, illegal fishermen grabbed most of the fish supply in the area leaving only the few, small ones for the fishermen in the area to subsist on.

Among the least attended sectors among the returned communities at the sites of origin, in terms of programme and assistance, are the children and the elderly. It was felt that more attention needs to be devoted to these two groups.

Lessons Learned from the Cases of Pagalungan and Pagagawan

The experience of the Pilot Project in Pagalungan and Pagagawan suggests that those who seek to implement intervention programmes among displaced communities must work closely with local power holders so as not to antagonise them or threaten their influence and control of the people in the community. Organising efforts by NGOs such as CFSI must begin with proper protocol by informing the local power holders and contending groups of the nature of the intervention programme.

Integration through community immersion with the displaced communities is essential to gain their trust and confidence and to generate their participation in the organising activities in their community. However, only CFSI conducts and implements a systematic and participatory organising programme among the IDPs. The presence of CFSI's Community Organisers (COs) who are Maguindanaons—who are familiar with the culture and language of the displaced community—evoked a positive response among the IDPs.

The basic education provided to the children at the evacuation centers—even in makeshift classrooms—greatly helped the children on their road to recovery, healing, and reconciliation. In addition to the basic learning skills, the children can be taught simple survival techniques and peacemaking skills.

There is a need to sustain the basic education programme on a continuing basis. In this way, the programme can also be utilised to promote an "education for peace" curriculum. This curriculum will allow children to develop such positive and peaceful values as mutual understanding, non-violent resolution of conflict, and an exposure to a more diverse world.

After what the IDPs have been through, they have learned to be always alert, not to panic, and to be prepared for any emergency situation that will beset their community in the future. In their struggle to survive as a people both at the EC and in their communities of origin upon return, they believe that it is necessary to be careful with both the MILF and the AFP and to closely monitor the security situation. This can be done either through the radio or from outposts so that they will not caught in the crossfire or, in some cases, strafing by one party to the conflict.

All of these experiences made them became aware that they also have a big part to play in their development as a people. They realise that their active involvement and participation is crucial to their physical, social, emotional and economic recovery as a people.

2. IDP EXPERIENCES IN CARMEN

Background

Carmen is a fourth class municipality of the province of North Cotabato. It is bounded by the Municipalities of Pagagawan, Pagalungan, and Kabacan in the southeast, Aleosan in the southwest, Banisilan in the northwest, and the province of Bukidnon in the northeast. Carmen can be reached by land through public transportation—public utility jeep (PUJ) and bus—from Kabacan national highway (Cotabato City-Davao route). The municipality occupies about 123,310 hectares of land with a mountainous and hilly rolling terrain. It is composed of 28 barangays. The municipality has an agri-based economy producing mainly corn, sugar cane, rubber, coconut and rice.

Since its establishment forty-six (46) years ago, Carmen has experienced struggles between Christians, Maguindanaon Muslims, and Indigenous Peoples. The latter are often also known as *Lumads*. Historical accounts suggest the first settlers were the Manobo-Aromanon (one of the many Indigenous Peoples of Mindanao). They welcomed the influx of Maguindanaons to Carmen in the early 1900s since they considered them to be their brothers and sisters. After World War II, when Mindanao was made a settlement region for the country, settlers from Luzon and the Visayas came to Carmen in droves. The population as of May 2000 was 9,395 households (approximately 46,975 persons) of whom about 50% were Christians, 35% Maguindanaon Muslims, and 15% Indigenous People (Manobo-Aromanon).

Migrant settlers typically occupied public lands or bought lands from the inhabitants. They also entered into the political mainstream of the municipality. Thus, the Manobo-Aromanon were pushed further upland. Eventually, the settlers wielded both economic and political influence. The present Mayor is an Ilocano and a retired military man, who initially served for three consecutive terms as Mayor. Then he ran for Vice-Mayor and won. In May 2001, he was elected again as Mayor of Carmen. His daughter is currently District I Representative of North Cotabato Province. Their political influence seems to have a bearing on the political participation of other groups in the area.

Newspapers have detailed stories of conflict, encounters, and massacres involving Muslims, Christians, and Lumads in the Municipality since the 1970s. The gaps in the relations between Muslims and Christians were further heightened as many Maguindanaons were linked to the Moro Fronts. It is believed that there are Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) Camps in Carmen. An MNLF camp is said to be located in Barangay Ugalingan while that of the MILF is in Barangay Manili. The reported presence of these has resulted in fear among the people; hence, many families have moved away.

The government's militarisation of the municipality in the late 1990s—aimed to control MNLF and MILF operations—started to foster the displacement of the residents. The struggles between the Moro Fronts and the AFP were heightened by a number of factors, including, the power struggle over the control of the MALMAR irrigation projects in

Carmen. Carmen became a battleground between the MILF and the AFP during the initial stage of the construction of the multi-billion MALMAR project because many MILF members live in the area (*The Mindanao Cross*, Nov. 13, 1999). There was also the MILF demand for the government to recognise Camp Usman in Carmen as one of their satellite camps, along with the other camps already recognised by the Ramos administration in 1996. Continuous accusations and counter-accusations between the AFP and the provincial government on one hand and the Muslim forces on the other hand further derailed the Peace Agreement signed between the government and the MNLF in September 1996, as well as the peace negotiations between the government and the MILF that were already being forged at that time. The "all-out war" waged by the Estrada administration in 2000 had the effect of nullifying all peace efforts earlier initiated by all stakeholders up to that point in time.

The relentless military offensives against the MILF fronts in Carmen and other affected areas brought about more displacements. Large numbers of civilians were affected by armed conflict in 2000. The most heavily affected barangays were Malapag, Liliongan, Aroman, Timbol, Lagusay, Kadiis and Kalagutay of Carmen. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) recognised a total of 28 evacuation centers in Carmen only, most of them school buildings, markets, and other public places.

In response to these and related displacements, Community Family and Services International (CFSI) launched the pilot project, *Promoting the Transition from Conflict to Peace and Development at the Community Level*, in Carmen. The project aims to develop enabling conditions in the affected communities that will encourage safe return or settlement and facilitate the process of transition as well as promote stabilisation among the internally displaced peoples (IDPs). In October 2001, CFSI conducted a household profiling in six pilot evacuation centers in Carmen and registered a total of 567 IDP families comprised of 3,024 persons.

Return and Settlement Updates

CFSI operations in Carmen included coverage of six Evacuations Centers (ECs) accommodating displaced persons from fifteen (15) sites of origin (SOOs). This research focused on four priority ECs accommodating IDPs from twelve (12) SOOs.

The four ECs were Sitio² Lanitap, Malapag High School, Malapag Mosque and Liliongan market. The sites of origin were Sitio Tabulon (for Sitio Lanitap EC); Quarry and Danao (for Malapag High School EC); Hinauran, Bunawan, Campo and Matingao (for Malapag Mosque EC); and Lower/ Upper Malugasa, Pinamintangan, Spring and Puting Bato (for Liliongan Market EC). (See Appendix D: Carmen Research Sites.) As of January 2002, CFSI reported 994 families and 4,959 persons were living in these ECs.

During field research activities in April 2002, the research team traced IDPs return and settlement status through the *sumpats* and barangay leaders. This effort included 731

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² Sitio here refers to a group of households/ families congregated in a small geographical space in a barangay. A barangay can comprise a number of sitios.

families (3,613 persons). Of these, 515 families (70% of the total) had returned to the sites of origin, while 79 families (11%) had been settled/rehabilitated in the host community. A total of 137 families (19%) were still living in the evacuation centers.

Table 1 Status of Internally Displaced Families in Carmen

| Evacuation Centers | Sites of Origin | Total Families | Total IDPs | Families Still at EC | Families returned to SOO | Families Rehab at Host Communit |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Malapag School | Quarry | 31 | 135 | 3 | 16 | 12 |
| | Danao | 15 | 75 | 9 | - | 6 |
| Malapag Mosque | Hinauran | 61 | 305 | 4 | 30 | 27 |
| | Bunawan | 25 | 128 | 7 | 18 | - |
| | Campo | 67 | 335 | - | 33 | 34 |
| | Matingao | 33 | 165 | - | 33 | - |
| | L. Malugasa | 250 | 1250 | - | 250 | - |
| | U. Malugasa | 58 | 290 | - | 58 | - |
| Liliongan Market | Pinamintangan | 40 | 200 | 28 | 12 | - |
| | Spring | 50 | 250 | 39 | 11 | - |
| | Puting Bato | 47 | 235 | 47 | - | - |
| Lanitap | Tabulon | 54 | 245 | - | 54 | - |
| Total | | 731 | 3613 | 137 | 515 | 79 |

Community Perspectives on Current Return/Settlement Efforts

The internally displaced families in four ECs in Carmen—comprised of Cebuanos, Ilonggos, Manobos, and Maguindanaons—come from twelve (12) self-identified sites of origin. The research team conducted several focus group discussions with the IDP families still at the ECs as well as families already in the sites of origin (SOOs). These discussions revealed a number of insights for the community return and settlement process for the IDPs. These insights tell us a great deal about the processes regarding the return of families to the SOOs and the reasons why a good number of families are still at the evacuation centers.

(For background information and details about the circumstances of IDP families involved in this study (i) in the ECs, (ii) who have settled in host communities, and (iii) who have returned to their sites of origin, see Appendix D: Carmen Research Sites. This provides additional insights into the community perspectives outlined here.)

A. Factors Influencing Decisions to Return to Sites of Origin.

There were four SOOs where there was a complete return of the displaced families. These were Matingao (33 families), Lower Malugasa (250 families), Upper Malugasa (58 families) and Tabulon (54 families).

As a result of displacement, and during the time of displacement, the IDPs were left practically helpless. Deprived of resources and concerned about the security of their families, they relied heavily on the support and assistance that government and concerned nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) extended. This support ranged from immediate relief good (e.g., food, medicines, and clothing) to short-term assistance such as housing and military security for the return to the sites of origin. The focus group discussions conducted with IDPs revealed that various agencies, government and nongovernment alike, gave immediate relief assistance to them at the height of their displacements. However, this support and assistance slowly waned. For long months and for some, years now, the IDPs have not yet returned to their sites of origin and there is less support to assist them with their return. In the discussion sessions that were conducted with the IDPs, the following factors surfaced as influential in the decisions to return to the sites of origin: housing, military security, involvement of barangay officials, community organising, "Go and See Visits", and livelihood support.

- 1. Housing. In Tabulon, the Provincial Social Welfare and Development (PSWD) built 48 housing units for the IDP families. However, six families are still waiting for their shelters to be built. In the meantime, they live with relatives in the community. In Matingao, IDP families rebuilt their houses using recycled materials saved during the evacuation. In Malugasa, 20 housing units were provided. Other families took their initiative to use salvaged materials and sourced out indigenous materials (bamboo, cogon³ and other materials) in their community to rebuild their homes. With the housing units available for the use of the IDP families at the SOOs, the return was materialised. The ability or inability to access housing was thus an important factor in their decisions.
- 2. Military Security. For the IDPs, the presence of military security provided by the local government was critical for the decision to return home. For them, they felt secure when they know that there are AFP personnel around that can provide security and protection in their SOOs. One sumpat from Malapag noted, :Mas matawhay ang pamatyag namo kung nabal-an namo nga naay military security sa among sitio." (We feel comfortable if we know that we have military security in our sitio.)
- 3. Active Involvement of Barangay Officials and Leaders. The local barangays in the sites of origin have been actively involved in the process of return of the IDPs. In Lanitap, the IDPs recognised the active support and assistance of Barangay Captain Aragon and Kagawad⁴ Abdul Salipada. These two officials have relentlessly pursued the requests of the IDPs and followed up to ensure their needs were met. The same

³ Cogon are couch grass used as roofing.

⁴ Kagawad refers to a barangay councilor.

observations were true with the barangay officials and sitio leaders in Matingao and Malugasa.

- **4.** Community Organising. One IDP key informant said, "Nalipay mi nga naa sina Roger ug Meriam diri kay sila gyud and nagapermanente nga nagatabang sa among panginahanglan." (We are happy that Roger and Mariam [CFSI Community Organisers] are here because they constantly help us in our needs.) The organising and mobilisation activities that ensue because of the presence of community organisers help a great deal in maintaining the IDPs' community cohesion. Together with the help of the Sumpats⁵ in the sites of origin, community mobilisation for IDP concerns is facilitated by community organising.
- 5. "Go and See Visits." IDP families recalled that the "Go and See Visits" organised by CFSI, and participated in by other government and nongovernment organisations, helped them assess their conditions and make the decision to return to sites of origin. For many of the IDPs, they were able to return to their SOOs after many months in the evacuation centers only because of the "Go and See Visit." They had been afraid to visit their farms for fear that combatants were still around. The "Go and See Visit" helped them see the resources available in the sitio and the prevailing security in the area. For Malapag School EC, Malapag Mosque EC and Lanitap EC, a "Go and See Visit" was organised by CFSI in September 2001 with hundreds of IDPs participating. Local DSWD, school principal, teachers, and others also took part in the visit. One participant noted, "Nakita namo nga pwede naman magbalik sa sitio kay dili na man diay makahadlok." (We saw that it is all right to return to the sitio because it is not, after all, scary.)
- **6.** Start-up Livelihood Support. The prospect of Livelihood Assistance Upon Return (LAUR) to the families played an important role in their decision-making to return to sites of origin. IDP families believe that with even a minimal start up capital for doable livelihood activities (e.g., animal-raising for consumption purposes, backyard gardening, and others) can spell economic advantage to their families. The LAUR provided through the pilot project by CFSI has been extended to about 233 IDP families coming from the sitios of Tabulon, Matingao, Malugasa, Spring, Pinamintangan, and Puting Bato.

Other Facilitating Factors for the Decision to Return. In addition to the aforementioned, there are other dynamics in the evacuation sites that further facilitate the desire of the IDPs to return home or settle elsewhere. These facilitating factors—which are discussed below—emanate from the IDPs themselves, from the government units, from their sites of origin, and from CFSI as a nongovernmental organisation.

IDP Composition. In sitios Matingao and Tabulon, 100% of the IDP families are Maguindanaons. They all belong to one culture group, and this appears to have strongly influenced their developing group unity and participation. One community leader said, "Magkakamag-anak kami rito sa sitio kaya madali kaming magkaintindihan at magkasundo sa mga bagay-bagay." (We are relatives in this sitio; thus we easily

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⁵ Sumpats are IDP volunteers who serve as liaison between and among IDP community, CFSI, local government units and other organisations in the area.

understand one another and agree on certain matters.) Tabulon is inhabited by clans (Padi, Laguialaut, and other families) related to one another by affinity or consanguinity. In contrast, families belonging to different identity groups are not as likely to display the same unity in their decisions to return to their sites of origin.

IDPs' Sincere Desire to Return. The IDP families believed that the decision to return was foremost among displaced families. In sitios Matingao and Lanitap, the families said that they sincerely desired to return to their sites of origin rather than stay in the ECs. They expressed this to their barangay leaders who expedited their return. (Nonetheless, some families have been reluctant to return to their homes, for reasons discussed below.)

Active Community-based Committees/Associations. CFSI Community Organisers facilitated the formation and mobilisation of community associations and committees tasked to spearhead activities of concern to the IDPs in the community. CFSI programme officers confirmed that committees were formed in the sitios focusing on issues relating to women and children, youth, peace and order, livelihood and projects, light and water, health and sanitation, disaster management, religious functions, and others. Although some of the committees and organisations have not been very functional, a few of them have spurred important developments for the community. In Matingao, there is the Matingao Organization for Peace and Development, Matingao Multi-Purpose Cooperative, and Matingao Women's Organization that have been actively involved in the concerns of the IDPs. In Malugasa, there is the Malugasa Association for Peace and Development. In Tabulon, there is the Tabulon Multi-Purpose Cooperative Association. Through the activities of community associations and community organisers—together with those of the Sumpats (community volunteers)—the issues and concerns of the IDPs have venues for deliberations, discussions, and decision-making.

Accessible Location of the Site of Origin. The IDP families who live near the national highway of Carmen have found it relatively easy to return to their SOO, for reasons of accessibility and security. In Matingao, which is a sitio traversed by the national highway, IDP families feel relative security compared to families from the interior SOOs. Because of the accessibility of their SOOs by jeepney or bus, they decided to go back rather than stay in the evacuation centers. Tabulon is also accessible from the highway because it is a lowland sitio. Moreover, the presence of the national irrigation administration (NIA) road in the area hastens the return of the IDPs.

Resources at the Site of Origin. One of the pull factors for the decision to return are the resources available at the SOO, particularly land. IDP families believe that their land is their only means for livelihood and so the sooner they can get back to their farms, the better their lives will be. One IDP farmer said, "Kailangan talaga naming makabalik sa aming sitio dahil nandoon yong aming lupa na sinasaka. Iyon lang ang aming ikanabubuhay." (We need to get back to our sitios because there, we have the land that we cultivate for our subsistence.) Tabulon IDP families have irrigated lowlands for use in rice cultivation. In Malugasa and Matingao, IDP farmers planted corn and root crops. One FGD participant noted, "Nasira na nga yong mga bahay namin doon, pero nandoon

pa ang mga lupa na maari naming taniman." (Our houses were destroyed, but we still have the land there that we can cultivate.)

Visioning Workshops. After the "Go and See Visit", the IDP communities participated in Visioning Workshops facilitated by CFSI. There were two Visioning Workshops conducted in Carmen. For Malapag evacuation center (EC), the workshop was conducted in August 2001 and for Liliongan EC, the workshop was held in December 2001. The IDP participants of the workshop noted that it was the first time they had attended such a lively session in their community. The activity, involving their visioning through drawings, was for them an interesting and revealing activity because it revealed the differences and similarities of feelings and concerns of each participant. The IDPs envisioned their SOOs with basic facilities such as farm to market roads, potable water supply, electricity, and a primary school. They also envisioned a peaceful environment as they go through their day-to-day activities. These dreams serve as a motivating factor among the IDPs to speed up their return to their SOO so that these basic facilities may be provided to them in the future.

Pulungan Centers. One of the first Pulungan Centers (community information centers) to be built was the Malapag Pulungan Center. There are now four sitios with Pulungan Centers for the IDPs—in Tabulon, Matingao, Malugasa and Pinamintangan. The Pulungan Centers are the venue wherein the IDPs come together to discuss important issues of concern related to their return. Because of its relative importance to the process of group discussion and decision-making, the IDPs built the Pulungan Centers through community effort and the "Bayanihan" system (cooperative method) with funding assistance from the pilot project being implemented by CFSI. The focus group discussions the research team held with the IDPs were in fact facilitated by the presence of the Pulungan Centers. The IDPs easily congregated and took part in the discussion when the FGDs were conducted. They knew the discussions concerned them because the meetings were conducted in their Pulungan Centers.

Among the strategies that further helps address the concerns for the IDPs is the CFSI radio programme entitled "Tinig ng IDPs," (Voice of the IDPs) aired over DXMY every Saturday at 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon. Families with radios in their homes listen to this programme to get updates on the services and activities relating to IDP communities. Those without radios go to the nearest neighbour with a radio or the *Pulungan Center* just to listen to this programme. The *Pulungan Center* also indicates community stability and provides a venue for building social cohesiveness among the IDPs.

Coping Mechanism for Displacements. The activities organised by CFSI—as well as its more specific psychosocial interventions—has helped ease the pain, anger, and trauma the IDPs experienced due to war and subsequent displacement. This has speeded up their recovery and enabled them to face reality, amidst the struggles to rebuild their lives and community. Some changes in the IDPs' behaviours were observed by the CFSI Community Workers and various programme officers: (a) IDPs voluntarily and actively participated in CFSI-organised discussions on issues affecting their community which led to a community consensus on next steps; (b) IDPs demonstrated a sincere attitude in

helping the CFSI COs and Sumpats prepare documents required for Livelihood Assistance Upon Return (LAUR) releases and other matters; and (c) IDPs developed a sense of community unity and cohesion as they became regularly involved in community actions that will facilitate their return to their sitio of origin. In addition, the peace education activities helped them gain knowledge on how to handle family and community disputes as well as disagreements through peaceful means. These also helped them foster solidarity among families and within the community.

B. Factors Slowing Return of IDP Families to their Sites of Origin

A large number of IDP families have returned to seven sites of origin (SOO) while many other families are still waiting to return. These are the sitios of Danao, Hinauran, Bunawan, Spring, Pinamintangan, Puting Bato and Quarry. However, in two SOOs (Puting Bato and Danao), no IDP families have yet returned. The focus group discussions conducted with IDPs from these sitios resulted in insights about difficulties in return decisions.

- 1. Concern with Livelihood (Daily Subsistence) Precludes Arranging Return. IDP families have to look for livelihood activities to earn income for the food and the other basic needs of the family. As they become busy looking for work, they get farther away from thinking of their return. One Sumpat (community volunteer) explained, "Ang mga tao nangita na lang ug trabaho para sa ilang pangabuhi. Bisag mga babaye ug mga kabataan nagabulig magtrabaho para lang makakwarta para sa pagkaon sang pamilya. Nagpamugon ang mga tao sa mga umahan unsaon pa man nila maasikaso ang pagbalik sa sitio." (The people are preoccupied with looking for work for their livelihood. Even the women and the children go to work to be able to buy food for the family. They provide hired labour in the nearby farms, so they have no time to arrange for their return to the SOOs.)
- 2. Lack of Shelter. Even though they have a strong desire to return, many IDP families hesitate to go back to their SOOs because they still have no house to return to, particularly in Hinauran, Danao, Puting Bato, and others. One mother said, "Unsaon man ni Maam, wala na man gud mi bisag kubo didto sa sitio, asa man namo patulugon ang among mga anak. Gusto man sa akong bana magbalik didto. Ang nahimo, siya miadto didto sa sitio sa adlaw, unya mobalik lang siya dinhi paggabii." (How can we return, Ma'am? We do not have even a hut in the sitio, where will we place the children to sleep at night? My husband wants to return, so now what he does is that he goes to the sitio during the day and then comes back here at night.) For IDPs in the sitio of Spring, about 27 families already have houses built by the provincial government, but these are still without roofs. So, the families are appealing to the provincial government to complete the construction of their housing units so they can go back to their sitios immediately.
- 3. Destruction of Resources at Sites of Origin. During the evacuations, the IDP families had to flee from the sitios, leaving behind their house, clothing, food, farm, work animals, farm implements, and other assets. One FGD participant from Malapag said, "Ginsultian man gud mi sa among barangay leaders nga muhawa na gyud sa sitio para dili mi

maabutan sa mga armadong tao, mao nga nagdagan na lang mi diretso, wala gyud mi dala bisag sinina." (Our barangay leaders told us that we had to move out of the sitio fast so that the armed groups will not see us; so in the rush, we just ran leaving everything behind. We were not even able to bring extra clothes.) After months of not being able to get back to the sitios, the IDPs lost their farm implements, farm animals, their homes, kitchen utensils, and other valuables. Families who managed to bring their farm animals and other valuables with them to the evacuation centers, eventually sold them at much lower prices to be able to buy basic needs such as food and medicine. The families may not be certain that the LAUR will counteract the effects of these losses.

- 4. Lack of Road Networks. Many of the IDP families come from remote uphill sitios, located from approximately two to six kilometres from the ECs. There are no roads, only foot trails in sitios such as Quarry, Bunawan, Puting Bato, Spring, Campo, and others. The absence of roads poses great difficulty for IDP mobility between the ECs and their sitios of origin. Consequently, these families do not have the direct ties to their sitios that other families have been able to develop owing to the "Go and See Visits" or the efforts of family members who members work in the sitios during the day and return to the ECs at night. The continuing uncertainties regarding conditions in their SOOs remain as barriers to their safe return.
- 5. Lack of Military Security. In the sitios of Spring, Puting Bato, and Quarry in particular, the IDP families are still wary, owing to the absence of military detachments, Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU), or Civilian Voluntary Organizations (CVO) in their areas. The families are fearful of possible eventualities that may still arise. Many are afraid to go back to the sitios until such time as these security elements are in place. One resident of Quarry said, "Bisag dili na lang mahatag ang uban pa namo nga panginahanglan, naa na unta mi diri military security." (Even if our needs could not be met yet, we want military security in our area.) In remote sitios, particularly those without a network of roads, houses are far from one another; hence, for some of the IDPs, the absence of military detachments means no sense of security and protection.
- **6. Danger Zones.** The IDP families consider as danger zones the sitios near the camp sites of the Moro Fronts. There used to be camp sites of the Moro Fronts in Carmen, particularly in Barangays Manili, Tumaginting, and Kibenes. Many IDP families are afraid to live in sitios near these barangays because of possible AFP operations against the Moro Fronts.

IDP Problems and Needs

Long after the evacuations, problems and needs still abound among the conflict-affected communities. The IDPs recognise that the services they have received from government and nongovernmental organisations have provided them with immediate relief and assistance. Nonetheless, the focus group discussions conducted with the IDP families in the ECs generated lists of continuing problems and needs. These are both short-term and long-term in nature. (See Table 2 below for a summary of FGD results for each of the four ECs surveyed.)

Table 2 Community Problems and Needs in the ECs (FGD responses)

| Evacuation | Site of | Community Problems/Needs | | |
|------------------------|---------------|---|--|--|
| Centre | Origin | · | | |
| Lanitap | Tabulon | food, kitchen utensils, shelter for 15 families, potable water, toilet, day care centre, farm inputs, farm animals, mosque, health centre, electricity | | |
| Liliongan | Malugasa | Spring water development, farm to market road, food, farm inputs, medicine, post harvest facility, arms and ammunition for the Civilians Voluntary Organisations (CVOs), schools, livelihood, housing, post harvest facilities, day care centre, chapel, sports facility, electricity, communication facility | | |
| | Spring | schools, potable water, medicine, food, livelihood, farm inputs, farm animals, housing, farm to market road | | |
| | Puting Bato | schools, potable water, medicine, food, livelihood, farm inputs, farm animals, housing, farm to market road | | |
| | Pinamintangan | schools, potable water, medicine, food, livelihood, farm inputs, farm animals, housing, farm to market road | | |
| Malapag High School | Quarry | military security, housing, farm inputs, farm animals electricity, potable water, day care centre | | |
| | Danao | housing, farm inputs, farm animals, livelihood, potable water, farm to market road, primary school | | |
| Malapag Mosque | Hinauran | Farm to market road, farm inputs, farm animals, post harvest facility, livelihood, health centre, school, water pump for irrigation, fish pond development | | |
| | Bunawan | Food, housing, farm inputs, livelihood, spring water development, farm to market road, toilets, sports facility | | |
| | Campo | Food, farm animals, farm inputs, chapel, medicine, potable water, post harvest facility, electricity, school | | |
| | Matingao | Food, potable water, farm animals, farm to market road, school, land titles, farm inputs, housing, mosque, madrasa school, day care centre, sports facility | | |

The short-term problems cited below are most relevant, in some cases, to their lives in the ECs, but are also continuing concerns even as the IDPs begin to move back to the sitios of origin (even if only moving back during daytime hours, in this period of transition).

A. Key Short-Term Problems/Needs

1. Food. Because large numbers of IDPs could not farm while in the evacuation centers, food on the table is both scarce and limited. Most of those interviewed gather root crops such as cassava, "bisol" (local root crop), and yam for sustenance. There is somewhat more food available in the case of families who have family members earning money from "pamugon" (farm labour) in the barangays near the ECs. Some families have managed to plant some crops and corn in their farms. However, they are doubtful about the prospects of success since rain has not come for more than two months. The plants are drying up and they fear they will not have any harvest after all. The overall scarcity of food is a cause of grave concern for the maintenance of health and nutrition, particularly of the children.

"Ang pagkaon namo pulos lang kamote, cassava, o saging. Wala man kwarta para ipalit ug bugas. Kaluoy lagi ang mga bata pud, walay pagkaong tarong. Wala na man maghatag ug pagkaon sa amo kay tinuig na mi diri sa Center."

(Our food consists only of sweet potato, cassava, or banana. We don't have money to buy rice. We pity the children because they don't have adequate food. We do not receive food assistance anymore because we've been here in the Center for years now.)

- 2. Housing. As noted above, when IDPs were forced to take refuge in evacuation centers, they left their houses and many of their valuables, including farm tools and other implements. Since many of these houses were made of light materials only, they were eventually destroyed due to the lack of maintenance and repair. To go back to their sitios of origin, the IDPs have to rebuild their houses. They said that they could do that even progressively with a limited start-up amount for housing since they only desire a modest house to go back to.
- **3.** *Livelihood.* Generally, IDP families have no means of earning a livelihood in the evacuation sites. They resort to doing farm labour on a day-to-day basis, mostly at 70 pesos a day—planting, weeding, and other farm work available in the barangays where the ECs are located. In most cases, work is scarce because so many are in need of work. Livelihood assistance, particularly for farm or off-farm activities, is recognised as critical to the IDPs' return to their sitios of origin.
- 4. Farm Support/Inputs. Since farming is the IDPs' primary source of livelihood, they need farm inputs and post harvest facilities to boost their farm productivity. They need

farm animals, farm implements, and farm inputs such as seeds, fertilisers, and other resources. Most of them are engaged in corn, sugar cane, and rubber production. Some IDPs said they started to cultivate their farms (back in their sites of origin) when rain came in March. However, there was no more rain afterwards and so their crops have now dried up.

5. Women's Livelihood. Female IDPs recognise that critical times demand that they, too, earn for the family. They also join in "pamugon" (farm labour) on other people's farms in order to add to the family income, both while in the ECs and, even more, upon their return to the communities of origin. They need livelihood training skills such as dressmaking, craft making, and others to equip them with skills for livelihood. They are

"Lisod na ang panahon karon. Kami napugos na mangita ug trabaho para may kwarta ipalit ug pagkaon. Naga-pamugon mi sa ubang barangay. Unta naa pud mi livelihood para sa mga nanay."

(Times are different now. We are forced to work to find money to buy food. We engage in hired farm labor in other barangays. We hope there will also be livelihood for the mothers.)

36 year old woman from Sitio Pinamintangan

also interested in backyard gardening and animal raising. These types of training programmes will certainly help facilitate the process of return.

- **6.** Water/Sanitation. Water sources for the IDP families, upon return to their sites of origin, are the spring and deep well. In the Quarry area, water for drinking and for household needs comes from "bugwak" (open spring fountain). The water is clear and cool, but the extent to which it is potable still needs to be determined. Toilet facilities are needed for sanitation. In Tabulon where IDPs had their houses built, there are no toilets. They have the wide rice fields for this purpose, they said.
- 7. Health Service. The most commonly cited health problems are malaria and diarrhoea, in addition to colds and flu among the children. Although at least some health services are available in the Rural Health Centers, many IDPs are unable to access them due to the far distance of the health centers from their homes. This is seen as a significant problem, both in the short-term and over the long-term.

B. Additional Long-Term Problems/Needs

In addition to the continuation of the short-term needs cited above, the following concerns were also cited in focused group discussions as the communities work toward return to their sites of origin.

1. Farm to Market Roads. The IDPs expressed the need for farm to market roads, particularly for sitios Malugasa, Hinauran, Spring, Puting Bato, and Pinamintangan. The use of horses is the most common method of moving farm products to the market. The one-way fee for a horse is 25 pesos, an exorbitant price for an ordinary farmer. Because of the high price, most farmers would brave the heavy load and carry their goods themselves. When they cannot manage to haul their crops from their farms to the market, the traders who buy their crops at the farm dictate the market prices of their product. In most cases, the farmers feel they do not get a fair price for their crops.

"Kalsada gyud ang among kinahanglan sa among sitio. Mang laktud mi aning mga bukid mga 4 kilometro gikan sa centro adlaw-adlaw para mabisita ang among uma. Balik lang sa centro sa hapon. Dinhi man gud mi matulog sa centro. Ang oras lagi naubos lang sa paglakaw gamay lang ang panahon ang panahon para sa uma."

(We really need farm to market roads in our sitio. We cross-mountains of about four kilometers distance from the center everyday to go to our farms. Then we go back in the afternoon. We sleep here in the center. Hiking consumes our time and we spend less time in the farm.)

40 year old man from Sitio Pinamintangan

2. Education. Many IDP families are worried about the education of their children. There are not even primary schools in their sitios, so very young children are forced to hike a long distance to go to school in the poblacion (municipal barangay central district). In most cases, many children who begin school in June drop out soon after as the daily routine of hiking to school becomes too burdensome. Depending on the sitio, security may also be a significant concern for these children. For the pre-school children, day care centers are also needed in the sitios. Since most day care centerss are concentrated in the central districts, many of the outlying sitios—where most of the children are found—remain without day care centers. The IDP families in Matingao and Tabulon also desire a "madrasa" (Islamic school) for their children.

"Kadtong wala pa sang gubot, ang among Day Care Center unta ma-accredit na sa Municipal Social Welfare Development. Pag-gubot naguba man pud ang Center. Karon sa among pagbalik, mosugod na sad mi sa umpisa."

(Prior to the conflict, our Day Care Center was almost to be accredited by the Municipal Social Welfare Development. It was destroyed during the war, now we are back to square one.)

26 year old woman from Sitio Spring

- 3. Land Titles. For the farmers in Matingao, Hinauran, and Malugasa, the desire to acquire titles to the lands they now cultivate is of paramount importance. They have discussed this issue in their farmers group meetings and the barangay leaders assure them of help in following up their request for land titles with the municipal government. These farmers claim that since the time of their parents they had been tilling these forested lands.
- 4. Mosque/Chapel. One of the many community structures destroyed by the war and subsequent was the mosque (for those of the Islamic faith) and the chapel (for the Catholics). For the Muslim members of the Moro communities, the community prayer during Friday service has been adversely affected since the displacement. The

"Kinahanglan namo ang eskwelahan dinhi. Daghan ang mga bata nga moeskwela pag-abre sa klase sa Hunyo. Apan pag-abot sa Agosto mauntat ang kadaghanan kay kapuyan na molakaw o mo-hike 8 kilometro adlaw-adlaw paadto ug pabalik sa eskwelahan."

(We need a school here. Many children go to school when class opens in June. But by August, many of them drop out because they get tired of hiking about eight kilometers everyday to go to school.)

Maguindanaon IDPs in Tabulon said that they now had to go to other barangays where there is a mosque in order to have their Friday services. The chapel in sitios Campo and Malugasa was also destroyed and so the Catholic families there wanted their chapel rebuilt so they could hold religious services at least once a month.

- 5. Electricity. The Tabulon community indicated the need for electricity in their sitio. Since their sitio is in a lowland area near the national highway, they feel access to electricity is possible. Electricity will provide them opportunities to have and use a radio, television, refrigerator, and/or other household amenities.
- **6. Sports Facility.** In Tabulon, the community as a whole desired the construction of a sports facility, especially for the youth of the sitio. The youth are eager to have facilities for basketball and volleyball so they can engage in more healthy activities in the community and not resort to gambling, alcohol, and other vices.

Lessons Learned from the Case of Carmen

The involuntary displacement of the families/people of Carmen due to armed conflict between the AFP and the Moro Fronts, has presented them with inevitable risks. At the outset, the physical displacement has automatically dislocated the IDP families from their land and livelihood, rendered them homeless, and made them concerned about access to food as well as health conditions. In addition, they are further subjected to a disrupted family and community life.

The perceptions of IDPs, in the Carmen research sites, regarding their return and settlement processes reveal important lessons regarding the risks of displacements for the conflict in Mindanao.

First, the IDP families, who are predominantly farmers, had clearly been deprived of access to their land resource and therefore their main source of livelihood. Unable to go back to their sitios for fear of untoward incidents, the IDPs lose access to their lands and farms. In the evacuation centers, they have to be resourceful in looking for work. Practically all family members help out, finding employment if possible in farm or off-farm work in nearby barangays to earn money to buy food for the family. As their stay in the evacuation centers was extended, the food and relief assistance also diminished. Without farmland to till, uncertain livelihood and inadequate food further impoverish the IDPs' condition.

Second, housing for the IDPs is critical for the decision to return. Since most homes were destroyed during the war and/or subsequent displacement, the IDPs were rendered homeless. In the evacuation sites, they suffer from the inconvenience of poor housing conditions, with crowded rooms and no allowance for personal privacy.

Third, family and community life are greatly disturbed. Some families have resorted to sending their older children to look for work in distant barangays and being far from them in the attempt to find work. Family members become too worried and anxious of the family losses and uncertainty of livelihood. Displacement from their sitios resulted in the disruption of their family integrity and the loss of their belongings and community life. Nevertheless, the IDPs exhibited apparent resiliency. Despite the loss of life and property, they are optimistic of their eventual return to their communities of origin and believe that peace and stability can be restored.

Fourth, the convergence of the various services and assistance extended to the IDPs by various agencies, both government and nongovernmental, increased their desire to return to the sitios of origin. No one agency can fully and extensively respond to the demands of displacement. Proper coordination and linkages between, and among, agencies and institutions facilitate the delivery of services to the communities. Of particular importance is an efficient and effective coordination atthe local level of concerned agencies and institutions involving the barangay captains, the *barangay kagawads*, and sitio leaders.

The study also revealed some programmatic implications for CFSI interventions in facilitating the return of the IDP families. The programmes that significantly contributed to the rebuilding of lives and communities of the IDPs in Carmen are the following: (a) the "Go and See Visits" helped the IDPs recover from their fears and trauma and rekindled their hopes that they could still return to their sites of origin; (b) the Livelihood Assistance Upon Return (LAUR) provided the IDP families with the initial incentives to struggle to establish anew their family and community life; and (c) the community organising activities conducted through the community workers (CFSI COs) facilitated the formation and mobilisation of the community to restore a community system or

structure in the ECs and SOOs. The community organising work of CFSI was anchored on the trust and confidence of the IDPs themselves, and so the entry of the succeeding activities such as psychosocial interventions, peace education, gender, and information programmes have been smooth and are well-attended by the IDPs. These efforts gradually helped the IDPs bring back normalcy into their lives. Finally, we should note that the spirit of cooperation and the strong desire of the IDPs to rebuild their lives and communities inspired the CFSI workers to sustain their efforts in the area, as well as learn from the community members themselves about workable strategies to improve the delivery of CFSI services.

PART II. LISTENING TO THE DISPLACED: PERSPECTIVES OF VULNERABLE SUBGROUPS ON RETURN AND SETTLEMENT

1. IDP EXPERIENCES IN PAGALUNGAN AND PAGAGAWAN

Displacement changes peoples' perceptions of their environment, their lives, and the coping mechanisms they use to allay their hardships. Assistance and protection of the internally displaced persons in certain forms of interventions can be strengthened through an in-depth understanding of the experiences undergone by these people in the process of their displacement, refuge, and return or settlement. It is believed that the displaced people can be heard more clearly by listening to specific vulnerable subgroups. In Pagalungan and Pagagawan, focused group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) were carried out in every pilot project site with each of the four subgroups considered as vulnerable sectors, namely: the children and youth group, the women's group, the elderly group, and the men's group. The following are their pleas and concerns.

The Crisis of the Children

Children have always been the innocent victims in any situation of warfare. They usually have little choice but to undergo, at the least, the same horrible experiences that their parents have as casualties or even as combatants. The internally displaced children have always been exposed particularly to the traumatic effects of violence and brutal death. These experiences may have affected generations of young people emotionally for the rest of their lives.

Fear and Trauma. Every conflict forces children to live through terrible experiences. Time does not heal trauma. During focused group discussions, the children, identified the following as their fears: the fear of bombs and war planes, evacuation movements during night-time, military operations, and the fear that they might not be able to go to school. Their greatest fear is the recurrence of war and the presence of soldiers in the area.

It is for this reason that these children must be helped to go through a healing process that

"Takot kami sa military. Baka mapagkamalan kaming rebelde. Takot din kami kung maulit ang giyera baka matamaan kami. Gusto namin na umalis ang mga sundalo sa aming lugar."

(We are afraid of the military. They might suspect us of being rebels. We are also afraid that the war will happen again. We want the military out of our area.)

Young Boy in Sitio Agakan

will enable them to confront bad memories and express their suffering, with the support and guidance of an empathetic and informed adult. The 2000 Mindanao war violated every right of a child—the right to life, the right to be with family and community, the right to health, the right to development of personality, and the right to be nurtured and protected.

Vulnerability of Children in Flight.

Displacement disrupted the social networks and primary relationships that support children's physical, emotional, moral, cognitive, and social development. The exposure of these children to this kind of environment for about two years must have profound physical and psychological effects, especially for those in the evacuation centers. Thus, an effective programme that specifically addresses the needs and problems of internally displaced must formulated he implemented by those concerned with the children's plight.

Children in Situations of Armed Conflict.

The internally displaced children in Pagalungan and Pagagawan have not felt that serious efforts have been made on their behalf to address their situation. One could say that there was little or no government presence at all in the area. Most of the interventions carried out by the government were focused on humanitarian aid at the evacuation centers with no follow-up at the communities of origin.

Children face further threats from war such as emotional and psychological damage. Even though some youngsters may not have witnessed violence or lost family members, they suffered the disruption of their normal lives as schools closed, friends dispersed, and their homes came under fire. The results are a loss of trust, aggressive behaviour, and a tendency toward revenge, which, in time, may result in another cycle of violence. The entire fabric of their societies—which includes their homes, schools, health systems and religious institutions—has been torn to pieces.

The Case of a 13 Year Old Boy in an Evacuation Center

This is the case of a child at the evacuation center in Pagalungan Central School whose rights were neglected by the government - his right to education, right to live a normal life, right to have a decent living. This 13-year old child is the eldest of five children whose family is still living the said evacuation center. Contrary to the pronouncements of the government that there are no more evacuation centers left in Mindanao and that everything is back to normal, he and his brothers and sisters, together with his parents, have continued to live in the evacuation center for more than two years now. When asked of his dreams, he was quick to answer that he wanted to become a teacher. But when he was asked of his needs and problems, he answered with complete uncertainty. On the one hand, he is eager to go home because they have been staying in the overcrowded evacuation center for more than two years. On the other hand, if he does go home with his family to their place of origin, he is confronted with the question of whether he can continue schooling considering that their house was burned and the infrastructures of the place were destroyed during the war. He is one of the beneficiaries of a temporary education programme extended by the OXFAM at the evacuation center that is about to be terminated because of lack of funds.

It seemed to the 13 year old that the government has not done anything about the children's education in the said evacuation center. Ironically, the displaced individuals and families were temporarily accommodated in a school where they could not obtain education. He said that without the NGO programme for education, it would have been very difficult on his part to go to school because of poverty. He really cherished so much the things that he learned from his education at the temporary school facilities available in the evacuation center. He is already in the 5th grade at the elementary level, in contrast to a number of the children in their center who have not completed any grade level at all.

At one moment, he expressed that he wants to stay at the evacuation center for his education, but later he would start articulating his aspiration for the building of a school at their place of origin. He continually expressed doubts of the sincerity of the government in addressing their problems. His dream to become a teacher someday was driven by the desire to help the children of his community to obtain basic education because this is seen as their only hope for a brighter future. He clamours for the removal or departure of the military from their place of origin so that those displaced can go home and start building their lives back to normal.

To flee from one's home is to experience a deep sense of loss, and the decision to flee is not taken lightly. Those who make this decision do so because they are in danger of being killed, tortured, forcibly recruited, raped, abducted or starved, among other reasons. They leave behind their assets and property, relatives, friends, familiar surroundings, and established social networks. Although the decision to leave is normally taken by adults, even the youngest children—as innocent as they are—recognise what is happening around them and can sense their parents' uncertainty and fear that eventually contaminates them as well. Children who are displaced face perilous circumstances. They are often worse off than refugees, since under these political circumstances they may lack access to protection and assistance. This is a fact in Pagalungan and Pagagawan. The origin of the problems of many children who have been affected by conflicts is obscured.

Children in Evacuation Centers. Ideally, camps for internally displaced persons should be places of safety, offering protection and assistance as these are supposed to be their refuge. However, displaced populations are complex societies that often replicate at the evacuation centers former divisions and power struggles. At the same time their traditional systems of social protection come under strain or break down completely, often resulting in high levels of violence and family quarrels. In the evacuation center of Pagagawan Central, the overcrowding aggravated the situation to the extent that the children are always exposed to disorderliness and health/sanitation problems.

Emphasising the Needs and Problems of the Children. The environment of Pagagawan and Pagalungan not only adds to the suffering of the community, but also contains the seeds of future conflict. All of what are now seen as "complex emergencies" had their roots deep in long-running social, political, and economic crises. Because children suffer the most from poverty, the fight against it must begin with them. This includes investing in social services that benefit the poorest children and their families, including basic health care and primary education. At the same time, the well being of children must be a priority objective of debt relief programmes, development assistance, and government spending.

Table 3 below illustrates the top priority needs and problems of the children in the *sitios*¹ of Pagagawan and Pagalungan identified as project sites:

¹ Sitio is a political sub-unit of a barangay (the smallest local government unit of the Philippines)

Table 3
Priority Needs and Problems of Children in Pagalungan and Pagagawan

| | Pilot Project Communities in Pagalungan and Pagagawan | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|----------------------------------|--|
| CHILDREN AND YOUTH | Communities of Origin | | | Evacuation Center | |
| | Sambulawan, Barangay. Nabundas, Pagagawan | Bai Tonina, Barangay Bulit, Pagagawan | Sitio Agakan, Barangay. Inug-ug, Pagalungan | Pagalungan Central School | |
| Needs | Education | Education | Education | Return to their places of origin | |
| Problems | Sources of income for parents | Education | Basic Needs | Sources of income for parents | |

Education is identified by the children in the three communities of origin as their top priority need, while those in the evacuation center identified it as their number one problem.

The Crisis in Education and the Need for Schooling. The crisis in education will have long-term impact on the children during the post-war period. The collapse of the educational system was inevitable in the area. The damage inflicted during the war left a number of primary school-age children without access to education. In the Pagalungan Central Evacuation Center, the children are troubled that they might not be able to continue schooling if they return to their sites of origin. Although they eagerly want to return to their places of origin, they also feel uncertain of continuing school. They believe that the presence of the AFP on one side of their community of origin, and the MILF partisans on the other side, would prevent the establishment of a school. It was observed that almost all of the children participants of the FGD have not completed an elementary level of education.

Attending classes, in whatever surroundings, can help children start the process of recovery, healing, and reconciliation. In addition to conventional school lessons, they can be taught conflict resolution and peace building. Schools will allow children to develop mutual understanding, to resolve differences without recourse to violence, and show how human diversity can be embraced rather than become the basis for barbaric behaviour. Feelings of exclusion, as well as the struggle for survival and protection, may lead children to join parties to the conflict or to become street children.

Poor Family Income. The children are so eager to go to school, to learn new things, including new songs as well as learn how to draw, read, and write. Yet they could not just simply do so because of poverty. The affected children regard this predicament as the concern of older persons. Being young, they do not possess the strength to tackle the task of provision and this makes them feel helpless and tired of the situation. The plight of the children during wartime contradicts not just every normal human concern for well being, but also the professed beliefs and legal obligations of those responsible. Even if schools exist—inasmuch as there are certain NGOs that provided Education Programmes in their interventions such as that of OXFAM in the Pagalungan Central evacuation

center—the children still may not be able to enrol because they lack interest or the required documents, or are unable to sustain the expenses of schooling. Moreover, there is also a question regarding the sustainability of the educational programme that is being provided. For example, OXFAM is terminating its support to its education programme in the project site, although it will turn over the management of the school facilities it had put in place to the IDPs living in several evacuation centers located near this school facility. With little or no education and no resources, these children cannot break out of the cycle of poverty.

Women's Perceptions on the Current Return and Settlement Efforts

The experience of war and consequent Pagagawan deeply affected and posed particular challenges to the women as well. The loss of their homes and their farm animals and harvests has emotionally and psychologically affected them. Physically, they were left with practically no food to subsist on, and those who lost their husbands during the conflict became single providers for their family.

Survival Issues at the Evacuation Center.

Two years have passed since the armed conflict between the AFP and the MILF in Mindanao. The humanitarian aid provided by donor agencies at the evacuation center has dwindled. The women at the evacuation centers are faced with impoverishment manifested in their inability to provide for the nourishment of their family, inadequate shelter, lack of sanitation and health problems. The risk of poverty had become a reality. The challenges of attending to the survival needs of their family by struggling to find alternative livelihoods in order to recover from the losses caused by the war, have preoccupied the internally displaced women of the pilot project sites.

The women believe that the Start-Up Capital Assistance (SUCA) extended to them helped them carry on while they could not yet return to their sites of origin. They needed to have basic house wares

The experience of war and consequent forced displacement in Pagalungan and

The Case of a Woman Resident of Sitio Bai Tonina, Barangay Bulit, Pagagawan, Maguidanao Province

A female IDP who had returned to her community of origin narrated her experiences during the height of the armed conflict in the area. According to her, although Erap (President Estrada) declared an "all out war: with the MILF, they still did not want to leave their place "kasi nanghihinayang kami sa mga ari-arian namin tulad ng bahay, hayop at mga kagamitan at lalo na ang aming pangkabuhayan mula sa pagtatanim" (because we did not want to lose our properties like our houses, work animals and our source of livelihood which is farming). "Kahit nagwarning ang Mayor na paalisin na kami, hindi pa rin kami umaalis sa lugar namin. Ngunit nang natamaan na ang malapit na bahay sa amin ng OV-10 bomb at nawasak ito, saka pa kami nag takbuhan at lumisan ng madalian sa aming lugar." (Even if the Mayor gave us a warning to immediately flee, we did not heed her warning. But when an OV-10 bomb hit a nearby dwelling, we had no choice but to hurriedly leave our place.)

A picture of everyone running in different directions is still vivid in her mind. According to her, most of them became separated from their families and were able to find each other only at the Municipal Hall of Pagagawan where they sought refuge. Because of the big number that had gathered there, some had to move to a school nearby and experienced the suffering of the displaced. She said they had to sleep on the cement floor that was covered only with banana leaves, while others slept on pieces of old newspapers. It was very cold at the evacuation centre and many got sick, mostly children. Some of those who sought refuge could not endure the agony of being displaced, homeless, and without food, and eventually died.

She said "Now that we have returned to our place, we still could not forget the tragic events that happened to us and it will take a long time to recover the loss caused by

such as basins, plates, drinking glasses, spoons, and kitchen utensils. They were grateful

for the initial capital assistance that enabled them to acquire some of these needs. They are happy with being able to help their husbands earn and provide for their family. Although they think that the SUCA, amounting to five hundred pesos, was too meagre for their needs, they indicate "it is better than nothing at all."

Women Worry Over Their Family's Health Conditions. The priority concern of the women in the evacuation centers (ECs) is the health of their family members. They hope that the poor sanitary conditions will be alleviated so that they will be able to avoid illnesses that will only aggravate their already difficult condition as displaced people. The help extended by some donor agencies in terms of medicines and the construction of water pumps and toilets made them and their families less vulnerable to common illnesses at the evacuation center. Nevertheless, since the task of caring for their family depends much on the women, undergoing literacy training on sanitation and nutrition would greatly help them protect their children from diseases.

The basic education facility provided by OXFAM had helped their children develop a positive outlook and increased their chances of survival. They hope that this programme will be a continuing one, although there is a great possibility that this will cease in the near future because of lack of funds. The women also long for sufficient space wherein the children can play like other normal children. The congestion in the evacuation center has prevented access to healthy grounds in which the children can play.

The women dream of returning to their site of origin, but they believe that this will only be made possible if the threat of possible encounters between the military forces of the government and the MILF will be settled by authorities of both camps in the area. The declaration of a peace zone in their site of origin will assure them of a safe return. However, this can only be achieved through an intensive peace programme that will involve all the stakeholders in the community, including the AFP and MILF.

The Rebuilding Process. At the site of origin, the women felt that the task of rebuilding their communities fell on their shoulders. On the issue of recovery, the women of communities of origin, namely Sambulawan, Bai Tonina, and Agakan, have similar primary concerns. They identified these as immediate material and social support systems.

Immediate material and social support is crucial to their recovery process. While some basic household utensils and the provision of a small amount of capital have been very helpful, they found it better if the problems faced by the community are tackled through group efforts. The sustained organising work of the Pilot Project in their community trained them to put up the needed social structures through the training of *sumpats*², the construction of the *Pulungan Centers*, and the constitution of basic action committees.

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²Sumpat is an IDP volunteer who serves as a development partner of the pilot project in her/his specific community.

Female IDPs in Community Affairs. It is also assuring for the women that their voice is now being heard and they are considered an important sector of their community. They needed to be involved in the activities of the community, especially those that concern the welfare of the children and their families. They want to contribute to the rebuilding process as economic partners of their husbands, however meagre their contributions are due to the circumstances. With these desires, they look forward to more training on child rearing, sanitation, and livelihood programmes to enable them to get involved.

They are also glad that the pilot project responded to their emotional and psychological needs through its psychosocial intervention efforts. It enabled them to cope better with the stress and trauma they and their children experienced. They hope that this programme will be sustained to help them fully recover as a people.

Some Responses to Women's Needs. The makeshift homes in the area have substituted for the homes they lost during the war. They don't mind settling in these makeshift homes at the site of origin for as long as basic health services (including medicine), materials for farming and fishing, day care centers, schools, water, and sanitation facilities will be made available to them. The female IDPs of Sitio Bai Tonina are happy with the water systems and toilets provided to them by OXFAM, but those in the sitios of Sambolawan and Agakan are having problems with their water and sanitation thus making them vulnerable to diseases.

Day-care centers and schools are badly needed for their children so that "the young will learn many things early on." They emphasised the necessity of schools and the *madrasah*³ that will provide their children with both basic and Islamic education.

The Vulnerability of the Internally Displaced Elderly

Another of the identified vulnerable groups is the elderly. In most communities, the people look up to the old folks for wisdom in any undertaking. The elderly are believed to have been there ahead of them all and to have acquired more knowledge with their numerous experiences. They must, therefore, know more of the things in life. They could therefore bring everything to better perspectives. Physically, however, the elderly make up the most vulnerable group. Years of impoverished living have wasted their limbs and have worn out their bodies. In Pagalungan and Pagagawan, most of the elderly in the communities of origin are suffering from health problems. They are also the religious leaders of their communities who worry about the spiritual and moral development of the community members, especially the children and the youth.

The Legacy of the Elderly. The elders have visions of peace and order prevailing in their communities of origin. They want to focus on uniting themselves as a community and plan for solutions or prepare proposals for submission to the government and other agencies through the help of the CFSI Community Organisers. The elderly in Agakan contend that "the government should help them and they also help the government." The

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³Madrasah is the Arabic term for school that imparts basic Islamic teachings. Its plural form is madaris.

elders have already something of a legacy to offer their children and their children's children. If only the seeds that the elderly have could be turned over to the coming generations, be sown and grown that they may bear fruits, then there will be a chance for these communities to recover from impoverishment and live peacefully towards economic development.

The Main Concerns of the Elderly. The group of the elderly in Pagalungan and Pagagawan identified as their immediate concerns, the construction/improvement of the mosque and the acquisition of a microphone and other mosque auxiliaries in the communities of origin (COOs) of Sambulawan and Agakan. The majority of the population in these areas is Maguindanao Muslims so it is natural for them to seek for the mosque so that they may have a place to worship. They needed also the microphone to call the community to prayer and to gather when important matters needing community action crop up. The elderly in Bai Tonina, however, are content with the concrete mosque that they already have. The elders identified housing as their next priority need and problem because their houses were destroyed during the conflict. The other needs and problems of the elders are livelihood and sources of income, schools and madrasah for their children and grandchildren, farm to market roads, and health and sanitation facilities.

The elderly men think that focusing on the stabilisation of peace and order in their communities is the best way to address their needs. In this way also, they could find alternative livelihood sources in between crop harvesting seasons. The elderly women expressed their interest in livelihood and entrepreneurship training supplemented with start-up capitalisation (to buy the needed raw materials). The elderly are concerned with the education of the youth and children of their communities. Yet, they do not have the financial resources to pay for the educational needs of their children, such as tuition fees and school supplies. They believe that education will prepare their children for a brighter future, but for now, this is a statement that they will write in the wind. If left to themselves, they could not afford this.

The elderly in the evacuation center need livelihood assistance. They also need to return to their sites of origin and hoped that the military detachment there will leave so that peace and order will prevail and they could return to their homes. The elderly women need continued assistance, especially for household wares. The DSWD and other agencies had distributed relief goods at the early part of their stay at the evacuation center, but because they have been there for more than two years already, these were worn out. On top of these concerns, they worry about shelter. According to them, their makeshift houses at the EC do not protect their children from rain and other perils while their houses at their communities of origin were destroyed during the armed conflict.

Deteriorating Physical Capabilities. The elderly in both communities of origin and evacuation centers expressed their concern regarding their health and physical capabilities that are gradually deteriorating over time. They have to work hard to earn a living but their health conditions neither enable them to perform well nor earn sufficient income. An elderly IDP said he is sick with tuberculosis and his wife is the one working

to provide for the family while another said his wife has cancer of the breast and has to be cared for closely, thus minimising his time to earn a living. They are suffering from poverty compounded with their health difficulties and they could not buy the needed medicine. Since the conflict of 2000, a number of them have suffered and become casualties while others succumbed to death due to illness. The elderly women particularly stressed the need for health centers in their communities.

Fears and Worries of the Elderly. The greatest fear of the elderly is the recurrence of armed conflict in the sites of origin. Because of this, they were afraid to go back to their home communities, but the Pilot Project's "Go and See Visit" activity made them realise that, to a certain extent, it was alright for them to go home. They are very much grateful to the people who had facilitated their return. Nevertheless, they are still uncertain of the peace and order situation in their areas up to now. This uncertainty has made them still feel the fears that they felt when they were returning to their home communities. The presence of the military and the occasional encounters between government forces and armed groups in their proximity contributed to their constant feeling of insecurity for themselves, their children, their families, and communities. They fear the expansion of the "Balikatan" to cover their areas. They said that it is good if the "Balikatan" activities would be dedicated to the reconstruction and building of infrastructure for their communities—they would welcome these activities very much. However, they see that a wild chase of armed groups in their areas by the military forces of the government will ultimately be damaging to their existence.

The threats also of natural calamities, such as flooding, compound their fear inasmuch as their areas are topographically prone to these. In the past, flooding had ruined their crops before harvest. They wondered: what more could happen to them? They fear economic crisis and the worsening of their poverty wherein they will not be able to find food anymore for their families. They worry about their young women who left their homes to work as domestic helpers or become working students in other places.

The Men's Perspective in Prioritising Needs and Problems in the Community

The men, typically the heads and breadwinners of the family, seem to have a more general/holistic perspective on the needs and problems of the IDPs in the communities of origin (COOs). The needs and problems they had identified, though varying in priorities according to community, significantly addressed not only the men 's concerns but also practically the needs of the whole community.

Livelihood and Financial Assistance. The men consider financial and livelihood assistance as their priority need and problem in both the communities of origin and at the evacuation center. There are not enough sources of livelihood and income to support family needs, not even the minimum basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, and education for their children. Those in the EC fear that they could not survive because they have no sources of livelihood and all the agencies that helped them earlier are already gone. Some

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⁴ Balikatan is a Philippine-U.S. joint military exercise aimed at enhancing the combat skills of Filipino soldiers in terms of handling modern military equipment and weaponry.

of them wanted to engage in fishing but they do not have enough capital to purchase a banca⁵ and other fishing implements. The response of the Pilot Project in providing the Livelihood Assistance Upon Return (LAUR) programme at the communities of origin has greatly benefited the IDPs, although they think that the amount of assistance is not quite enough. The Start-Up Capital Assistance (SUCA) programme for women at the evacuation centers has also been helping the IDPs augment their earnings. The male IDPs are hopeful that the SUCA will also be extended to them—not just the women. Despite these forms of assistance, however, the men believe that the income they earn is not enough to sustain the daily basic needs of IDP families.

The Need for Decent Housing Facilities: Most of their residential homes were destroyed during the war between the MILF and the AFP in 2000. They can hardly afford to finance the rebuilding of their homes so they construct makeshift houses using bamboo with plastic sheets as roofing. These temporary houses cannot sustain the heavy rains and bad weather, thus making their children and family vulnerable to illnesses. At the evacuation center and in one community of origin, there are communal toilets and water distribution system. However, in the other communities of origin, none is available and the water supply comes from an open spring and rain that is not so safe for drinking. The men are willing to provide the labour, but they do not have good materials to make decent houses.

The Problem of Health and Sanitation. The men are worried about their family members. They speak of the elderly and children who got sick and died without availing of medical services due to the lack of health service facilities, including health centers and medical supplies in their communities. Their sitios and barangays do not have adequate toilet facilities and most of the residents would just relieve themselves and leave human wastes anywhere, whenever the call of nature comes. This practice is highly unsanitary and it may help explain the incidence of death due to various diseases. The water supply compounds their deplorable health and sanitation conditions because there is lack of potable water in their communities. Most residents rely on deep wells and rainwater as their main source of water. The IDPs also are in dire need of enough supply of medicines and medical services for those who got sick in the ECs. Since they do not have the money to buy these medicines, they are hoping to have them free of charge.

Education for the Children and the Adults. Most of the men want their children as well as adult family members to go to school both in the Philippine public school systems and the madrasah. However, there are no school facilities nearby. Some have to send their children to schools located at considerable distances from their communities. This problem is also compounded by the economic difficulties they have. They cannot afford to pay the necessary school related expenses, even if schools are accessible nearby.

At the EC in Pagalungan Central School, the IDPs cannot send their children to school for they cannot afford to pay the school fee and purchase the necessary school supplies and materials. OXFAM, however, provided their children free education and free school supplies for some while. Regrettably, these services have now been terminated.

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⁵ Banca is a small wooden fishing vessel used in fishing.

Need for Infrastructures and Farming Supplies. Considering that the major livelihood source of the IDP men in the communities of origin is farming, they stress the need for farm-to-market roads to facilitate the delivery of their products to the market. Aside from this, those who are producing rice and corn desperately need a solar dryer in their communities. They are willing to make the dryer themselves when the materials are already available to them. They also mentioned the need for construction of a mosque for every community, except for Sitio Bai Tonina as it already has one. The other needs of the men include a supply of fertiliser and a seedling sprayer. They would be most grateful if a utility that will supply electricity will be made available for sitio Agakan in Barangay Inug-ug because it is very dark during the night-time. They cannot afford the fees of such services; therefore, they would be happy if it were provided to them for free, i.e., without the charges they insist they cannot afford to pay.

Lessons Learned from the Cases of Pagalungan and Pagagawan

Intervention practices should be relevant and responsive to the socio-political and economic contexts of the IDPs. Planning and implementation of development projects and programmes for the community should be anchored on cultural sensitivity and participation towards peoples' empowerment. For an intervention programme to be successful, capability building should be its crucial component.

The traditional humanitarian assistance provided in the evacuation centers has created more conflict in terms of competition for limited resources and has developed dependence on relief aid among the IDPs. Most humanitarian assistance has been limited to relief operations addressing immediate needs and is administered only for a very limited period of time. In order for the interventions to be meaningful, the service provider must ensure the sustainability of its intervention towards healing and rebuilding.

The children are the most vulnerable sector in situations of armed conflict. The rebuilding process must give emphasis to the needs of the children to avert the most obvious effects of war: displacement and impoverishment. Intervention efforts must embody reversion mechanisms on the negative consequences of trauma among the youth during reconstruction and recovery.

The role of the government is very crucial in the healing process towards socio-political and economic recovery. A meaningful and sustained partnership with the government brings about successful implementation of intervention programmes. In other words, effective and efficient coordination among donor agencies, government, and other stakeholders ensures the sustainability of the intervention.

Generally, IDPs' fears related to return and settlement are allayed through actual visits to their places of origin. This way, they can see for themselves the current situation in their areas. This was facilitated by the "Go and See Visits" organised by CFSI. These encouraged the return and settlement of the IDPs.

Female IDPs realised their crucial role in the return and settlement process. This made them eager to contribute to the rebuilding process, including the formulation and implementation of an intensive peace programme involving all the stakeholders in the community, including the AFP and the MILF.

It can also be noted that the elderly can contribute to the recovery process because of their wisdom and experience in displacement, return, and settlement. The experience of conflict especially among elderly men made them realise the importance of peace.

2. IDP EXPERIENCES IN CARMEN

The involuntary displacements in Carmen brought about miserable conditions for the communities of Christians, Maguindanao Muslims, and Manobos. Having been in the evacuation centers for more than two years, quite a number of IDP families recently returned to their communities of origin in sitios Tabulon, Malugasa, and Matingao. However, families from sitios Danao, Pinamintangan, and Puting Bato have not returned home. In the other sitios of Quarry, Bunawan, Hinauran, and Spring, some families have returned, living in their makeshift houses, while many others go back to their farms only during the daytime hours. They return to the evacuation centers at night.

Focused group discussions with IDP subgroups of women, youth, children, and elders revealed in-depth insights into the varying impact of displacements to differing sectors of displaced persons, as well as differences in perceived problems and needs. The research team conducted the discussions with subgroups in sitios Tabulon, Malugasa, Spring, Puting Bato, Pinamintangan, and Campo. Listening to the voices of these displaced women, children, youth, and elders point to the pressing call for assistance and action.

The Rural Youth and Children

The massive displacement of families in Carmen due to armed conflict between the MILF and the AFP greatly affected the physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional growth and development of the youth and children in the area. The FGDs conducted among the displaced youth in Malapag (6), Malugasa (12), Liliongan (10), and Tabulon (14) revealed their tormenting experiences—from fleeing; being separated from their families, friends and community; having witnessed deaths; and living in the crowded evacuation centers for several months.

The youth recalled the happy moments they shared with their friends prior to their displacement. They lived a simple but peaceful rural life. The youth—male and female alike—did households chores and farm work together, played together, and also shared feelings and dreams. In Tabulon, the youth clearly remembered the community activities they used to do such as: Qur'an reading, physical fitness activities, and Arabic lessons. These activities are all gone now. The community lost their Mosque during the armed

conflict and the youth are now busy working in the farm to earn money for the family's food.

The Malapag youth lost their houses, backyard animals (chicken, goats, carabao), personal belongings (clothing), school things, and household utensils. They also lost their friendships and missed their peers. Their sports facilities, such as basketball and volleyball courts, were destroyed. The membership of their youth organisation was reduced to almost half. Many youth (16-20 years old) have not returned to their places of origin because they went to the cities (Davao, Cagayan de Oro and Manila) to look for work. Being largely unskilled, most of them end up as domestic helpers. Many youth, for instance, at Malugasa, have not even entered grade one. This is also true of Christian families affected by displacement. Some female youth married at an early age of 16 years or below.

Because many of them come from poor families and subsist only on farming, the youth feared that they might forever lose their chance to go back to school. The family properties (resources) are already dwindling or almost consumed. Providing food comes first and foremost among the family concerns. The majority of the youth in the affected areas, mostly in the interior sitios, are out-of-school. Many drop out of school because they have to hike more or less four kilometres one-way to school.

There were three children in sitio Campo, ages three to six years, who just

"Dati-rati merong kaming pagbabasa ng Qur-an para sa aming mga kabataan. Natuto kami tungkol sa aming relihiyon at ng Arabic. Ngayon lahat ng ito ay nawala na dahil wala na kaming Mosque na aming pinagdarausan ng pabasa at ang mga kabataan ay abala sa paghanapbuhay para sa pamilya."

(Before we have Qur-an reading and arabic lessons held at our Mosque, now they are gone because our Mosque was destroyed and the youths are busy looking for food for the family.)

Tabulon youth leader.

run and hide when they see a person with a gun. They automatically think that he is an MILF. They shiver when they hear gunshots or even just the sound of a motorcycle. An airplane passing by is also mistaken as a helicopter ready to drop bombs onto their community. They are scared to death. There were also boys from Campo and Malapag who were separated from their parents because of evacuation.

The displacement had negative effects on the children and youth in the research project sites. Their responses to the question on what they felt after having experienced armed conflict and evacuation in their communities point to the issues of (a) psycho-social behaviours (fearful, sad, angry, full of mistrust, nervous, uncertain); (b) health conditions (hungry, malnourished, prone to illnesses like diarrhoea, headache and cough with fever); (c) education (disrupted schooling, forced to leave school); and (d) concern for family survival and welfare (forced to work as domestic helpers and farm workers).

The most important needs expressed by the youth include: (a) money for education such as school supplies/uniforms, scholarship; (b) elementary schools at the site of origin; (c) livelihood for the youth; (d) food, nutrition; and (e) sport facilities.

The Burden of the Displaced Women

The women carry the heaviest burden of displacement. As they shared their experiences of the displacement that happened nearly three years ago, they still got teary-eyed. The fears, anxieties, and uncertainty of life for their families away from their sitio still bothered them, day in and day out. At the time of displacement, they said they felt angry, nervous, frustrated, and shocked.

In the evacuation centers, they are forced to find work to help find the money to buy food, sometimes neglecting the children and forgetting even their own personal needs. Many get sick. They have headaches and insomnia. In the FGDs conducted with women subgroups, one woman from Malugasa said: "Na-insomnia na ako sa kahadlok. Dili ako makatulog kay nahadlok ko nga basig naa naman pud gubot." (I suffer from insomnia because of fear. I can't sleep because I fear that trouble will again come.)

The women disclosed that they have been deprived of their farm livelihood because of displacement. They talked of their farm life when they were able to cultivate backyard vegetables and plants, as well as raise backyard animals such (e.g., chicken and goats). They also mentioned their lost neighbourhood relationships. Some women claimed that repeated displacements made their children move away from home. Many mothers allowed their children, mostly females, to find work as domestic helpers in the nearby towns while the male children serve as hired labour on other people's farms.

Many women attended the "Go and See Visits" organised by CFSI. They claimed that the activity was festive and attended by many people from government and nongovernmental organisations. They were happy that they were able to see their sitios again after a long time. The women from Tabulon, Pinamintangan, Spring, and Malugasa received livelihood assistance for backyard animal raising.

There were women who attended the peace education session of CFSI. One woman commented, "Nakatabang ang sesyon sa peace education para maiwagan ang among huna-huna nga ang diyalogo importante para magresolba sa dili pagsinabtanay." (The peace education session was helpful to enlighten our minds about the use of dialogue in resolving disputes/conflicts.)

The women in Tabulon, Matingao, and Malugasa were proud to show the research team the vegetables that were growing in their backyards. They availed of the farm seedling assistance and the "Pagkain Para sa Masa" of the Department of Agriculture.

The needs and problems of the women range from personal to family matters. They need medicine for their common illnesses such as headaches, coughs, and fever. They are

anxious always of finding food for the family. They also need kitchen utensils for cooking. They need livelihood skills training, family planning orientation, and start-up capital for small-scale livelihood or animal raising activities.

The Declining Health Conditions of the Elderly

The elderly IDPs were also very much affected by the displacement tragedy. Despite their wealth of experience that provided them with a deeper understanding of socio-political phenomena, they were not spared from feeling the effects of displacement.

The majority of the elderly have developed anaemia due to the lack of food and malnutrition. Elderly males complained of constant joint pains, which are believed to have developed due to the disruption of their routine work in their farms. Yet they too are now forced to find work in order to have food.

Some elderly developed fear and mistrust toward other groups. This is particularly evident in the Muslim and Christian relations. About fifteen (15) Muslim families formerly residing around the Malapag Mosque evacuation center are hesitant to return back to Malapag. They have moved out of Carmen, leaving their houses behind which are now occupied by Christian families displaced in Malapag. They are afraid that the Christians will harass them if they return because of the conflict that happened in Carmen. The Mayor of Carmen and their barangay officials have assured some of the Muslim residents of Malapag that they could have their houses back if they want to return. However, they have still opted not to return.

The Muslim families in Sitio Matingao who evacuated to Malapag Mosque, immediately returned back to their sites of origin, for fear of being harassed by the Christians. In one of the FGD sessions conducted with the elderly, one Maguindanaon participant from Sitio Matingao whispered "Di ta bun gaid kalabawan a makasalig i ginawa ta sa kanilan a mga taw. Tembu niya bu let i kinadtalu nu Kapitan sa mapakay kami den a muli, na minggan-gan kami den muli sa dalepa nami, ka geda-geda ta bun i sulian kami nilan, ka maya mamagidsan bun ba nan silan." (We cannot totally entrust ourselves to these people. That is why, when the barangay captain told us that we could return to our site of origin, we rushed to go home to Matingao.)

Among the Christian families, the distrust towards the Muslims was expressed during the first few FGDs. They labelled the Muslims as bad elements in the community. However, it can be noted that the attitude gradually changed as the research team moved further along in the fieldwork interview. This observed behaviour change may possibly be attributed to the psychosocial and peace education activities conducted in Carmen by CFSI.

Sitio leaders noted that the Muslims and Manobos were more trusting with each other. As the Manobo Timway⁶ said, "Da man problema ami sa kaniran a mga Muslim ka mana kami bun udsusuled, sa iganat sa mawgut den a gay na di kami ebpamagukag." (We

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⁶ Timway is an elder leader in the Manobo community.

don't have problems with them [Maguindanaons], because we are like brothers/sisters. Ever since, we do not quarrel with one another.) Another Manobo elderly woman narrated, "kanu da pan magira su dalpa, na ebpanganggaten nami siran ka pagkanduli kami, na mananggit silan sa apia ngin a tabang. U silan menem su pagkanduli na panggaten kami bun nilan, na pedtabang kami bun sa apia ngin. Saguna bu ka madalag i kailay nami kanilan." (Before the war in the place, we were like brothers/sisters with the Maguindanaons. We invited them to our post-harvest feasts. They brought with them some things to help us. We did the same for them. It is only now that we do not have these activities because we seldom see each other.)

One Maguindanaon sitio leader from Matingao told the Timway from Malugasa, "U makasengaw tanu den sa mga prublema tanu, ka mamakasabpet tanu mangangawid na edsaluman tanu su nalayaman tanu a kapegkakanduli tanu. Edsabuta ta bu u kanu, asal na di magetas su nan a adat tanu, saleta na makapamandu tanu kanu mga muliataw tanu su nan a mapia a adat." (Once we have overcome our current economic problems and we can have a good harvest, we will revive our joint festivities so our practices will continue with our children and their generations. We will just contact each other.)

The elders also felt bad about so many things they have lost because of the displacement. In sitio Tabulon, the Muslim community used to have a mosque and a small madrasah. They were proud of their mosque, as this had become the center of their community. It was in this place that they nurtured the minds of the children and trained them to become good citizens.

In their mosque, the call of the minaret (call to prayer) and the prayer five times a day reminded them of their duty to Allah (God) and increased their faith to the Almighty. As Bapa Uyag recalled "Egkalugud ku su paganay a aden pan masgit 'ami, a lu kami ba egkalimud, labi den u maghrib endu Isha a mga magabi a sambayang. Malu kami egkalinawagan kanu panduan su agama." (I remember when we had the mosque and we gathered during night time so that we hear some teachings of our religion.) He added: "Ya nin kapia i aden masegit na aden pakapamukaw sa lekami a mga taliawid uman nagan mapita." (The advantage of having a mosque is the call to prayer that awakens us farmers, at dawn.)

When asked which needs they would want to be responded to, the elderly in Tabulon and Matingao expressed their wish to have their mosque and madrasah back. Sports and recreational facilities were also cited as important needs. They particularly identified medicine for high blood pressure and arthritis. The majority of the male elderly were in need of start-up capital and resources such as farm implements, livestock, livelihood for home industry, and post-harvest facilities. The elderly women longed for big water containers where they can stock rainwater during the rainy days so that they would not have to go far distances to get water. The elderly women also want access to capital for small-scale business in the community.

The Farmers' Group

Most of the displaced families in Carmen are farmers. The FGDs with the farmers in Malapag provided details on their farming practices. Very few families own the land they till, as many are cultivating government land classified as forested lands. The Manobo community relies on stewardship arrangements. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) had already surveyed the public lands in the affected areas of Danao, Bunawan, Hinauran, Spring, Matingao, Malugasa, and awarded them to the resident-farmers. However, no land titles have been released yet to date. The landowners are the pioneering settlers from Panay and Cebu, or the Manobo native inhabitants.

A 72-year-old farmer in Danao recalled that the land title for his four-hectares was about to be released already in 1999. But because of the intensifying conflict and subsequent displacement, the release of the land title was aborted. He has been waiting for this title since 1985. Today, he hopes that the land title will be released before he dies of old age. The four-hectare land used to be planted with corn and vegetables. The farm is their sole source of livelihood. Before the conflict, his family harvested more than enough to feed his children and grandchildren. At present, he only cultivates a one-hectare plot planted with corn. The three-hectares remain idle. He borrowed money from the trader and bought corn seeds as a start-up capital for farming. He was thankful that he still has his two horses and one carabao. His house in the sitio was totally destroyed. He put up a new hut using the lumber of the *ipil-ipil* tree, dried cogon, and some salvaged materials.

A landowner in Sitio Campo, Malapag was almost in tears when he narrated how he lost his four carabao, one horse, and all his farm implements and carpentry tools during the evacuation. Mang Fortunato owns seven and a half hectares of corn land. He fears that he might lose his land too in the near future. To be able to farm his lot, he borrowed money from the bank using his land title as collateral. Now he is worried about the loan payments that he has to pay soon.

"Sang wala pa sing gubat diri tawhay kag mayo ang among pangabuhi, sugod na pud sa uno. Pag dili ko mabayaran ang akong utang sa bangko pati lupa ko madula na pud."

(Before, we had a peaceful and good life. Now it is different, we have to start rebuilding our lives. I feared and worried that I may lose my farms to bank if cannot pay my loans).

Most farmers affected by displacement experience low farm productivity (low income) because of limited farm inputs and farm implements. The developments introduced in their farms before the war are all gone. The farmers have to start all over again. Their lands have now been left unattended for almost two years. They could only cultivate small plots for corn farming. Many of them borrowed corn seeds and fertilisers from the traders. One sack of corn seeds costs ₱2,850 while a bag of fertilisers costs ₱700. A one-hectare land needs one sack of corn seeds and three bags of fertiliser. This ratio will give the farmer a good harvest. The borrowed capital (farm inputs) has to be paid in three to four months when the corn is harvested. The tenants are the most affected sector.

The prevailing arrangement between the tenant and the landowner is that one sack of corn goes to the owner for every four sacks that will go to the tenants. This is after deducting all costs incurred in farming. Other farmers who opted not to borrow from the traders use native corn seeds (acquired through farm labour) for their farm. But the harvest is only enough for the family's food consumption. Sometimes if the climate is not good (heavy rains or long drought), the corn production is low.

The farmers in the upland sitios (Spring, Malugasa, Danao, Campo, Pinamintangan, Hinauran, and Bunawan) have to contend with the high cost of hauling their products to the market. A one-way trip costs 40 to 45 pesos. These areas have no farm-to-market roads. Horses are the only means of transporting products from the farms to the market. This problem is further compounded by the absence of post-harvest facilities (sheller and dryer) in these sitios.

A farmer in Malugasa commented, "Pareho kami sang tanom nga wala nagtubo. Ang mga mangunguma wala makatrabaho sing mayo bangod sa samok. Makalak-ang na unta kami sa among pangabuhi, karon bangod sa samok nabalik kami sa uno." (We are like a plant whose growth got stunted. Farmers like us could not work properly in our farms because of conflict. We were already doing fine then, but because of this war, we are again back to square one.)

While the farmers lamented their sad experiences during the displacement, they expressed gratitude to those who, in one way or another, have helped them. The assistance given by CFSI made a difference in rebuilding their lives. The Livelihood Assistance Upon Return (LAUR) in the form of farm inputs—seeds and fertilisers in Tabulon as well as animal and poultry raising in Spring, Pinamintangan, and Malugasa—provided the farmers something to work with as they began to work in their communities of origin. Some farmers, whose farmlands were flooded and were left without farm implements, eventually had to have the seeds milled as food for the family.

The "Pagkain sa Masa" Programme of the Department of Agriculture was also availed of by the farmers and their family members (in Malugasa, Spring, Pinamintangan, and Tabulon) through the assistance of CFSI.

The farmers cited the following priority needs: (a) release of the land titles for their lands; (b) farm inputs/farm animals; (c) farm-to-market roads; and (d) post-harvest facilities such as shellers and a solar dryer. Other needs mentioned are potable water supply, military security, carpentry tools, and start-up for livelihood (animal raising).

Displaced Manobo Community in Crisis

Carmen is home to the Manobos, one of the indigenous peoples of Central Mindanao. They represented the majority of those occupying 10 out of 14 sitios in Barangay Liliongan. In the CFSI project sites in Carmen, the Manobos are found in upper Lower Malugasa, Penamintangan, Spring and Puting Bato. A solid Manobo clan inhabits

Penamintangan, while in other mentioned sitios, there existed mixed groups of Manobo, Cebuanos, and Ilonggos.

An FGD conducted with the Manobos in Pemintangan provided insights regarding their families' living condition and community life as a people affected by armed conflict.

The majority of the Manobo elderly IDP work for their own living. They were forced to work in order to have something to eat. Only about 30% are living with their children. But everybody, both male and female, are likely to have to work for food. As Babu Tambay, a 65 year old woman, said, :u di kami penggalbek na di kami makakan. Di ta bun makasalig sa wata ta, ka diun makagaga sa saguna a timpu. Nasisita na uman I isa kanu mimbru nu pamilya na pengalabek ka asal di matay sa gutem." (If we do not work, we cannot eat. We cannot rely on our children, because they cannot to afford to feed us. It is required that everyone in the family must work, so that they will not die of hunger.)

Some elderly have experienced trauma. For example, Tomas had experienced so much fear of airplanes and helicopters that whenever he hear a plane or a helicopter flying over the barangay, he will run to the forest. The same is true with Andres. These two elderly men did not go to the evacuation centers. Instead, they stayed and guarded their farms and working animals. They just ran to the forest when there were airplanes or helicopters nearby. Later on, they were able to accept that not all the planes and helicopters are conflict-related and likely to drop bombs.

There was no difference between male and female elderly Manobo in terms of causes of death. Either they died with old age, over-fatigue, cough, or they developed tuberculosis. Both males and females suffer from the same common illness, such as arthritis, cough, headaches, and malaria.

The elderly Manobo IDPs experienced the worst crisis during their displacement. While it is true that they suffered the same fate with their younger ones, they were the ones who had to look after the welfare of the whole family, including the security of their properties. Most of the male elderly had to stay in the homes during the height of the conflict in order to guard their properties. They were not afraid of the army or the bad elements. They were afraid of the unceasing bombing of their sitios by the airplanes and helicopters. They also feared the wild animals that destroyed their crops in their absence.

Except for the cases of trauma mentioned above, no further unusual behaviours have been noticed, except that they seem to be weak due to malnutrition and lack of proper rest and sleep. The coming of CFSI follow by the NDU researchers made them feel alive again because they have lost the love of other people. As one elderly Manobo woman said, "Sa wala niabot ang mga taga CFSI, morag layo kaayo, kay nakabaton lang mi'g rasyon kaniadtung bag u pa mi namakwit. Karon nga maa ang mga taga CFSI, na nag-atiman sa amo, ug ana na mo, nga nagapangutana sa among mga problema, murag nalipay na mi." (Before the coming of CFSI, we felt depressed and distressed. We only received relief goods during our first few months in the ECs. But when CFSI came to help us, and here

you (NDU) are again also helping us, trying to write our needs and problems, we are now happy.)

The majority of the elderly Manobo IDPs were not able to participate in the "Go and See Visit", Peace Kanduli, or Peace Education programmes because they were made to look after their grandchildren and their shelters. Morover, the majority of the elderly Manobo do not have a clear view of the causes of conflict. What is clear to them is that armed groups only come to the place and do not have the intention of harassing them. As one Manobo elderly narrates, "da man a ukag ami sa mga Maguindanaon a nan, ka mapia kami kanilan, na mapia bun silan sa lekami. Nagilekan kami bu sa kanu eroplano endu su bumba nilan a pakasugat sa lekami." (We don't have any feeling against Maguindanaons. We are good to them, and they are good to us. We were afraid of the airplanes and their bombs that might hit us.)

The Manobo families lived on subsistence corn farming in the hinterlands. They are the most marginalised section of the society. Their children could hardly finish elementary education. Many of the Manobo children work in the farm of their parents. Their access to basic services (health, education, and potable water) is very limited. The displacement pushed them further into misery. Today they live a hand-to-mouth existence.

Many of the youth got married at a very early age. Elsa, now 16 years old, got married at the age of 14 because of displacement. She met her husband at the evacuation center. Afraid that the war would not stop, she re-located to marry a 23-year-old man who courted her during her stay at the EC. She mentioned the case of her three friends who also got married at an early age (at 15 and 16 years old) because of displacement. Besides, they could not continue their schooling. The women were worried about these early marriages among their youth because they do not know about child bearing and rearing. Today, the Manobos believe that the war is not yet over, and that the conditions of peace they have now are only temporary.

The common illnesses suffered by the Manobos are tuberculosis (one elderly already died of tuberculosis), malaria (suffered by men, women, and children), cough with fever, cold, diarrhoea, and skin diseases (common in children). The hard labour and lack of food and proper nutrition are the causes cited by the respondents for these illnesses. Recently, a mother 36 years old died because of giving birth at home attended by a traditional birth attendant.

The Manobos are a peace-loving people. They value their traditions and practices, such as sharing food and supporting each other's needs. They hate war very much because it destroyed their livelihood and they were forced to evacuate, leaving their farms and animals unattended. When they returned to their community of origin, they have had to work doubly hard to cope with the needs of their families. They worked in other farms just to get the corn seeds needed for their newly cultivated plots. Today, their primary concern is "maglikay sa gubot, mangabuhi ug tawhay para sa kaugmaon sang kabataan." (Our concern is now to evade armed conflict, live peacefully, and work for the future of our children).

The Manobo families greatly appreciated the assistance provided by CFSI. They mentioned the Livelihood Assistance Upon Return (LAUR), the "Go and See Visit", *Pulungan Center*, and Peace Education. They will be more grateful and happy if their needs are given attention and consideration as soon as possible. They will need this assistance to rebuild their community in the area. These needs consist of: (a) health care (training of birth attendants; establishing herbal nurseries; and learning about different types of herbal medicines and their effectiveness vis-à-vis different types of illness; family planning; and child bearing/rearing); (b) livelihood (dressmaking and animal raising), (c) day care centers and (d) preservation of their cultural practices (dances, songs, musical instruments, and their native dresses).

Displacement Risks and Interventions in Carmen

The research activity aims to listen to the voices of the communities displaced by the Mindanao conflict. The aim is to capture the circumstances and local dynamics of the return and settlement process. No formal model of return and resettlement was identified and designed for this study, as previously discussed in the Introduction. Nevertheless, Cernea's model on Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction, also presented in the Introduction, provides some useful guidelines for the discussion of return and settlement processes in Carmen.

The research attempts to provide an exploratory examination regarding the risks involved in the displacement of families in the context of Carmen communities. As presented in the Introduction, the eight risks include: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, increased morbidity, loss of access to common property resources, and community disarticulation. It can be noted that two of the eight risks do not have particular relevance for the IDP families in Carmen. The risks of landlessness and joblessness are not *continuing* risks in the context of Carmen IDPs. Landlessness is not as important as an *ongoing* (*continuing*) risk—at least not in the long-run—since those who are recognised as 'owners' of particular parcels of land have not been totally uprooted from their land resource, but rather have simply lost access to their lands (and thus are not landless). Moreover, these families are also not wageworkers but farmers, so joblessness as a continuing (or long-term) risk does not fit their situation.

What follows below thus focuses on the six risks found most relevant to the case of Carmen IDPs—that is, those that are among the most serious risks faced by the Carmen IDPs in the sense of presenting ongoing (rather than strictly temporary) risks. We will first discuss the risks themselves, and then the measures taken to reduce or eliminate these ongoing risks.

Displacement Risks

The research focused on the communities' perspectives of the displacement and the perspectives of the women, children, elders, and farmers, with emphasis on their problems, priorities, and experiences, in an attempt to derive insights regarding best

practices in the return and settlement processes in the local context. These perspectives provide the basis for reflecting further on the Cernea (2000) model of risks and reconstruction.

There are six risks of return and settlement that are of particular interest in this discussion. These are the risks of homelessness, food insecurity, increased morbidity, loss of access to common resources, marginalisation (economic and social), community disarticulation, and increased morbidity. For Carmen IDPs, the highest risks are homelessness, food insecurity, loss of access to common resources, and marginalisation. The lower risks include community disarticulation and increased morbidity.

The physical loss of homes is the major consequence of displacement. The families fled their homes in haste, leaving behind their farms, crops, farm equipment, farm animals, and all their belongings, even their clothes. At the evacuation centers, they feel helpless, disoriented, and depressed. The miserable conditions of overcrowding and uncertainties at the evacuation centers add to their ardent longing for an immediate return to their communities of origin. The continuing risk is that they will remain homeless, thus jeopardising their successful return.

Regarding food insecurity, the displaced families appreciated the prompt flow of assistance from concerned agencies and organisations during the earlier phases of displacement. There was food, clothing, and relief assistance. However, as their return to their homes was not immediately possible, assistance diminished as months wore on leaving the people in a most pitiful situation. Unable to farm, they are dislocated from their main source of livelihood. If they do not find work, even as hired farm labourers or through other odd jobs for some family members, food could not be served for the family. Food has become scarce or is limited to basic root crops like cassava, bisol, yam, and sweet potatoes or bananas. Thus, food insecurity continues to jeopardise the successful rebuilding of their lives.

For many of the IDP families who had access to land as a common resource (e.g., under community stewardship), the loss of access to their basic resource--their land, forested land, and farmland—increased their vulnerability. Since most of the displaced families are farmers, their basic livelihood comes from farming corn, sugar, rubber, or rice using the common resource base. Unable to go back to their farms, the Manobo families are deprived of their productivity in their ancestral lands. The continuing risk is that this lack of access may turn out not to be temporary, but might instead be long-term.

Another common resource lost due to conflict was the community place of worship. For example, the Maguindanaons lost access to their mosques where they attend their Friday religious services and hold the Qur'an reading activities for their youth.

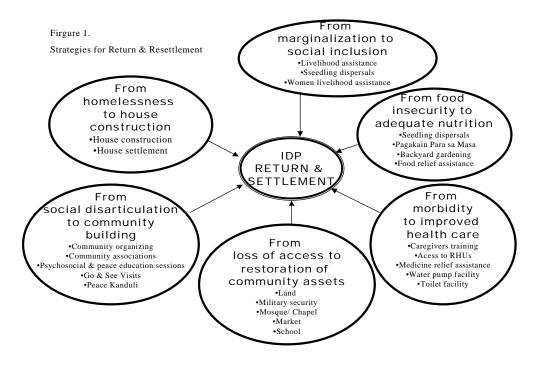
Because of displacement, the already impoverished communities are subjected to further marginalisation. The farmers, either as tenants or farm stewards (as in the case of Manobo communities), were already cultivating farmlands with poor productivity levels. As a result of displacement, their farmlands cannot be fully cultivated. They no longer

have farm equipment and farm animals to enable them to maximise land cultivation. The usual one to three hectares of land that they cultivated prior to the armed conflict have now been greatly reduced to barely half a hectare.

The risks of community disarticulation and increased morbidity present lower risks patterns for the IDP families. Family ties and neighbourhood networks were clearly weakened by displacement. There were families who lost the life of a family member or a kin. Some family members have altogether separated, as children were sent (out of fear) to distant relatives outside of Carmen or to find work in other communities. In addition, the morbidity risk is prevalent among the children. The common illnesses are fever, cough, headache, diarrhoea and malaria.

Strategies that Address Displacement Risks

Following Cernea's model, the identification of the (displacement) risks can be a guiding tool for development policy and planning. Cernea argues that the strategies for return and settlement may have to deal with the reversals of the identified risks. In this case, the reversals of the six continuing risks most relevant to the case of Carmen IDPs focus on devising strategies that can turn (a) homelessness to house construction, (b) food insecurity to adequate nutrition, (c) loss of access to restoration of community assets/ services, (d) marginalisation to social inclusion, (e) community disarticulation to community building, and (f) increased morbidity to improved health care. (See Figure 1.)



- (a) From homelessness to house construction. One of the important issues of displacement is housing. The homelessness of the displaced families heightens their frustrations and anxieties. Housing assistance therefore becomes imperative. In the case of the displaced communities in Carmen, the immediate response of government, coming from the Provincial Social Welfare Development, was the construction of core houses. However, the bureaucratic processes of government assistance rendered long delays in the construction of the housing units. It can be noted that sitio Tabulon, which received the first housing assistance, got them nearly two years after displacement. Some IDP families were able to occupy houses vacated by Maguindanaon families who left Malapag and settled in other communities. Others returned to their communities of origin and rebuilt their houses using recycled housing materials and some bamboo available in the community.
- (b) From food insecurity to adequate nutrition. Food crisis characterises the IDP communities' life in the evacuation centers. The Department of Agriculture and the Department of Agrarian Reform, together with CFSI and the University of Southern Mindanao (USM), launched the "Pagkain Para sa Masa" (PPM), backyard gardening assistance, as well as seedlings dispersals (upland/lowland cultivation) for the displaced families to help address food scarcity and the under-nourishment of the displaced persons, especially children.
- (c) From loss of access to restoration of community assets/ services. The IDPs' physical dislocation automatically deprived them of their access to their community resources such as land, school, mosque, chapel, sports facilities, etc. Most farm families initiated efforts to move back to the farmlands—even if only during daytime hours—to get access to their basic economic resource. The mosque in Tabulon was built through the self-help initiatives of the families. Each family contributed some amount for the construction of the mosque that was built on a donated land. The Maguindanaon community can thus revive their Friday prayer services in the mosque and continue the Qur'an reading contests with the youth. CFSI also provided basketball equipment to encourage the male youth back into sports in their communities of origin once again.
- d) From marginalisation to social inclusion. The internal displacement of rural farm families in Carmen spells their economic marginalisation, and economic marginalisation raises the risk of ongoing social marginalisation as well. The loss of their farm productivity, as well as their lack of or limited livelihood opportunities, pulled them further into greater risks. To address this risk, the Department of Agriculture extended to them seedling dispersals and farm input assistance. As such, some farmers were able to begin working their fields once again. However, there were also farmers without farm implements. These were unable to initiate farming activities, rendering the seed dispersals ineffective. CFSI provided the capital for start-up Livelihood Assistance Upon Return (LAUR) which families use to engage in small-scale animal raising (e.g., chickens, goats, etc.) or to finance farm inputs for seedlings, fertilisers, and the like. The strengthening of their economic position helped secure their social inclusion as well.

- e) From social disarticulation to community rebuilding. The weakening of community networks and family ties characterised the resulting displacements in Carmen. Some lost family members due to illness contracted during displacement or to bullets during the heavy fighting between the AFP and the MILF fighters. Others sent family members, mostly female children, to find work in the neighbouring communities or to stay with relatives outside of Carmen. The CFSI community organising activities, the participation of sumpats in community mobilisation efforts, and the organisation of community-based associations or people's organisations aim to strengthen the sense of neighbourhood and community unity. In addition, the psychosocial services and peace education meetings help in promoting harmony and understanding in the midst of the dislocation and deprivation of the families. The *Pulungan Centers*, which were built with funds made available through the Pilot Project, and community labour participation also enhanced IDP relationships and identity. In addition, the sincere participation and commitment of the local barangay and sitio leaders in the efforts of return, help regain community esteem and unity. Proper coordination and collaboration with them facilitate the processes of community rebuilding.
- f) From increased morbidity to improved health care. The health hazards faced by displaced persons can never be left ignored. Immediate relief assistance to IDPs included the provision of medicine, specifically aimed at addressing the needs of the children. Many NGOs have addressed the health issues arising from displacement in Carmen. However, the assistance is emergency in nature and thus is not sustainable. CFSI provided training to volunteer "Caregivers" for the IDPs. These caregivers can serve as resource persons for the physical and mental health care needs of the IDPs. However, most of them are municipal government workers and are therefore not readily accessible to IDP communities in far-flung sitios.

Table 4 below summarises the strategies and interventions of government and private organisations extended to the displaced communities in Carmen to facilitate their return to their communities of origin.

Table 4
Strategies/ Interventions for Displacement Risk Reversals

| Displacement Risks | Strategies/ Efforts for risk reversals |
|--|--|
| From homelessness to house construction | LGU-DSWD?PSWD: housing construction IDP initiatives to rebuild housing using recycled materials, bamboo, etc. IDP settlement in houses abandoned by owners in host communities |
| From marginalisation to social inclusion | LAUR of CFSI: farm inputs, backyard animal raising, etc. DA: seedling dispersals, farm inputs |

| From food insecurity to adequate nutrition | DA/DAR with USM and CFSI: "Pagkain Para sa Masa", Backyard Gardening, Upland/Lowland seedling dispersals |
|---|---|
| From increased morbidity to improved health care | PHC: trainings on health care IDP access to RHU services CFSI: Caregivers' training, peace education sessions |
| From loss of access to restoration of community assets and services | Reestablishment of access to common land (forested and agricultural land) IDP initiative to rebuild mosque CFSI: sports facility (basketball equipment) |
| From social disarticulation to community building | CFSI: community organising, "Go and See Visits", visioning workshops, psychosocial and peace education sessions, Peace Kanduli |

Despite a number of strategies undertaken in the Carmen, there were needs that have not been adequately met. The military security has not been extensively provided by the municipal government in the different sites of origin, leaving many other sitios such as Quarry, Spring, and Puting Bato unattractive for safe return purposes. Families are waiting for this support from their municipal mayors. The other needs are for rebuilding the markets and schools that were destroyed during the war and subsequent displacement. These reconstruction requirements have not been favourably addressed.

Lessons Learned from the Case of Carmen

In times of displacement, when community life patterns are disturbed or destroyed and families are disbanded or dislocated, the prospect of return or settlement seems dim. The experience of violence and conflict contributes to the physical and social dislocation. The displaced families and communities become helpless and marginalised. The assistance of government and nongovernmental organisations, concerned agencies, and even international aid agencies become critical and imperative in order to address the concerns and needs of the displaced communities.

The processes and dynamics of return and settlement for the internally displaced persons entail the all-important participation of the IDPs themselves, local government units, and concerned private organisations. Coordination, collaboration, and networking among and between the major stakeholders needs to be strengthened. Material and human resources need to be shared and maximized in order to speed up the return and settlement processes.

Private and public agencies or institutions must devise strategies that will address the problems, needs, and risks the IDPs face in displacements. These risks include food insecurity, homelessness, marginalisation, loss of access to community resources, social disarticulation, and increased morbidity.

The burden on the displaced persons as a result of these risks calls for an immediate and urgent response from government and aid agencies. In addition, there is need to prioritise strategic responses for return and settlement—mainly in terms of reconstructing local economies, rebuilding social networks, and rehabilitating basic social services for the displaced communities.

The task of reviving local economies entails strategies that can help move the displaced from a situation of marginalisation to social inclusion, and from loss of access to the restoration of community resources. In the case of Carmen, the Livelihood Assistance Upon Return (LAUR) of CFSI can ensure at least some opportunities for family livelihood. Because of economic insecurity, even the women and older children are compelled to join the casual agricultural labour force or find employment for their skills to earn an income. The Department of Agriculture provides farm inputs and implements to provide initial assistance for farming activities. At the outset, economic reconstruction should go beyond initial support. There are other needs to address, for example, the farm to market roads, farm credit, and basic access to farm lands.

The physical dislocation of families during displacement renders them homeless and deprived of basic social services, such as education and health. There is need to rehabilitate the basic social services for displaced persons. The emergency responses of aid agencies, government and private alike, during displacement focuses primarily on the provision of food, medicine, and clothing. The food insecurity of the families is very evident in displacements. The incidence of morbidity in the evacuation centers requires immediate medical attention. Interventions should aim to protect families' health and security. In addition to health care problems, the psychosocial trauma of the displaced needs to be recognised since these experiences influence social cohesion. The trauma stems from the experiences of displacement, violence, and the witnessing of killings. The Pilot Project in Carmen has been striving to address the psychosocial concerns of the communities, particularly that of the children and women. The provincial government of Cotabato also provided housing assistance to facilitate the return and settlement of the displaced families.

The social networks of families and communities are deeply affected by displacement. Rebuilding their social networks should, thus, be given major priority in return and settlement strategies. One of the important strategies employed by CFSI at Carmen to turn social disarticulation and disturbed social networks into community building is community organising. Clearly, the community organising strategy creates in the community voluntary self-help groups who can aid in mobilising action for the return and settlement of the displaced. The community-based associations and the *sumpats* play strategic roles for this community mobilisation. The building of the *Pulungan Centers*, through the self-help initiative of the community, with the assistance of CFSI, further

enhances community building in the sites of origin of the displaced families. In addition, the government provision of military security in the affected communities helps bring about feelings of security and protection to some families.

Displacement experiences are unique to specific subgroups of communities and therefore indicate varying perceptions of needs, problems, and priorities. Displacement exacerbates the already multiple burdens of the women. Their needs range from livelihood opportunities and access to health care and psychosocial services as well as skills training to the more urgent need for food and farm inputs. The children who have become frustrated by repeated displacements want food, education, health and psychosocial care, as well as social and sports activities. The elders, on the other hand, reveal important imperatives for health care and psychosocial services.

The challenge of rebuilding families and communities resulting from displacement requires the active participation of the displaced themselves. The displaced communities have been enthusiastic to join community-based activities that facilitate their return to their communities of origin. The consultation processes, though slow and gradual in approach, becomes a critically important ingredient for peoples' participation and peoples' empowerment. This helps establish and strengthen the communities' inherent self-help initiatives to direct their own efforts for immediate return to their home communities, or settlement in new communities after displacement.

PART III. COMMUNITY VALIDATION REPORTS: A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

CONTEXT

Several months after the initial data collection elements of study were completed, the two research teams conducted validation activities to present the findings of the study to the communities whose insights and experiences provided the basis for the study, and to ask for additional comments and corrections wherever needed. Although the community participants in the workshops agreed with the findings of the study, they added a few additional points that are summarized below. (The complete Validation Reports of the two research teams are available for a more detailed understanding of the points participants agreed with, as well as more detail on conditions in different parts of Carmen, Pagalungan, and Pagagawan.)

First, it should be noted that several events are likely to have affected the responses given in the validation activity workshops. Above all, the renewal of fighting in some areas has apparently shifted the focus of community participants to an emphasis once again on meeting immediate needs—for security, livelihood, housing, and other fundamental requirements—in view of the deteriorating conditions and a significant increase in the level of fear and anxiety in the affected areas. Residents of the most vulnerable areas emphasize first and foremost the need to restore order, and the need to have food, clothing, and shelter as well as a means of livelihood in order to begin returning again to a more "normal" existence.

The renewed fighting, in fact, delayed the holding of the validation activities until it became possible to carry them out with the communities' participation. In some sections of Carmen municipality, tensions have taken the form of inter-community conflict, with harassment, theft, house burnings, and other forms of violence and conflict, leading to high levels of anxiety and renewed displacements of people to evacuation centers. In parts of Pagalungan and Pagagawan, there has been a re-emergence of serious armed conflict between government forces and local armed elements, causing thousands of families and individuals to return to evacuation centers. In fact, the validation activities for Pagalungan and Pagagawan could not be carried out in the communities at all, but had to take place instead in Kabacan, North Cotabato, necessitating a very long journey for many of the participants. Although at the moment the situation is calmer, the sense of uncertainty about the future is high. The different—and more immediate—tone of the participants' voices in the validation activities can only be understood in view of their intensified sense of vulnerability owing to recent events.

In addition to the renewed fighting and the need for many of those previously displaced to return yet again to evacuation centers in the affected areas, there was also a strong increase in fear, anxiety, and a sense of vulnerability related to such factors as heavy rainfalls and flooding in the months following the initial study. These events have also

affected in a negative way the state of livelihoods, housing, children's health, and other concerns that are of fundamental importance to the local communities.

A third factor that may have influenced the participants' responses was the conducting of minimum basic needs (MBN) surveys by CFSI prior to these workshops, since the MBN's emphasis tends to be on material goods and conditions rather than on longer-term (and non-material) needs such as education, psychosocial training, and other services. These long-term needs were also cited as very important by community members, but the focus of the validation activity discussions tended to be more on timing issues (i.e., the need for more *immediate solutions* to security, livelihood, housing, and other problems), and more on particular material needs (e.g., the need for specific farming implements, stronger housing materials, water pumps) than was true in the earlier discussions. Such problems as the uneven distribution of assistance and delays in the delivery of assistance were also reiterated in the validation activities.

The consensus is that the renewed fighting above all, together with other factors, have left communities particularly worried about not only security issues, but also securing sources of food, income, and shelter, as well as other basic requirements. Long-term goals are also seen as very important, but immediate needs must be dealt with first.

The Validation Reports do note the progress that had been made in the ensuing months in certain areas, particularly those that were more accessible to service organisations (government organisations, NGOs, and others) and had committed and highly motivated community members (the example of sitio Tabulon, in Barangay Lanitap, Carmen municipality is one such case). In contrast, the more remote and less-accessible areas, and particularly the very unstable and conflict-prone areas in the three municipalities, continued to face very serious problems. In these areas, there were some examples of progress (e.g., a school had been built at Inug-ug in Pagalungan in the intervening months), but there were also many cases of further deterioration. The deterioration was usually tied to a lack of security (whether in the form of armed conflict or ongoing harassment by armed groups) and/or a lack of means to secure livelihood, resulting in continued impoverishment. The Validation Reports again go into detail regarding which sitios in which barangays in the three municipalities experienced the rebuilding of community facilities and services; which experienced renewed conflict and displacements; which had to deal with the consequences of heavy rainfalls and flooding; and which experienced other forms of progress or reversals over the past few months.

The following will summarize some of the main points of the Validation Reports. It will not restate all of the key findings of the original study, which were indeed supported by the community participants in the validation activity workshops. Instead, it will focus on a few of the points that were emphasized by participants, and it will present additions to the study that came out during the workshops. (For more information regarding the community participants' support for the key findings of the study, as well as more detail regarding changes in particular sitios and barangays, the two Validation Reports are very useful sources of information.)

Revisiting "Lessons Learned": Benefits and Problems Associated with Transition Interventions

Positive interventions cited in the Validation Reports

The Validation Reports agreed that a number of interventions were perceived as very useful to those displaced by conflict in all of the research sites in the three municipalities. In addition to those meeting basic material needs, several programmes were cited repeatedly in the Validation Reports as very much desired by community members.

- Livelihood training programmes are seen as critically important. (Although it was reported that they did not reach everyone—and the distribution was also sometimes uneven, with delayed trainings, or trainings that were promised but not delivered—still, community members were grateful for what they did receive along these lines, and they hope these programmes will continue.)
- Livelihood financial assistance programmes (SUCA, LAUR) are also seen as critically important. (Although it was reported that the amounts given were often too small to effectively support the families and ventures involved, again, the community members were grateful for what they were able to receive, and they emphasize the continuing need for these programmes.)
- Information dissemination programmes are seen by community members as very useful, both as a means of getting out and obtaining information and as a source of pride to the community. This type of effort (including through the community radio programme) is seen as helping community members learn to communicate and be listened to as a people.
- Community organising programmes are also seen as critically important, as they allowed community members to take charge of their own activities and efforts and create unity in the communities. These programmes are seen as enlightening and empowering, and are seen as promoting leadership skills.
- Peace programmes (including Peace Dialogues, Peace Kanduli, Peace Festivals, Peace Advocacy training, Peace/Information Caravans, and others) are seen as a very useful means of bringing communities together and teaching them peaceful means of resolving conflicts.
- The *Pulungan Center* has often been noted as very important for the community as a place for meetings and the dissemination of information, and as a place to rest.
- Psychosocial training programmes are seen as very helpful; community
 members want them to be continued and extended to more people, as these
 programmes help individuals and the communities with coping strategies,
 crisis preparedness, and in meeting other psychosocial needs.
- Visioning workshops, and other related programmes are also seen in a very positive light as part of the process of return to "normal" life.
- The "Go and See Visit" activity is seen as a very important component in facilitating the process of return to sites (or communities) of origin.

In addition to the above-mentioned interventions, programmes that focus on meeting such basic needs as adequate housing, educational and health facilities, and of course, basic security needs and means of livelihood are seen as being the key to allowing those in evacuation centers to return to their home communities. This is true in all cases of displacement, but particularly those involving the destruction of personal and community assets, and continuing problems of security. Successful return and settlement programmes typically require a concerted and coordinated effort on the part of NGOs, government agencies, and other organisations working closely with the community in a coordinated way. Clearly, this type of coordination has been successful in some cases, and is seen as being all too often missing in others.

Regarding other general points brought up in all of the project sites: it was agreed that organisations offering assistance should approach the communities as CFSI did, using the proper local protocols and informing the local power holders and contending groups of the nature of the intervention programmes (going through local community leaders and organisations, and local military units—this is done in order to acknowledge their positions of authority, coordinate with them, and avoid misunderstandings). It was also suggested that organisations offering assistance should follow up on their work to determine what happens to the people once the assistance period is over, and determine what are the positive or negative consequences of the interventions.

It was considered most important of all that organisations offering assistance should do as CFSI did, integrating through immersion with the communities, to gain their trust and confidence and to generate their participation in the organising activities in their communities. It was argued that NGOs, government agencies, and other organisations that do not develop close ties with the communities and do not stick with them over time cannot develop the trust and confidence that is so critical in a very uncertain post-conflict situation, where intimidation, tensions and even armed conflict can re-emerge very suddenly and motivations can be quickly called into question.

Problems cited in the Validation Reports

The Validation Reports emphasized that certain interventions, or rather the way of implementing those intended interventions, often posed a problem for the displaced communities. Among the specific problems cited are the following:

• Organisations (GOs, NGOs, and others) offering assistance have tended to come and go quickly, and not sustain their presence in the communities. Their representatives are likely to disappear after an initial period, or else come very infrequently. In contrast, an NGO such as CFSI, or a government agency like DSWD, that can sustain its contact with the communities over a long period of time—through periods of renewed conflict—is seen as being much more effective. In addition, the use of local people as *sumpats* and community organizers is seen as being very effective, in contrast to outsiders trying to carry out these activities.

- Community members emphasize that funds allocated for interventions usually dry up very fast, even in the case of well-intentioned and large NGOs such as OXFAM (the example was given of the school OXFAM built—although the effort was indeed very much appreciated, the school could not be maintained or run once the allocation was exhausted). Government agencies' support—including, but not limited to, infrastructural investment, programmes and assistance offered, and security measures—is also seen as being very uneven, varying tremendously according to the community. Community members indicate that government agencies have been welcomed in some communities, but face a significant lack of trust in others for these and other reasons.
- A very significant problem involves the uneven distribution of aid. For example, clothing and other forms of relief goods were seen as not always being distributed equally or fairly. Similarly, it is perceived that housing assistance was limited, and like other forms of assistance, sometimes went to non-IDPs (and often to friends of those in charge of the distribution of assistance, who were from the local area but were not IDPs). This created a sense of competition over scarce goods, and a feeling of being cheated since some of the IDPs did not receive the housing they had been told was built for them. (CFSI's survey to determine who was truly an IDP certainly helped. However, no measure seemed to be able to fully prevent the diversion or uneven distribution of relief goods and assistance.) Whatever the cause, the unequal distribution of assistance leaves frustrations, cynicism, and often anger in its wake. This can also be very divisive, as some groups perceive that others are benefiting at their expense.
- Certain training programmes were also administered unevenly in the sense that some communities received these benefits, but others did not.
- In some cases, interventions are promised—particularly by NGOs or community organizers—but are not delivered. This gives people false hopes and can also lead to cynicism and frustration.

Some of the other problems that were reiterated in the validation workshops include the following:

- Although the communities in the sites of origin and displaced persons in
 evacuation centers were grateful for assistance when it came, sometimes the
 assistance was ill-designed (e.g., with no health workers coming to the
 communities, or if they did come, they were reported to come often with only
 prenatal medicines; housing materials were also often found to be too weak to
 withstand the heavy rains).
- It was pointed out that if interventions are not culturally sensitive, they are likely to be rejected by the people for whom they were designed.
- Some of the interventions are not usable as intended. For example, even though schools or health centers are built, they may not be affordable by local community members. (For those who were impoverished to begin with, and then experienced the further destruction of whatever resources they may have had prior to conflict and displacement, the costs of tuition, medicine, and

other basic goods and services are likely to be beyond their reach.) This also causes deep frustrations. Participants in the workshops suggested making these basic goods and services free or very low-cost, in view of the communities' inability to pay at the present time. They are particularly concerned about the costs of education, and their inability to pay for medicines to treat illness, which is prevalent especially among the children, women, and the elderly of the community.

• It was also emphasized that interventions need to be based on the peoples' own perceived needs and priorities, and not determined by outsiders (even those with the best of intentions). In the worst cases, community members reported, "Planners simply presented their own plans, drawn up without consulting the people on the ground. Plans were all to do with investments, but that is not what is needed. What is needed is poverty alleviation, employment and basic services." (From MSU-IIT Validation Report, p. 32.)

UPDATE ON NEEDS AND PRIORITIES IN THE PROJECT SITES

The following two sections will discuss a reconsideration of needs and priorities in the Pagalungan and Pagagawan and then the Carmen research sites. The discussion of needs and priorities was one section in the validation workshops in which a number of additions were made to the original study.

Validation Report regarding PAGALUNGAN AND PAGAGAWAN: a revisiting of needs and priorities

General needs and priorities: a reaffirmation of the research findings

The discussions that took place during the validation activities centered in part on the needs and priorities of the different communities in the project sites. The *general* points made in the discussions all supported the findings of the research report (some of these points overlap with what has been said in previous sections of this summary). It was particularly in the *sectoral* (*subgroup-related*) discussions that revisions and additions to the research report emerged.

Beginning with the general needs and priorities of the communities in Pagalungan and Pagagawan, again it was noted that although the order of importance and details varied with each community, it was agreed that for those who had returned home, livelihood assistance and financial support for livelihood activities (e.g., LAUR) remain among the most important concerns. In addition, health facilities (health centers, affordable medicine), educational facilities (and the need to make sure children are in school instead of working to support their families), mosques and madrasahs, farm-to-market roads, sports facilities for the youth, and potable water and sanitation facilities (including the need for water pumps) were also emphasized. Again, depending on the community, such things as solar dryers, carabaos, seeds, fertilizer, and insecticides were mentioned as critically important for being able to survive and make a living.

In the evacuation centers, in contrast, the immediate requirements of food, clothing, and shelter were of greatest importance since even these very basic needs were not being adequately met. (The evacuation centers are often overcrowded and unsanitary, housing materials are often too weak, and there are other very basic problems that create health and other troubles). In this context, such additional items as kitchenware, medicines, bath soap, blankets, mosquito coils, school uniforms for children, and other necessities were also mentioned. A functioning day care center (or play center) and health care center were also cited as being needed at evacuation centers. Community members also noted the central importance of finding a means of livelihood in the evacuation centers, since the money allocated to the centers diminished very quickly after an initial allotment (e.g., SUCA) The lack of available work made their circumstances very difficult once the assistance had dwindled.

The points made thus far all reaffirmed the findings of the research report.

RETURN AND SETTLEMENT UPDATE: PAGALUNGAN AND PAGAGAWAN

As of early 2002, a total of 432 families (2,228 persons) had left evacuation centers in Pagagawan and returned to their communities of origin located in Sitios Sambulawan, Bulikay, Tatag, and Bual in Barangay Nabundas. In Pagalungan, 352 families (1,767 persons) returned to their community of origin in the sitios of Barangay Inug-ug, namely Agakan and Butig.

Those who have returned still feel insecure not only of the peace and order situation but more importantly their daily subsistence and humane existence. The task now at hand is addressing the needs of the IDPs through a comprehensive plan that provides these communities sustainable solutions to include means of livelihood, education for children, health services, and others. But recent experiences have underlined the importance of other tasks such as healing the psychological wounds of war, restarting schools, and embarking on education for peace. (*From MSU-IIT Validation Report, p. 30.*) ¹

Additions and revisions to research findings regarding needs and priorities

In addition to the general community reports regarding needs and priorities, the sectoral (or subgroup-related) workshops on needs and priorities (focusing on the differing

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¹ It should be noted that much of the renewed armed conflict occurred in the areas covered by the MSU-IIT Validation Report, and that many parts of Pagalungan and Pagagawan remain highly vulnerable to tensions and conflict. For this reason, community members feel particularly concerned and anxious about securing their livelihoods and the conditions of peace and security that are needed in order to be able to go on with their lives. In the case of Pagalungan and Pagagawan, it is reported that fighting erupted between government forces and local military units in such a way that particularly outraged Muslim sentiments in the area, causing a significant erosion of trust with respect to government organisations and NGOs (but not apparently including NGOs and other organisations that are well-regarded by the communities, and remained in the area throughout the conflicts). As of February 2003, several thousand families in Pagalungan, Pagagawan, and Pikit were affected heavily by armed conflict, and initial estimates of families and individuals remaining in evacuation centers in Pagalungan, Pagagawan, and Pikit as of June 2003 were also very high (with estimates of a total of almost 26,000 IDPs in the three municipalities).

perceptions of men, women, children, and the elderly in the communities) reinforced the findings of the study but also added some new concerns. These sectoral workshops consisted of between 15 and 23 participants in each section (15 elderly, 21 women, 22 men, and 23 youth participants). The new concerns are seen as being, in part, a reaction to the renewed fighting in parts of Pagalungan and Pagagawan.

These findings are presented in the following passages from the MSU-IIT Validation Report, and they are quoted directly in order to highlight the additions to the study that participants hoped would be noted and, in fact, emphasized.

(1) Regarding the perceptions of the women's group:

Actually, they [the women in the group] want to change something in what I have written here. I had placed here food, clothing, livelihood, farm implements, training, medicines, health center, school, play center, water distribution system, and housing. According to them, housing should come first. So let us put housing as number one. They also wanted to place food as number two, because they found food supply is still a problem until now. In all the areas, those who evacuated and those who did not leave their homeplaces said, there is a lack of food, and the problem of food was not solved.

Third, they identified that livelihood and farming should come together including agricultural training, seeds, and others. This will be number three. The fourth—some areas may already have health centers but the rest do not have any and they need medicines and the visits of health personnel to their places instead of them going far to Kabacan or Cotabato. So they have identified this as number four.

The fifth, according to them it is quite difficult not to have water to clean their house and surroundings and not to have a toilet. The places with marks are those that do not have any. We have placed them here one by one. Is this since before until now still no toilet and water supply? Like here in Gantung--none, in Bai Tonina, no health center, in Agakan there is one pump but only at the school. We touched also on the programmes, the five programmes of CFSI. Everything was done by CFSI but not everybody was able to avail of the benefits. Only a few benefited, the same as last year. Like the Community Organizers, there are also sumpats in every place. There is also Peace Education, Peace Offering, and the "Go and See The Peace Caravan is new because the peace information programme before is through the radio programme. The Livelihood Programme is still insufficient as there were others who did not benefit from it. Is this right? Not everybody was given? So, it depended on the area. The Peace Dialogue already existed before. There is also information campaign in the Livelihood Programme. But this is new. The women were trained on how to bake cassava and banana cakes. In the Psychosocial Programme only a few were trained and only a few got the assistance. Maybe not everybody were visited and given training. This here with the big X mark in Gantung means that no housing assistance was given and no water supply was available in the area. So, there were many needs that were not catered to. according to the women sector, their needs should be presented in this manner. This should be number one and not the one that was presented earlier. (From MSU-IIT Validation Report, pp. 22-23.)

(2) Regarding the perceptions of the youth group:

The children said that the results and findings of the research are alright and that what we had written in the reports that we presented to them earlier represent their sentiments...According to them, both problems must be given concern, i.e., education and sports facilities. At least they were able to play basketball because there is already a play center. These are already incorporated in our report. What they want us to do is to stress their importance because generally, the focus of the report is more on their needs and problems of their fathers and mothers particularly on the livelihood. The children really want to go to school. That is what they want most. Also, according to them there was an observation presented during our datagathering period last year that was not included in our report and they want this to be inserted in the report. This was about their desire to know what exactly is the situation in Mindanao because if possible, they want the other countries to get involved in the situation in Mindanao like in the conduct of a referendum. They want this to be in the report.

Finally, they are hopeful that the problems they had presented shall be addressed accordingly. Like for example, education—they are hopeful that schools shall be established in places where education is direly needed. These are all what they said. I am very pleased with the children's responses. Here in our country...they are our future. Twenty or thirty years from now they will be the leaders of our homeland. So we need to take care of them, we need to guide them on the right way so that when the time will come, they will become our future leaders who will have the heart for us. (From MSU-IIT Validation Report, p. 23.)

(3) Regarding the perceptions of the elderly:

The next report concerns the elderly women and men—those who are older than us. We had started with the presentation of the findings of our research on the problems and concerns of the elderly women and men. These are listed and we had discussed these earlier. But we may repeat these here in the presentation. Their number one problem is health—physical health, spiritual problems, and the moral development of the youth. Their other problems are the construction of the Mosque, construction of houses, livelihood, the construction of a Madrasah school because they would have wanted their children and grandchildren to study in a Madrasah school and also be educated in a school that teaches English, health, and sanitation. Next is the problem of war.

The elderly women also want to work and to send their children to school. They had all agreed to the presented problems, their problems are all listed down there. What they are asking now is that these problems shall be acted upon. They said certain measures were already implemented as solutions to the problems they had presented. One of these is the establishment of the school in Inug-ug. The school for the children now exists. But there is one important thing, a new concern that was not specified in the report.

Their number one problem is livelihood assistance. The livelihood assistance that they want is in the form of carabao or work animals. Carabaos are important to them because even if they are living in evacuation centers if they have carabaos they can still work. They can look for a small land area where they can plant corn, vegetables so that they will still have work. Their carabaos were lost or stolen or butchered and eaten during the war. Therefore, they no longer have carabaos at present. I asked them why specifically carabaos and not cows? According to them, to a Maguindanao a carabao is important.

They added however, that having just the carabaos are not enough. They should also have seedlings like corn, rice, and vegetables. The vegetables seedlings will be for the women because they wanted very much to help the men by planting vegetables. When there are already seedlings, there are already carabaos, then there is still one thing lacking, the fertilizer. According to them, in our present time a farmer will not earn a living from his farm if there is no fertilizer. And they also need farm implements. They had asked who are going to help them. They said that they need CFSI to help them. CFSI will assist them look for different agencies that can help them. This is the number one and most important thing for them. Second, particularly the women mentioned the on-going project of CFSI, the SUCA or Start-Up Capital Assistance. The SUCA, one elderly woman said, is so meagre and that when another war broke out, the SUCA was gone so they need additional funding. They suggested that the SUCA be increased to P1,000 per person so that they can have earnings.

Another concern, specifically in the areas of Inug-ug and Sambolawan, is the absence of a water distribution system. If only they could have a water pump so that they may be able to avail of clean potable water. The next thing that they need is a solar dryer. In fact, they suggested that if they will be supplied with the necessary materials like cement, sand, etc., they provide the labor force and make the dryer themselves. According to them, some of their products during harvest time like corn and rice will go to waste without a solar dryer. Their fifth concern is housing. How they long for a housing project for them in their homeplaces, especially in Sambolawan and Inug-ug. They said, how can they have a good life when they often get sick because they are sleeping on the bare ground because they have no houses. They even have a priority question but they said, CFSI may do the prioritizing on what they will do first for them. They had also mentioned time frame and asked us when will all their dreams materialize?

Again, I told them we are only doing the research, writing the findings and results but we will not be implementing the projects they want to be put in place in their communities. We, the researchers, cannot give them the time frame. Maybe CFSI and other agencies who will be willing to help can provide them with the time frame when the time comes. Some of them said that at least they had presented their problems to people who might be able to help them. It is better to have something to hope for than nothing is being done. Finally, there was one elderly woman, who said that if we might be able to tell to people that the solution to the problem in Maguindanao, especially to the people of Pagagawan and Pagalungan, is not war. The solution is the search for an answer or solution to the problem that every Maguindanao faces everyday, and that is their daily consumption needs. Livelihood, according to them, is the right and exact solution for the Mindanao problem that we are discussing here in Pagagawan and in Pagalungan together with the women and children of Maguindanao. (From MSU-IIT Validation Report, pp. 24-25.)

(4) Regarding the perceptions of the men's group:

They do not question the problems that we had presented earlier but they have additional concerns. They want to give importance to the problems of Sources of Livelihood and Financial Assistance. These were actually included in our report of findings but the men's group would just like to emphasize that their urgent needs are carabaos, farm and fishing implements, seedlings, and fertilizers. They emphasized that the Financial Assistance should be increased to help them with the basic needs of their families.

According to them, if they can possibly have tractor and machines so that plowing the fields and other works will be made faster, they could also earn faster. Nonetheless, the peace and

order condition still came out very important to them because they know that even if everything they needed were provided, when there is no peace their work will be disrupted, so they really need peace to prevail in their places. Those who come from Nabundas wanted to be provided with pumpboats or bancas. Nabundas is quite far and they will have to cross the Pulangi River to go to Kabacan. When it rains hard and during floods, they will not be able to cross the river and it will be very difficult for them to purchase their daily necessities. They are asking for a pumpboat or a banca that they could use to cross the river. But they also said, that a good farm to market road will be better for them and make life easier for them. They also said that they are amenable to all the findings presented and that they believe that the researchers had written all that they would have wanted to present. (From MSU-IIT Validation Report, pp. 25-26.)

Validation Report regarding CARMEN: a revisiting of needs and priorities

General needs and priorities: a reaffirmation of the research findings

The research findings regarding the general needs and priorities of the community, as well as those identified by the subsectors of the population (women, men, children, and the elderly), were validated through follow-up discussions in three study sites: Lanitap, Liliongan, and Malapag. Around 20 participants in Lanitap (Tabulon), 17 in Liliongan (Puting Bato, Spring, Lower and Upper Malugasa, Pinamintangan, Liliongan), and 14 in Malapag (Matingao, Danao, Hinauran, Quarry, Bunawan, Campo) attended the research validation activities. The participants were composed of sitio leaders, sumpats, barangay officials and community members. The forum in Tabulon was well attended by the community. This is because the forum was conducted at the SOO (site of origin). The validation activities in Liliongan and Malapag were carried out at the barangay hall of these two barangays, respectively.

Drawing from the earlier research findings, some of the ongoing problems and needs of different communities within Carmen are stated once more in the following table:

Community Problems and Needs at the SOOs

| Barangay | Site of Origin (SOO) | Community Problems / Needs | | | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Lanitap | Tabulon | Farm animals, health center, farm | | | | | |
| | | implements, day care center, primary | | | | | |
| | | school, post-harvest facilities | | | | | |
| Liliongan | Spring | Farm-to-market road, farm inputs | | | | | |
| | Puting Bato | (seedlings, fertilizers, etc.), water, farm | | | | | |
| | Malugasa | implements, post-harvest facilities, | | | | | |
| | Pinamintangan | electricity, school, chapel | | | | | |
| Malapag | Hinauran | Farm-to-market road (except for | | | | | |
| | Danao | Matingao, Quarry, and Campo), farm | | | | | |
| | Campo | inputs, farm animals, chapel, post- | | | | | |
| | Bunawan | harvest facilities, health center, school, | | | | | |
| | Matingao | water, electricity | | | | | |
| | Quarry | - | | | | | |

(From NDU Validation Report, p. 7.)

In addition to these needs that were identified by the community members in the three barangays, the general needs of the communities in Carmen that were validated in the workshops include the ongoing requirements for food, housing, livelihood for men and women, farm support/inputs, water and sanitation, health services, farm-to-market roads, education of children, land titles, mosques/chapels, electricity and sports facilities. These were points common to all parts of Carmen, but there was also variation in needs and priorities depending on the specific—and *changing*--circumstances of each area within the municipality of Carmen.

RETURN AND SETTLEMENT UPDATE: CARMEN

The figures presented [see table below] show an increase in the number of families who have returned to their sites of origin. From an estimated number of 515 families who returned to their SOOs in April 2002, the number rose to 606 families in April 2003. Around 91 families were added to the original number of families who returned to their SOOs in April 2002. A big number of families who returned to sites of origin was noted in sitios Pinamintangan with 31 families; Spring with 44 families; and Puting Bato with 25 families. Around 3,715 persons were reported to have returned in 12 sites of origin in Carmen during the validation activity in April 2003. There is an increase of 102 persons from the original number of 3,613 persons reported in April 2002. Sitio Tabulon has the biggest number of persons (55) reported who have returned to their SOO as of April 2003.

Families from Quarry and Hinauran have returned to their home-based evacuation center in Malapag. They again experience displacements due to absence of protection and security in their community.

The increase in number of IDPs was attributed to the marriages and childbirths that occurred in the community during the year and the presence of relatives who opted to live with the IDPs at the SOOs. The decrease on the other hand, was due to death of member in the family and/or some adult members who sought employment/livelihood in the urban areas in order to augment the family income.

The stability of peace and order in the SOOs can be gleaned from the number of families who remained at their SOOs, as in the case of Tabulon, Malugasa, Pinamintangan, Spring, Bunawan, and Matingao. Unlike in Quarry and Hinauran, families who have returned to their SOOs in April 2002 are now back at the home-based evacuation center in Malapag. These families reported that bandits who stole their farm products and work animals during nighttime and harassed them. They were afraid to stay in their homes at their SOOs during nighttime because of the presence of armed groups in the nearby areas. (From NDU Validation Report, p. 5.) ²

finding it very difficult to remove the daily tensions and sources of conflict, but they now plan to be more active in trying to reduce the levels of anger, fear, and anxiety in the affected areas.

² In some parts of Carmen, as opposed to Pagalungan and Pagagawan, the tensions have taken less the form of armed conflict and more the form of ongoing—and often violent—tensions between members of different religious communities. It has been called a "silent war," since there is a great deal of unstated animosity that is repressed until something happens. When tensions flare, conflict takes such forms as the burning of houses, fighting, thievery, and harassment carried out by armed groups. Local organisations are

Number of Internally Displaced Families/Persons Who Returned to their SOOs in April 2002 Compared to April 2003 Figures

| Barangay | Sitios | Total No. of Families | | Families Returned at SOOs | | | IDPs | | |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|------------|---------------------|---------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Darangay | | April 2002 | April 2003 | April 2002 | April 2003 | Increase (decrease) | April 2002 | April 2003 | Increase (decrease) |
| Gen. Luna | Tabulon | 54 | 70 | 54 | 70 | 16 | 245 | 300 | 55 |
| Liliongan | Upper Malugasa | 58 | 60 | 58 | 60 | 2 | 290 | 296 | 6 |
| | Lower Malugasa | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 | ı | 1,250 | 1,250 | 1 |
| | Pinamintangan | 40 | 43 | 12 | 43 | 31 | 200 | 199 | (1) |
| | Spring | 50 | 50 | 11 | 55 | 44 | 250 | 256 | 6 |
| | Puting Bato | 27 | 25 | - | 25 | 25 | 235 | 227 | (8) |
| Malapag | Quarry | 31 | 33 | 16 | - | (16) | 135 | 141 | 6 |
| | Danao | 15 | 19 | - | 9 | 9 | 75 | 95 | 20 |
| | Campo | 67 | 68 | 33 | 35 | 2 | 335 | 338 | 3 |
| | Hinauran | 61 | 61 | 30 | - | (30) | 305 | 305 | - |
| | Bunawan | 25 | 27 | 18 | 23 | 5 | 128 | 130 | 2 |
| | Matingao | 33 | 36 | 33 | 36 | 3 | 165 | 178 | 13 |
| TOTAL | | 731 | 742 | 515 | 606 | 91 Families | 3,613 | 3,715 | 102 Persons (Increased) |

(From NDU Validation Report, p. 5.)

Additions and revisions to research findings regarding needs and priorities

The Validation Activity Workshops resulted in the following additional observations regarding the changes over the past month in more accessible areas (particularly those with a highly motivated population), in contrast with the more unstable and/or remote areas of Carmen.

In Tabulon, General Luna, the IDPs persistently work for the attainment of peace and development in the area. One year after they have settled in their SOO, new facilities such as the Mosque, children's play center, water facilities, and sanitary toilets were constructed at their SOOs. These facilities were acquired through the *active participation of the people* in community development programmes implemented by the non-government organisations (CFSI, Kadtuntaya, Inc., and OXFAM), and government line agencies in the area. CFSI programme interventions (community organising, livelihood assistance and other related trainings, psychosocial services, and the like) conducted in Tabulon have helped the people in so many ways that they have become more self-reliant, inspired, and motivated to work closely with programme implementers and sustain the gains they have acquired from these experiences/involvements.

IDPs in Quarry and Hinauran are not as fortunate as the people of Tabulon. The unstable peace and order and lack of security in their sites of origin have caused the families to return to the evacuation center in Malapag. The IDPs in Malapag are staying at their home-based evacuation center. Armed groups harassed the families during nighttime and stole their farm products and work animals. They again experience displacements and impoverished life.

In other SOOs (Malugasa, Spring, Puting Bato, Pinamintangan, Danao, and Bunawan), the IDPs are perennially confronted with problems of lack of farm-to-market roads, farm inputs/animals, post-harvest facilities, potable water and health care services. While they enjoy relative peace and order in their respective communities, most of them still live below the poverty threshold.

The IDPs in Campo and Matingao also need facilities such as farm inputs/animals, post harvest facilities, potable water, and health care services.

The programme interventions for the immediate rehabilitation of the IDPs in these areas have already been done. However, there are long-term problems/needs of the IDPs at the SOOs that should be given attention by the provincial government and programme donors. The SOOs are generally agricultural-based economies. There are potentials to develop the area into agri-business economies. The IDPs identified programmes that are potentials for resettlement in the twelve SOOs: Organization of Cooperatives and Livelihood for women and elderly (e.g., chicken and goat backyard raising) for the IDPs of Tabulon, Lanitap. Fruit tree growing (e.g., Mango, Durian, Lanzones), plant nursery development, commercialization of guano fertilizer, development of Spring caves into tourist spot, and mahogany and coconut tree growing in the SOOs (Malugasa, Pinamintangan, Spring, and Puting Bato) in barangay Liliongan are all possible. Agricultural lands in Hinauran, Campo, Matingao, Quarry, and Danao in Barangay Malapag are suitable for vegetable growing (e.g., eggplant, squash, pechay, ampalaya, string beans), mango growing, and fishpond development. There are caves found in Hinauran, Campo and Danao that can be also developed into tourist spots. (From NDU Validation Report, pp. 8-9; italics added.)

Going into more detail about the contrasts between the more accessible and more remote areas, and the continuing needs and priorities of different areas within Carmen municipality, the Validation Report makes the following observations:

Among the twelve SOOs, Tabulon in Lanitap has shown stability in terms of peace and order, and progress. The committees that were formed in 2002 to help facilitate the rehabilitation of the community are still functional and active in Tabulon...The community is generally clean and individual families maintain backyard gardens of vegetables and flowers. The community leaders (day care workers, sumpats, youth organization president), the women, and elderly were present during the validation of findings in Tabulon. Their presence in this activity indicates a community of people who are highly motivated and willing to participate and contribute to the development of their sitio. This may be one factor that made Tabulon community a "regular" beneficiary of programmes (aside from CFSI) implemented by other nongovernmental organisations like OXFAM and Kadtuntaya Foundation Inc. and government agencies such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Department of Health (DOH). The community reported that health workers visit their sitio periodically for the immunisation and weight monitoring of under-five year old children.

In other SOOs, the IDPs have difficulty in gaining momentum to live a stable community life. They lack basic facilities and services such as water, livelihood, sanitary toilets, farm-to-market road, and health services. They still wait for the provincial government to fulfil its promise to provide these facilities and services to them.

Most of these SOOs are located in far flung areas, thus the rebuilding of the community for socio-economic development is sometimes very slow because of the lack of road networks in

the area. The IDPs have limited access to education, health, and market facilities for their livelihood activities. Problems and needs identified in the study still come out as their problems and needs at present.

Most of the needs of the IDPs imply a long term planning and large capital outlay since most of these needs are in line with infrastructure such as farm-to-market roads, post harvest facilities, electricity, schools, and chapels. (From NDU Validation Report, pp. 6-7.)

CONCLUSIONS OF THE VALIDATION REPORTS

The following conclusions will incorporate the main themes and conclusions of the MSU and NDU Validation Reports.

One theme that emerged from the two reports is that a "convergence" and integration of the work of government agencies (national and local), NGOs, and other organisations is badly needed in order to make the return to, and settlement in, the communities of origin both possible and sustainable. The problems are of a magnitude that piecemeal and very short-term support will not serve the needs of making the communities secure, liveable, and sustainable. All concerned organisations can help out in this effort, but only if they work on a continuing basis in order to respond to the real needs of the communities—as defined by the communities themselves—and avoid such divisive pitfalls as the uneven distribution of assistance and development programmes. They also must be careful to work in an ongoing and committed manner and work very closely with the local communities in order to build up ties of trust and confidence, which can be all-too-easily shattered when tensions and conflicts re-emerge. Ultimately, the underlying causes of the conflicts will need to be resolved, but the communities cannot wait until that time comes.

In some cases—particularly in areas in which government control and goodwill is better established—this coordination between different government and nongovernmental organisations has worked well. Regarding the Carmen area, for example, as the NDU team argues, "The convergence of the various services and assistance extended to IDPs by both government and non-government agencies brought hope and desire among them to return to their SOOs." (From NDU Validation Report, p. 4.) The research team goes on to say, "Based on the validation of research findings in Carmen, the IDPs have acknowledged the efforts and support provided by the national and local government and non-government agencies during their displacements and until they have returned to their SOOs. Specially mentioned are the services provided by CFSI such as livelihood support and trainings, psychosocial services, community organising, and other related services, which somehow have prepared them to start anew after displacements. As they struggled to re-establish their family/community life at their respective SOOs, the IDPs still need assistance from the government and donor agencies. The problems cited in the study are the same problems raised by the IDPs during the validation of the study. To effectively respond to their needs, a comprehensive assessment of their present conditions and potentials for development is imperative. The data [that has been produced by this study]

will provide a basis for the preparation of comprehensive development strategies indicating the institutional structures and mechanisms on how to implement programmes and projects that will help alleviate the socio-economic condition of the IDPs in the area." (From NDU Validation Report, p. 9.)

The sentiments were very different in areas of Pagalungan and Pagawan that have not had the same type of sustained government help, in no small part because they are conflict-prone areas. As the MSU-IIT team argues, "From our observations, the problem of return is really a combination of lack of political will, lack of resources, and lack of coordination among the concerned line agencies. It appears that the community is just banking on the assistance extended by CFSI." (From MSU-IIT Validation Report, p. 31.) They also note the perception that "(t)here is also a clear manifestation of government neglect in the areas affected by war in terms of providing basic infrastructure support, health and education services and livelihood support." (From MSU-IIT Validation Report, p. 34.) It may not be easy to overcome this perception, but without concerted efforts in, and for, these communities, the situation may only get worse.

Another important theme that emerges from the Validation Reports is that of **self-help** and **self-reliance**: the communities want to work on their own behalf, and plan and implement their own social and economic projects. Given the degree of destruction that has taken place and the deep impoverishment of these communities, such projects will need to be aided by the above-mentioned organisations. However, successful projects need to involve and be driven by the ideas and efforts of the community members themselves, using both old as well as new skills that they have the opportunity to learn. One lesson is that projects should not just be "given" to them from above without the community members' active participation.

In the example cited by the MSU-IIT team, "IDPs believe in their own capacities and have expressed interest in providing the needed manpower if only the government or some other funding entities would give them the cement and other materials needed to build their own community solar dryer...They are even willing to plan their own community projects with the help of CFSI and submit these to funding agencies." (From MSU-IIT Validation Report, p. 32.) And again, "[The community members are now] aware that they also have a big part to play in their development as a people. They realize that their active involvement and participation is crucial to their physical, social, emotional and economic recovery as a people." Their sense of self-reliance in the face of conflict has been strengthened: "After what the IDPs have been through, they learned to be always alert, not to panic, and to be prepared for any emergency situations that will beset their community in the future...In their struggle to survive as a people both at the EC and in their communities of origin upon return, they believe that it is necessary to be careful with both the MILF and the Military and to monitor closely the security situation either through the radio or from the outposts so that they will not caught in the crossfire—or in some cases of strafing—that might be engaged in by either camp." (From MSU-IIT Validation Report, p. 35.) The communities are trying to develop their own skills in order to deal with a very difficult situation.

A third theme that comes out of the Validation Reports focuses on the **need to develop the human and natural resources of the communities** in order to allow those displaced to return to and make a living in their home communities. The communities are very dependent on agricultural activities (fishing and farming in particular). However, as the NDU team pointed out, "The displaced families are predominantly farmers and they have been deprived of their land resource, which is their main source of livelihood and survival. The IDPs have lost access to their lands and farms while they stayed at the evacuation center...Family and community life was greatly disturbed and affected. Some families have resorted to sending their older children to look for work in distant places and to be away from the family for a while. Livelihood and survival become the primary concern of the family members during the displacement period." (*From NDU Validation Report, p. 4.*) Thus, not only did families lose access to their land and other resources, they also, in many cases, experienced the disruption of their primary social resources of family and community.

Moreover, their other assets (houses, trees, crops and seeds, animals, equipment, and others) were often destroyed in the conflict, or deteriorated in the ensuing months, or continue to be under threat as tensions return. It is thus considered of utmost importance not only to bring security to these areas, but also to help these agriculturally-based economies return to productivity and sustainability—which is difficult for families to do alone, in view of their loss of resources. As the NDU team puts it, "There are potentials to develop the area into agri-business economies. Thus, the present efforts should be focused on the long-term needs of the IDPs such as farm-to-market roads, post-harvest facilities, education, and electricity. There is also a need to look into the productive capacity and the vulnerability of the human and natural resources of the community in the area. This means that a durable and feasible solution to the problems of the IDPs in Carmen must be sought appropriately." (From NDU Validation Report, pp.9-10.)

Finally, although the tone of the Validation Reports was more focused on meeting immediate material needs and speeding up the process of returning to "normalcy" (to whatever extent possible), the fourth theme that was consistently stressed was, again, the "crisis of the children"—the need to ensure that future generations not only survive, but are also to be able to avoid the polarizing influences that lead to conflict and war. Not only the children themselves, but others in the community also stressed consistently the need for sustainable and usable educational facilities (as well as health and recreational facilities) in the communities that will help the children grow into healthy and responsible adulthood. All segments of the communities are concerned about the effects of ongoing tensions and conflicts on the youth who are so easily hurt, swayed, and even polarized by what they have experienced.

As stated by the MSU-IIT team, "Apart from the imperative of re-establishing credible security and peace, the 'crisis of the children' is the most important challenge facing the areas affected by war...Staying in the communities is problematic because of continuing uncertainties, such as possible recurrence of war in their areas of origin because of the presence of warring parties, together with the lack of educational facilities and other social services in their communities." (From MSU-IIT Validation Report, pp. 34-35.)

Nonetheless, they conclude that, "The basic education provided to the children at the evacuation centers—even at make shift classrooms—greatly helped the children on their road to recovery, healing and reconciliation. In addition to the basic learning skills, the children can be taught simple survival techniques and peacemaking skills...There is a need to sustain the basic education programme on a continuing basis. In this way, the programme can also be utilized to promote an education for peace curriculum. This curriculum will allow children to develop such positive and peaceful values as mutual understanding, non-violent resolution of conflict and an exposure to a more diverse world." (From MSU-IIT Validation Report, p. 35.)

Again, recent events have shown that none of this is easy to accomplish. And yet, there are good indications that positive outcomes are possible, if pursued carefully, within a broader context that allows the underlying tensions and conflicts to be resolved over time.

PART IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The war of 2000 in Mindanao resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of families in Central Mindanao, particularly in the provinces of Maguindanao and North Cotabato. The majority of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) sought refuge at the evacuation centers while others found shelter in the homes of their relatives, albeit temporarily. Fortunately, organisations and individuals in the public and private sectors commiserated with these victims by extending assistance following the programmes that they themselves have formulated and adopted. Some of the assistance focused on responding to specific urgent needs, while the Pilot Project carried out by CFSI employed a more comprehensive approach in responding to the needs and the process of return of the IDPs.

This study on transition interventions listened to the voices of the IDPs in three of the five project sites—namely Pagalungan, Pagagawan, and Carmen—to generate insights from their experiences of displacement, needs, return and settlement. The highlights of the study revealed some commonalities and differences in the experiences of displacement, needs, return and settlement among the IDPs in the three research sites.

Among the commonalities are: scarcity of livelihood sources; inadequate food supply; the lack of basic household wares, shelter, as well as education for the young and the adults; incidence of common illnesses; psychosocial problems; poor health and sanitation; unavailability of farm to market roads; and the destruction of resources.

The IDPs in Pagagawan, Pagalungan, and Carmen expressed their immediate need for sources of income for their families as they struggle to rebuild their lives at their respective sites of origin (SOOs). In Pagagawan and Carmen, where most IDPs are engaged in farming, they need capital for farm inputs, implements, and work animals. Post-harvest facilities like shellers and solar dryers are also needed in the conduct of their livelihood. In Pagalungan, many IDPs are engaged in both fishing and farming. The fishermen need fishing implements.

Specific to women's livelihood needs are backyard animal raising, vegetable gardening, and other livelihood training skills such as dressmaking and handicraft/nipa weaving that will provide additional sources of income for the IDPs.

The displacement has driven the IDP youth and children to engage in contract labour on the farms. Young female IDPs are forced to work as domestic helpers in neighbouring urban areas.

In the recovery process from displacement to settlement, the IDP families experience inadequate food supply. Most of them subsist on root crops, fish, and the like. While

most of the IDPs have already returned to their SOO, planting corn, rice and root crops, they have to wait for about four to six months until these are ready for harvesting. Most often, their harvest is not sufficient for the family's subsistence. These families also need household wares such as utensils, water containers, sleeping mats, mosquito nets, and others.

The IDPs consider shelter as a basic requisite to rebuilding their family and community lives. Only a few IDP families were given housing units in Carmen and Pagalungan while many of them, in other sitios of Carmen as well as Pagalungan and Pagagawan, still need shelter assistance.

A large number of IDPs in the three project sites are school-age children, hence the need for basic education. The severely limited accessibility to school facilities deter the children and youth from obtaining an education. Most schools in the area will take about two (2) to four (4) hours walk from the SOOs. The literacy level of the IDPs in the project sites is, generally, very low, the highest being only at the primary level (Grade II). In addition, many adults feel the need for a functional literacy programme. The physical distance of the schools from the SOOs is further compounded by their condition of poverty and displacement. They express the need for a primary school at their SOOs.

The common illnesses suffered by the IDPs are respiratory diseases (children in all areas), tuberculosis (elderly Manobo in Carmen and Maguindanaos in Pagalungan), skin diseases (children—all areas), malaria (children and adults in Carmen) and shock and trauma (children, adults, and elderly—all areas). Many of these illnesses are preventable through regular primary health care services. Most SOOs are far from the health centers, thus, they are seldom provided with health services. In most cases, the IDPs rely on traditional medical care such as birth deliveries assisted by a *hilot* (traditional birth attendant).

The war and subsequent displacement in the three research sites resulted in a heavy psychosocial burden on women and children. They suffer from shock and trauma, which hinders their capability to cope with the ordeal to survive in the crowded evacuation centers (ECs) and in the impoverished SOOs.

The poor health and sanitation condition of the IDPs is partly attributed to lack of potable water and toilet facilities in the SOOs of the IDPs. Their common source of water is an open well or spring, which is unsafe for drinking.

Many SOOs have no road networks. The IDPs experience difficulty in transporting their products from their place to the market. In Carmen, horses are the common mode of transport, which is quite expensive since it would cost the farmer about forty to fifty pesos per trip. In Pagagawan, the farmers and fishermen are highly dependent on the *habal-habal* (single motorcycle commonly used as the mode of transportation in the rural areas).

As a result of the war, the IDP families had lost their resources—their houses, work animals, crops, farm implements and other properties—as they experienced displacement. Most of them went through great physical and economic loss and are thrown into a state of further impoverishment.

Circumstances that are unique to each of the three research sites are the presence of tripeople in Carmen, the issue of security, and the presence of host communities for the rehabilitation of settled communities.

The Manobo IDPs in Carmen clamour for interventions that could facilitate their return and recovery. Many of them cultivate land on a stewardship arrangement. To the Manobos, the land is their life. They have no other skills except farming. Their main concern in the near future is that they will own the land they till. They also need basic services such as health, education, water, and post-harvest facilities. Many Manobo children suffer from malnutrition and skin diseases while the elderly are afflicted with tuberculosis.

The issue of security and protection is viewed differently by the IDPs in the three project sites. For instance, in Pagagawan and Pagalungan the IDPs feel secure if there are no AFP camps in, or near, their SOOs. The presence of the AFP in their area might lead to more skirmishes and may result in further displacement. The IDPs in Carmen, on the other hand, feel more secure and motivated to return to their SOOs if the military has a detachment in the area. Moreover, the SOOs of the IDPs in the research sites are prone to security risks due to the presence of the AFP and MILF camps nearby. They fear that the occurrence of another armed confrontation between these two contending groups is not a remote possibility.

It can also be noted that only Carmen has host communities for the rehabilitation of settled IDPs, whereas the IDPs of Pagagawan and Pagalungan return to their sitios of origin to rebuild their community.

Despite the hardships and difficulties experienced by the IDPs, it is heartening to note that the IDPs in Carmen, Pagagawan, and Pagalungan acknowledge and appreciate the significant contributions of the CFSI programmes in rebuilding their lives and communities.

Among the significant learnings drawn from this study are lessons that have to do with the consultation process among the traditional and community leaders, the convergence of services among donor agencies, and the Pilot Project experience of return and settlement among IDPs.

The barangay political and traditional leaders have to be consulted and their cooperation sought in the implementation of intervention programmes for IDPs. This holds true for all local and community officials.

There is a need to maximise the distribution of relief assistance among the IDPs through the convergence of services among donor agencies. The donor agencies have to work closely together and coordinate properly, such that it will lessen competition and the duplication of services responsive to the immediate needs of the IDPs, both at the ECs and SOOs.

The intervention programmes of the Pilot Project facilitate the return and rebuilding process of the displaced communities. Essential to return and settlement of IDPs to their SOOs are: (a) the revival of the local economy (capital for farm implements and provisions for post-harvest facilities); (b) rehabilitation of basic services such as schools, health centers, day care centers, water systems, and farm to market-roads; and (c) the rebuilding of social networks at the ground level which entails the strengthening of the action committees in the communities of origin (COOs).

The best practices and strategies for return and settlement can best be assessed in terms of: their relevance to the needs of the IDPs; their sustainability; and their effectiveness towards peace-building, social cohesion, inclusion, and reconstruction. The sustained implementation in the Pilot Project must have been the reason that CFSI's transition intervention model gained popularity among the IDPs in the evacuation centers and in the communities of return. The intervention strategies of CFSI, other NGOs, and GOs gained ground and worked considerably well in Carmen, Pagagawan, and Pagalungan—parallel with the experiences of the IDPs in other countries.

In the preparation for IDPs to return, the "Go and See Visit" activities of CFSI enabled the IDPs to visit their communities of origin and allowed them to explore the possibility of return. The process includes a visioning workshop towards community organisation and reconstruction. The IDPs' decision to return to their home sitios considers the following as crucial: housing, security, involvement of community leaders, community organising, "Go and See Visits," and start-up livelihood support.

In a similar situation the IDPs in El Salvador (UNHCR, 1997) also planned their return. Although different in many ways, some basic similarities can be found in situation of war-torn countries such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Cambodia, and Mozambique. In all of these cases, thousands of IDPs have gone back to areas that had been laid waste by armed conflict. It can also be noted that the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* provided guidance to various stakeholders in the local and international community to include favourable conditions, sufficient means, appropriate safety measures, and IDP participation. The same guidance can be observed in displacement interventions in the areas of Carmen, Pagagawan, and Pagalungan. Bennett (1998) also discusses how displacement involves transformation processes of the IDPs, which can be observed in the three research sites.

Community organising creating "action committees" and fostering the spirit of volunteerism provide greater success for normalcy. The *sumpats* who function as CFSI development partners are efficient community coordinators at the evacuation centers and in building or maintaining community cohesion in the communities of return. The

sumpats are instrumental in the formation of action committees and also in the community's struggle towards normalcy. Community organising was essential at the ECs and, in the COOs, created avenues for IDP empowerment and mobilisation. In a similar way, the women action committees of Rwanda provided survival support for a lot of community problems. Also, Myanmar's (Burma's) experience of organising teams created favourable and effective relief assistance to IDPs.

Start-up Capital Assistance (SUCA) at the evacuation centers and Livelihood Assistance Upon Return (LAUR) also creates a positive impact on a number of IDP beneficiaries. The extension of the livelihood assistance upon return provided them material start-up capital for farm and/or livestock production. The LAUR and SUCA have helped them earn and provide for their families' needs. Similarly in Greece, financial assistance through loans was used by the IDPs for agriculture and home industries.

The information and assembly center (the *Pulungan Center*) brings about effective social articulations of community. The *Pulungan Center* is a community-built structure, financed by the Pilot Project, wherein IDPs converge for meaningful discussions and issues. The radio programme of CFSI made the IDPs understand better their plight and conditions. It also provided them opportunities to be heard. This same information strategy has been adopted in Bosnia where they were able to up a community radio project.

Psychosocial Services as a programme is also an important intervention. This programme that initially focused on the vulnerable group of the women provided the avenues for healing and peace building.

The Peace Education component of CFSI offers promising success. This component covers peace training and assembly. The IDPs were taught peaceful means of resolving conflicts and encouraged to join Peace *Kanduli* that are conducted as thanksgiving celebrations for safe return and other purposes.

Several other interventions of government organisations (Gos) and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) are considered to have relevance to the lives of the IDPs. One of which is GO-NGO Collaboration. The collaborative efforts of GOs and NGOs in the maximised utilisation of resources have stabilised linkages for the effective delivery of services to the IDPs such as housing and farm inputs, among others. The active involvement of barangay officials and community leaders in the process of return provided a crucial structure that facilitated possible return. Working closely with the traditional power holders in the cases of Pagalungan and Pagagawan promises success of the intervention processes. CFSI is also successful in some instances in bridging the government to the people through immersion activities in some areas of Carmen, Pagalungan, and Pagagawan.

The Basic Education Programme Facility at the evacuation center had an encouraging impact on the IDPs. OXFAM facilitated an education programme that developed a

positive outlook among the children and increased their chances of survival. Their intervention programmes included water and sanitation facilities.

The presence of the AFP in the areas of Carmen (in a predominantly Christian community) provided easier return to the areas of origin. On the other hand, the absence of the AFP in Pagagawan and Pagalungan (predominantly Muslim communities) is a requisite of the IDPs for return to their communities of origin. In Indonesia, IDPs in Ternate also premise their return on adequate security to the area, the military serving as a "buffer zones" between Christians and Muslims. Peace zones in the Philippines such as Tulunan, Sagada provided safe places for the IDPs as warring groups were made to respect the declared zone as an arms-free zone. However, the presence of both the military and the MILF discouraged IDPs from return to their community of origin as in the cases of Barangays Inug-ug and Gantung in Pagalungan.

Amidst the intervention efforts of the NGOs and GOs, the IDPs viewed some aspects of implementation as ineffective and lacking. This includes mistrust of some service providers because of false promises made to, and false hopes established by, the IDPs.

The presence of Community Organisers (COs) at CFSI who are Maguindanaos, that is, COs who are familiar with the culture and language of the displaced community in Maguindanao, evoked a positive response among the IDPs. However, the number of COs is not sufficient vis-à-vis the number of communities to be served and the scope of work in both Maguindanao and Carmen. A lot of hindrances to community organising are also observable as follows: lack of trainings for *Sumpats*; problem of security in the implementation of the Pilot Project; and only few of the action committees are functional in the return and settlement areas. *Sumpats* in some instance are not really focused in their function due to the fact that they are also struggling to survive and still need the assistance of the COs in making the committees work.

In the livelihood programme of CFSI, the IDPs raise some suggestions to increase the amount of financial assistance, for the income they earn from LAUR and SUCA is not enough to sustain their daily basic needs. Problems of LAUR consist of the following: listing of the names, non-compliance of deposits and savings maintenance, delay of funding releases, and natural calamity destroying their livelihood. On the other hand, the IDPs who were not yet covered by the LAUR stated that the delay of this assistance programme to them compounded the sufferings that they have been going through since the war.

The psychosocial services programme should include other vulnerable sectors such as the children and the elderly. Psychosocial care needs to be institutionalised. Though meaningful, the peace education programme should be sustained to include the peace advocacy to all sectors of the IDPs, community organisers, and stakeholders at all levels.

Some of the loopholes of the interventions include a combination of the lack of political will of the government organisations, lack of resources, and the lack of coordination among the stakeholders. The control of resources and relief goods by local government

figures also deters successful distribution to real IDPs in some instances in the evacuation centers of Pagalungan and Pagagawan.

There were also complaints of unequal distribution of relief goods to IDPs and some support or supplies are not fitted to the IDPs (i.e., not being culture-sensitive). Some of the people receiving the relief goods were not actually IDPs and the number of housing units given were not sufficient, and in a number of cases, not liveable. Adding to these, some of the housing beneficiaries are not real IDPs themselves. Clannish tendencies and the hostile feelings of the host communities to the IDPs were also problems to contend with at the evacuation center. Similarly in some cases in Armenia, they feel that government authorities tried to steer their attention to less needy areas to satisfy particular constituencies, while needier populations remained underserved (Narayan et al., 2000).

The forging of cooperation mechanisms fostered easier coordination among NGOs and religious groups in the provision of humanitarian aid and emergency relief services to the IDPs. In the three areas, the IDPs enjoyed support from government agencies during the height of the war. The relief services eventually dwindled because of the lack of funds.

Sitios Agakan, Sambolawan—among others—are still having problems with water and sanitation that make the people vulnerable to diseases. The basic education provided to the children at the evacuation centers—even in makeshift classrooms—greatly helped the children on their road to recovery. Though there are support services extended by government agencies and institutions, the IDPs are apprehensive that the support will be terminated. Due to the limited resources of the government and NGOs, a considerable number of IDPs were not able to benefit. The lack of government presence in some areas in Pagagawan and Pagalungan also contributes to the worsening situation of the IDPs. While NGOs have played a key role in making development more participatory, often they have only limited outreach and have not touched the lives of the majority of the people. Similarly, in Indonesia, there is disconnect between community initiatives and institutions, and government programmes and institutions. Community initiatives and institutions that are the basis of local capacity are not connected to government resources and decision-making (Narayan et al., 2000).

Ironically, their displacement had, in a way, been a factor in the IDPs' enthusiasm to learn organising themselves as a community that had gradually developed unity. This includes initiatives and instances for social mobilisation (where IDPs rebuilt their houses using recycled materials saved during the evacuation). An optimistic and resilient attitude has surfaced, along with intervention processes implemented by the various stakeholders. The IDPs gradually developed a sense of community cohesion as they become regularly involved in community actions that provided a lot of social functions.

CONCLUSIONS

The experiences and perceptions of the IDPs documented in this study reveal that the root of their misery was poverty. Even before their displacement, impoverishment was already a reality to them. The armed conflict that had driven them away from their homes only worsened their situation, making it virtually impossible to address the basic needs of their family members such as food, clothing, shelter, and education. Compounding the struggle for survival was the traumatic effects of the armed conflict on their lives, particularly on the children, women, and the elderly who are the most vulnerable groups in the pilot project communities.

Foremost among the varying responses to alleviate the situations of the IDPs in Central Mindanao was humanitarian aid and relief services provided in the evacuation centers by the government and nongovernmental organisations. That these, however, declined over time is a manifestation of the unsustainability of such assistance.

The weakness of this type of intervention is the danger of a dependency syndrome that may develop among the IDPs and may prove disadvantageous to the return/settlement process, inasmuch as this will encourage a prolonged stay in the evacuation centers to avail of the relief services instead of going back to their sites of origin.

Moreover, this form of assistance may have satisfied the physical needs for subsistence of the IDPs but it does not address the deeper needs of their psychosocial beings that were left battered by traumatic experiences. Some initiatives introduced by a few nongovernmental organisations do include psychosocial services and peace education components necessary for a comprehensive intervention programme that addresses the unseen effects of displacement. Failure to respond to the psychosocial needs of the IDPs is a deterrent to their social recovery.

The study showed that the IDPs in Pagagawan, Pagalungan, and Carmen were interested and enthusiastic in joining visioning exercises and the planning of community-based projects spearheaded by the Community Organisers of the Pilot Project. This facilitated the construction of the *Pulungan Centers* in the sites of origin and strengthened the IDPs' active participation in NGO-GO collaborative efforts towards reconstruction and recovery. CFSI's community organising efforts laid the groundwork for the successful implementation of its intervention programmes. The study concludes that for transition interventions to succeed they must be comprehensive, collaborative, and sustainable, and that sustainability is anchored on community-based activities.

Weaving together the above observations and conclusions, one can say that Cernea's IRR model bears significance specifically on the joblessness, homeliness, landlessness, food insecurity, increased morbidity, loss of access to common property resources, and community disarticulation experienced in the project sites of Carmen, Pagalungan, and Pagagawan. The model posits that impoverishment is one of the fundamental risks that go with any situation of displacement; therefore, strategies for reconstruction must incorporate a reverse mechanism to address it.

The situation in the research sites, however, go beyond the risk elements of the IRR model. The key elements that are missing from this general (and necessarily simplified) model that appear to be relevant to the cases of Carmen, Pagagawan, and Pagalungan in Central Mindanao include the following considerations.

- 1) First, the IRR model assumes implicitly that the displaced people were not suffering from a condition of severe impoverishment prior to their massive forced displacement as a result of armed conflict. The IDPs in the identified research sites had already been among the poorest populace of the country even prior to their displacement. Impoverishment to them is a long-time reality and cannot be considered a risk. Nonetheless, the model may still be considered relevant in the sense that the displacement has compounded the sufferings of the IDPs and has caused to further their already extreme form of existence of literally scratching for food for the mere existence of their family members. In other words, almost all of the "risks" mentioned in the IRR model are in fact realities to the majority of those living in the very impoverished areas found in the research sites; however, the trauma of armed conflict and its aftermath have intensified and compounded these realities for those displaced by war.
- 2) Another point is that the model considers a transition from conflict to peace. However, in many cases of armed conflict in the 21st century—particularly the conflicts that result in *internal displacement*, as opposed to conflicts between clearly separate nation-states—states we find that the most we can sometimes hope for is a transition from conflict towards peace. In other words, the general "message" of the model is that impoverishment risks can be reduced or avoided by following certain policy prescriptions once the displaced return home or resettle and the context to which they return or settle is assumed to a peaceful one. However, the political, economic, and social circumstances in Mindanao are such that a lasting peace is still apparently far away and the context of return and settlement is one of ongoing fear, anxiety, and uncertainty of the future. Moreover, the serious problems of bias, discrimination, and widespread corruption are central characteristics of the context into which the displaced persons return, creating an environment of ongoing inability to control the forces that impact their lives. The model lacks a consideration of the serious consequences of reconstruction under such fragile and unpredictable circumstances. It is therefore suggested that a very strong peace education and advocacy component, along with others that aim at addressing the sources of conflict in both "micro" and "macro" senses, be incorporated in the model to address conflict issues to promote successful reconstruction and settlement.
- 3) In the light of this atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, a very careful consideration of the *psychosocial* side of the trauma of displacement and return into unpredictable circumstances also needs to be incorporated into any attempt to come up with policy prescriptions for the return/settlement and community development effort. The IRR model focuses primarily on material needs, and secondarily on social needs (in the sense of social cohesion and the need for inclusion). However, the serious psychosocial needs of individuals, families, and particular subgroups (e.g., children or

youth), and even the psychosocial traumas of whole communities, must equally be addressed as the community members attempt to rebuild their lives under very difficult and uncontrollable circumstances. Moreover, we need to recognise that the religious or spiritual side is also a significant dimension to many communities, as seen in the need for mosques and churches or other religious venues, as was often expressed by many of the community members interviewed by this study. These needs may not seem as significant as livelihood, housing, or other immediate requirements, but in some cases they may be the "lifeblood" of the community. In sum, the psychological, religious or spiritual, and cultural needs of the community cannot be ignored in favour of only material and social considerations.

- 4) The IRR model focuses on livelihood, housing, and other related concerns. Although almost all of those interviewed for this study would agree with the central importance of these basic needs, it was male livelihood earners that were particularly concerned with access to resources and related livelihood needs. Interestingly, different subgroups within the communities expressed somewhat different priorities; for example, education was the primary concern to the children and the youth, and to a large extent to the women respondents in the present study (although the latter often stressed livelihood needs as well). Significantly, the IRR model does not mention education as a central need that would be equivalent to livelihood, access to resources, or health care, for example. Although Cernea does acknowledge that different subgroups may have different priorities, we need to recognise that this is another limitation that signals that we should not restrict ourselves to looking only at the concerns emphasised by this general model, but instead be open to the views of different individuals and groups within the displaced communities.
- 5) The importance put on education by the children, youth, and women interviewed for this study also points out another dimension that is missing from the IRR model, as it tends to focus on immediate material and social survival needs, and adopts a very short-term point of view. Education and the psychosocial needs of individuals, subgroups, and families, among other important concerns not mentioned in the model, take us into the future and introduce a dynamic element that is not explicitly a part of the original IRR model. The point is that if these additional basic needs are not responded to carefully, the implications for the future (and the not-too-distant future at that) may be serious. For some communities, it is possible that satisfying certain immediate material needs might not be as important to those attempting to rebuild their lives as meeting the needs that help them prepare for the future.

In sum, it was found that the list of risks outlined in the IRR model were not comprehensive enough, and that many of the needs expressed by community members—and, in fact, many of the programmes—discussed in this study have goals in mind that are not captured by the IRR model. For this reason as well, it was decided that the research teams would be able to reflect on this model in their work without being constrained by its boundaries (in other, the model was not "applied" to the cases they examined, but rather was used as a way to reflect further on their findings, as can be seen in previous sections of this study.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Policy Recommendations

On the basis of the perceptions of the IDPs disclosed in this research study, CFSI's approach to the challenge posed by displacement appears multi-pronged and more systematic in contrast to other aid agencies. However, more good can still be done by this and other NGOs not only for the benefit of the IDPs, but also the people of Mindanao, for the bottom line is the promotion of peace and development. In this context, a greater and deeper involvement of NGOs and other organisations in the welfare of displaced persons may be further broadened and effectively realised by considering the recommendations derived and inferred by "listening to the voices" of the IDPs in Carmen, Pagagawan, and Pagalungan, including but not limited to the following:

- Adopt and implement a more holistic and integrated approach on the issue of displacement. NGOs and other concerned organisations need to network and coordinate with other aid organisations and institutions in order to be able to address more fully and effectively the needs of the IDPs.
- Ensure the active participation of the IDPs in all phases of the programmes—from their arrival at the evacuation centers, return to their home communities or relocation in other areas, and up to the time when peace and normalcy shall have been restored.
- Explore the possibility of organising the IDP communities into peace zones. Muslims regard the Christians as enjoying the protection of the government and the military. Conversely, the Christians suspect the Muslims of being sympathetic to the Moro cause and supportive of the secessionist groups whose members were related to them. These suspicions can be removed through the establishment of peace zones whose proclaimed neutrality is anchored on the non-entry of arms in these areas. The success of this endeavour, however, lies in the warring groups' compliance to the restriction imposed and/or the strength of public opinion. Moreover, as peace zones, these communities may receive more development assistance from the government and other local and foreign organisations.
- · Formulate a comprehensive peace education programme integrating a holistic framework. This paradigm consists of six (6) clusters of issues and concerns, namely: structural violence, militarisation, human rights, environmental care, cultural solidarity, and personal peace (Toh and Cagawas, 1987). The formal and nonformal education teachers and community leaders in the IDP communities should be oriented on the contents, values, skills, and strategies of peace education.
- · Systematise the holding of visioning workshops. This strategy enables the participants to articulate their vision of the community which they want to pursue and realise in their midst. The output of the workshop can be posted permanently and conspicuously in the *Pulungan Center* to constantly remind, inspire, and prod them to action. Perhaps, once a year or when necessary, the community can appraise what they have done in term of concretising their vision.

- · Support and promote interfaith dialogues on the grassroots level between Christians, Muslims, and Lumads to help sustain the peace efforts in the community.
- · Intensify and expand the psychosocial programme (particularly, trauma healing).
- Extend the *bayanihan* spirit exhibited in the construction of the *Pulungan Center* to the construction of other important edifices such as the mosques and chapels. In this way, the armed groups supposedly fighting for their protection and welfare may learn to respect and leave intact these places of worship.
- · Advocate and work for the faster recognition/awarding of the ancestral domain of the Lumads and the Moros.
- Strengthen the programmes of the type implemented in the Pilot Project through the following steps:
 - ➤ Provide the sumpats assigned in far-flung areas with hand-held radios or cell phones for faster communication and easier coordination with CSFI (and/or other organisations who learn from this model) and possibly with government and other nongovernmental organisations.
 - ➤ Equip the *sumpats* with the needed skills by providing a capability-building programme.
 - ➤ Schedule regular meetings of action committee leaders in the communities of origin to ensure continuous follow-up of various programmes.
 - ➤ Enhance the capabilities of the "care-givers" and "peacemakers" and make them more community-based.

Since the IDPs in Pagagawan, Pagalungan, and Carmen are assisted by government and nongovernmental organisations—including multidonor organisations—they too, will find the suggestions of the IDPs of Pagagawan, Pagalungan, and Carmen useful. Among these are the following.

- Addressing the basic needs of the IDPs in evacuation centers and sites of origin continues to be the plea of the people. These needs include housing, waster system, farm-to-market roads, and especially education for the youth. These should be addressed by the agencies concerned.
- · For more effective delivery of the services given to the IDPs, there should be a systematic implementation of programmes through linkages, networking, and partnerships. It is suggested that all these activities be formalised through the signing of memoranda of agreements.
- It has been observed that some programmes implemented in the IDP communities failed because of insensitivity to the traditional practices of the community. It is recommended that programme implementers should be sensitive to local cultures, especially recognising the role of traditional leaders in carrying out various activities.
- · In Pagagawan and Pagalungan, the call is also for a more active involvement of government organisations in the return and settlement of IDPs, since there have been disappointments in the past associated with government organisations

providing only very temporary support, and sometimes not effective support, for the IDP communities in these areas. Good programmes do contribute to building up a sense of good will.

B. Recommendations for Future Research

Useful research for the future would include the following topics.

- · Participatory Action Research on Women's Issues and Development in IDP Settlement. The problems and coping mechanisms of women, as well as organising women by enhancing their skills for community work through organising and action research, needs to be explored.
- · Case Study Documentation of the Psychosocial Intervention in IDP communities. The study of the psychosocial needs and concerns of IDP groups, particularly women and children, needs to be undertaken.
- · Community Organising: Its Impact on IDP Communities/Families. The investigation of the capacity of communities for self-help processes for rebuilding their lives is critically important.
- · Comparative Study of CSFI-Assisted and Non-assisted Communities: Return and Settlement Strategies. A comparison of the IDP communities assisted by the Pilot Project carried out by CFSI and IDP communities with other return and settlement processes and dynamics would result in lessons for future interventions.
- · Traditional Socio-Cultural Structures: Implications for Displacement Issues. An analysis of the traditional structures of leadership and other socio-cultural practices in Maguindanaon communities as it influences displacements issues is warranted.
- · LGU-NGO Collaboration for IDP Settlement. An analysis of the processes and dynamics of collaboration between government and nongovernmental organisations in the return and settlement efforts could inform future efforts.
- · Child Labour and Family Disintegration in IDP Settlement. An in-depth study of the child labour practices and displacements, and their impact on the child and the family is recommended.
- · Stress and Behaviour Problems among Displaced Children. A psychosocial investigation of the stress and risk behaviours among the displaced children and their effects on family is required.
- · Clustered vs. Unclustered Settlements: Strategies for IDP Development. A comparison of the best practices in clustered and unclustered settlement strategies for IDP settlements would be useful.

These are among the most important research concerns that follow directly from the present study. The goals of this type of research, and programmes that are generated by this research, need to include the establishment of conditions that significantly improve the well being of the most impoverished communities in war-torn Mindanao. These programmes need to be carried out in a way that helps establish a lasting peace, and not simply contributes to more competition and conflict, in the future.

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NEEDS, PROBLEMS AND PRIORITIES IN COMMUNITIES OF ORIGIN

Sitio Bai Tonina, Barangay Bulit, Pagagawan

| <u> </u> | nto Bar Tollina, Barangay Bunt, Fagagawan | | | |
|----------|---|--|--|--|
| Priority | Needs and Problems Identified | | | |
| 1 | Livelihood Assistance and Financial Support to be able to acquire farm implements such as a solar dryer, carabaos (four of their carabaos were killed during the armed conflict), and other farming needs such as seeds, fertilisers, insecticides, etc.) | | | |
| 2 | Community Health Centre | | | |
| 3 | Barangay School/Day Care Centre and Madrasah for their children including school supplies | | | |
| 4 | Concrete Farm to Market Road | | | |
| 5 | Sports Facilties (Basketball, Volleyball) for the youth | | | |
| 6 | Sources of Capitalisation for Alternative Livelihood and Entrepreneurship Training, especially for the women. | | | |
| | N.B.: They are hoping that all their needs will be provided for by the government, civil organisations or whoever can. | | | |

Sitio Agakan, Barangay Inug-ug, Pagalungan

| Priority | Needs and Problems Identified |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Food, Shelter, Clothing |
| 2 | Livelihood |
| 3 | Housing |
| 4 | Education/School |
| 5 | Health and Sanitation |
| 6 | Mosque and Madrasah |
| 7 | Sports Facilities for the Youth (Volleyball and Basketball) |

Sitio Sambolawan, Barangay Nabundas, Pagagawan

| Priority | Needs and Problems Identified |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Financial Support/Livelihood |
| 2 | Education of Children |
| 3 | Housing |
| 4 | Health and Sanitation |
| 5 | Water System |
| | |
| | |

NEEDS, PROBLEMS AND PRIORITIES IN EVACUATION CENTRE

Central Evacuation Centre, Pagalungan

| Priority | Needs and Problems Identified |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Basic needs – food, clothing, kitchen utensils |
| 2 | Livelihood/start-up capital |
| 3 | Livestock and work animals for farming |
| 4 | Medicines, bath soap, powder, shampoo, cologne/milk for the children |
| 5 | Blanket, mosquito net, school uniform and other school needs for the children |
| 6 | Day Care Centre, Health Centre |
| 7 | Elementary Schools/Madrasah |
| 8 | Water pump, toilet |
| 9 | Play Centre |
| | |

CARMEN RESEARCH SITES

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN CARMEN: BACKGROUND, NEEDS, AND RESOURCES AT THEIR PLACE OF ORIGIN

A large number of families in Central Mindanao suffered displacement owing to the war of 2000. One of the areas affected was the municipality of Carmen. Carmen lies at the border of the provinces of North Cotabato, Maguindanao, and Lanao.

The first section below details some of the circumstances faced by the IDP families in Carmen as of mid-2002. The second section then provides a brief analysis of the results of the household surveys carried out in Carmen by CFSI staff members.

I. CONDITIONS FACED BY IDP FAMILIES IN THE CARMEN AREA

The following is intended to provide background information that will help elucidate the results of the research team's interviews with IDP families in Carmen. It notes, in a summary way, the circumstances faced by families that: (1) still remain in the evacuation centers; (2) have settled in host communities; and (3) have returned to their sites of origin

1. Families in Evacuation Sites

A total of 137 families with approximately 685 members are still staying at the evacuation centers (ECs) located in Barangays Malapag and Liliongan. About twelve families settled temporarily in five dilapidated shanties built on the Malapag High School grounds. In June 2002, these families will be forced to vacate their shanties for the opening of classes. Eleven (11) families occupied the abandoned houses around the Malapag Mosque. The biggest number (114 families) of IDPs is found in Liliongan Market Site. Of these three groups of IDPs, the families who stayed at the abandoned houses seem to be better off compared to the families staying in the two other ECs. Their homes are spacious and made up of strong materials that could stand any type of weather, unlike those families in the ECs whose shelters are made up of light materials, and are crowded and in bad shape.

Liliongan Market Site EC is located on a one-hectare plot of land, near a sugar cane plantation. It is 500 meters away from the national highway en route to Cagayan de Oro City from Carmen Poblacion. Approximately 50 shanties are occupied by 114 families waiting for return to their sitios of origin, namely: Spring (47 families), Pinamintangan (28 families), and Puting Bato (39 families). Two or three families are housed in one shanty. These shanties were constructed in March 2000 by the IDPs themselves, using some salvaged materials and the "kalakat" (indigenous materials for walling) donated by

the Provincial Government. A water pump put up by Accion de Hambre in 2000 has not functioned since March 2002. The IDP leaders have already referred this to the proper authority for repair, yet no action has been taken to date. The toilets for male and female IDPs are still usable. The families get their water for drinking and washing from the sawmill spring, one km away from the EC.

The IDPs in Malapag EC were from sitios Quarry (3 families), Danao (9 families), Hinauran (4 families), and Bunawan (7 families). As in the case of IDPs in Liliongan EC, they already expressed their desire to go back to their home place as soon as possible. The CFSI Community Organisers in Carmen ECs are working doubly hard to facilitate the speedy return of these remaining families to their respective SOOs.

Farming is the primary source of livelihood of the IDPs. Some men, women, and children work on their farms during the day at their site of origin, which is more or less four kilometres from the ECs. Most of them gather root crops such as cassava, "bisol" and ube for sustenance. Others resort to doing farm labour on a day-to-day basis, mostly at 70 pesos per day, doing planting, weeding, and other farm work available in the barangays where the ECs are located. At the end of the day, the IDPs go back to the ECs for a much-needed rest. To supplement their meagre income, some families allowed their 15 years old-and-above children to work as household/store helpers in Carmen poblacion, Kabacan, and other neighbouring municipalities where work could be found.

At present the IDPs, through their *Sumpats*, work closely with the Community Organisers of CFSI for their immediate return to their respective sites of origin. They joined the "Go and See Visit" activity initiated by CFSI in September 2001 for Malapag IDPs, and in December 2001 for Liliongan IDPs. As previously noted, this activity brought hope among the displaced families that they can still go back to their site of origin. The big factor for the delay of their safe return was the construction of shelters at the IDPs' sites of origin (SOOs), as promised by the Provincial Government. There were initial efforts to construct 27 housing units for the IDPs in Liliongan EC, but these cannot be used because there are no roofs vet. The IDPs are still waiting for the Provincial Government to continue the construction of the said shelters. The sites of origin are located in the hinterlands and very far from the ECs. The absence of road networks in the area makes it difficult for housing contractor to finish the construction of housing units in the SOOs. The SOOs are accessible only by foot or by horse. It would take more or less a one-hour walk or 30 minutes by horse to reach the area from the EC. The IDPs wanted their shelters to be put up on the lots where their farms are situated and these are scattered over a large area.

In the meanwhile, at the ECs, the IDPs make both ends meet by doing all kinds of farm work. Some families at the ECs resort to backyard animal raising. Through this activity, these families are somehow assured of some income in the near future. The IDPs know that there is no more supply of relief goods for them. They are left on their own now. CFSI and the local officials are their only hope to help them facilitate their immediate return to their SOOs. The IDPs feel the immediate need to return to their places of origin so that they can avail of the Livelihood Assistance Upon Return (LAUR) programme of

CFSI. The LAUR programme is seen by the IDPs as a good incentive to become more aggressive in doing the follow-ups with the Provincial Government, to speed up the completion of the construction of shelters in the SOOs.

As days and months go by, the IDPs have feared that in the long run they may not get any assistance anymore from the local government units (LGUs) and other nongovernmental organisations since the number of IDPs is getting smaller. Their already sad condition will become more miserable as they struggle for a hand-to-mouth existence. Food and livelihood are the immediate needs of the IDPs at the ECs.

There are more women and children than men in these ECs. These children 10 years old and below are the most vulnerable members of the households. Common illnesses suffered by the children are cough with fever and diarrhoea. In Malapag High School EC, Catalina, 36 years old, a mother of 7 children with a nine-month-old child, said that two of her children aged 9 and 10 years were sick of diarrhoea because of unsafe drinking water. At present, Catalina works in Danao—her SOO—together with her older children and husband. She brings along her nine-month-old baby to the farm during the day and goes back home to the EC at sunset. Just like Catalina, many women with young children work on the farm. This is their daily routine while they wait for help at the evacuation centers in Carmen.

CFSI, through its information programme, "Ang Tinig ng IDPs" – a radio programme aired over the local radio station DXMY-AM every Saturday at 4 p.m. – gives a ray of hope among IDPs to continue their struggle for return to their site of origin. Catalina said in Cebuano "Pigado and among kinabuhi dinhi sa evacuation center, walay pagkaon ug walay permanenteng trabaho. Di pareho sa among bukid na naay makuhaan ug pagkaon." (Life at the evacuation center is very hard; no food and no permanent source of livelihood. It is unlike our place of origin, where there's always food for the family.)

2. Families Settled in Host Communities

IDPs from Campo (34 families), Hinauran (27 families), Danao (6 families), and Quarry (12 families) opted to avail themselves of the offer of the Provincial Government to settle at the Malapag Market Site. The reasons why these families took advantage of the rehabilitation programme of the government are: (a) Fear of being killed in their SOO; (b) Source of livelihood in Malapag is quite accessible; (c) Malapag is safe and a peaceful place to live in; (d) Barangay officials and services are within reach; and (e) There are no more shelters to go back to the SOO since the houses of the IDP houses already burned/destroyed by the war and its aftermath.

The number of families who were given shelters in Malapag settlement was determined based on the assessment of the extent of property lost and/or damaged. A team of barangay officials did an ocular survey and picture-taking at the SOOs of the IDPs from Campo, Hinauran, Danao, and Quarry. The survey findings were documented and submitted to the Mayor of Carmen and the Provincial Government. The barangay officials facilitated the construction of shelters for the 79 families. The housing units

were made up of indigenous materials (*kalakat*) for walling, galvanised iron for roofing, and wood for flooring. Each house has a toilet. The Department of Health Region XII (DOH XII) provided the water pump and a large tank for the regular supply of water in the settlement. More or less eight families share one water-tap stand with a faucet.

Forty families were given one goat each while eight families received a carabao (water buffalo) each for livelihood. P555,000.00 was awarded to the Malapag Resettlement Farmers Association (MAREFA) by the Department of Labour and Employment Region XII (DOLE XII) for the acquisition of post-harvest facilities such as corn shellers, a dryer, and a warehouse. The post-harvest facilities were officially turned over to the Farmers' Association on November 19, 2001. A livelihood-training programme was conducted on July 13-17, 2001 for the members of the Association. A DOLE XII representative extended technical assistance to the MAREFA officers in the preparation of the livelihood proposal for a "buy and sell project" amounting to P500,000.00. According to the MAREFA President, the check was due for release before the end of April 2002.

The IDPs in the Malapag settlement perceived their new community as a place where they could sleep peacefully and without fear of harassment. This is because barangay officials and the community volunteer officers (CVOs) are there to provide security and protection. Moreover, livelihood opportunities for the farmers are there, especially during planting season. Since the settlement is located near the barangay center, the families can readily avail the services of the day care center, elementary and secondary schools, and health center (the midwife visits the health center twice a week).

Women in the settlement are organised into Women's Association and the youth into the Rehabilitation Youth Organization. The people are pleased with their local officers because they are very active and approachable as well as concerned with their needs.

While the IDPs at the rehabilitation center seem to be contented and happy compared to their counterparts at the ECs, they still expressed the following as their immediate needs: (a) farm animals, (b) farm inputs, such as seedlings and chemicals, (c) electricity, and (d) backyard animals. They also want to hold a peace prayer celebration in the settlement center to express their thanksgiving for a new life in a newly established community.

3. Families Returned to Site of Origin:

The promise of livelihood assistance to the IDPs upon their return to their site of origin, coupled with rehabilitating strategies conducted by CFSI and other government line agencies, both local and provincial, promoted a significant number of families to gradually return to, and stabilize their communities of origin. The five (5) priority ECs of CFSI in Carmen, accommodate IDPs from 16 sitios. All (100%) of the residents of at least four sitios have now returned home. They are sitio Matingao of Barangay Malapag Mosque EC, sitios of Upper and Lower Malugasa, from Liliongan Market site EC, and sitio Tabulon from Lanitap EC. Either some or none of the IDPs from the twelve other sitios have returned to the sitios of origin.

Sitio Matingao

Matingao is one of the sitios of Barangay Malapag located along the national highway of Carmen Bukidnon road. It is about 24 kilometres and a 30-minute ride (via public utility jeep) from the Carmen town proper. It is inhabited entirely by Maguindanaons, and originally consisted of 40 families. However, during the displacement period, only 33 families stayed at the Malapag Mosque EC while the others went as far as General Santos City and Cotabato City to seek refuge.

Matingao is the only sitio in the entire Malapag whose residents have fully returned. Some left the Malapag ECs as early as January 2001. Seven families sought refuge elsewhere. All 33 families are now back in their SOO.

As reported in the Focus Group Discussion with the community, there are more women than men, and more children than adults. In this sitio, *most of the community members do not own the land they are tilling* (this is not true of all sitios). Nonetheless, most of them are working very hard on the farms, including the women. The hope is that in the future they will own the land they are tilling as promised by their Barangay Captain. The literacy rate is high, despite the distance of the closest school from the sitio. However, few have been able to go to secondary (high school) level.

The peace and security situation is, to them, uncertain. They have a good relationship with their barangay officials and neighbouring sitios. However, being the only 100% Maguindanaon SOO in Malapag, they cannot avoid thinking that some Christians who happened to be victims of war might retaliate for the casualties they suffered from the Moro Fronts. However, what is more frightening to them is the coming of the El Nino phenomenon, which might result in the destruction of their present crops. No farm technician has visited them since their return home. They also have health problems due to the absence of a regular schedule of barangay health worker (BHW) visits to their sitio. Besides being far from their sitio (about 500 meters), their source of drinking water is simply a shallow well, just beneath the pond that often inundates the surrounding areas during rainy days. The occurrence of diarrhoea among children is inescapable. Moreover, ten out of the 33 families who returned back home have no house of their own. They are temporarily staying in vacant houses owned by those who are still in other parts of the region.

They claimed that ever since they returned to their SOO, only CFSI is continually helping them. With CFSI, they were able to organise three community organisations. They are (a) Matingao Organization for Development in which Unos Afdal is the President, (b) Matingao Multi Purpose Cooperative, chaired by Ayunan Andi, and (c) Matingao Women's Organization under the leadership of Sarah Adam. They were very thankful to CFSI for all the services they have already given, such as the *Pulungan Center*, the Psychosocial Training for their women, the "Safe Return Kanduli," LAUR Leader Training, and the coming start-up livelihood assistance. They believe that with CFSI and the positive attitude of their Barangay Captain, they will not be abandoned and their dream for their community will come true.

Upper and Lower Malugasa

The first IDPs at the CFSI priority evacuation sites to return home were those from the sitios of Upper and Lower Malugasa. As early as February 2001, some 40 families returned to Lower Malugasa, and the last batch to complete the 250 families returned in April 2001. March 2001 was the month the first batch (40 families) returned to the Upper Malugasa. The last batch, numbering 18 families, returned in January 2002.

Manobo, Cebuano, Ilonggo and Ilocano dominate these sitios. Both sitios belong to Brgy. Liliongan. It is about 4 to 5 kilometres from the Liliongan Market EC and 23 kilometres from the poblacion of Carmen. It can be reached through a feeder road that is only passable during the dry season. It is about a two-hour walk to the *Pulungan Center* (constructed through the assistance of the Pilot Project) of upper Malugasa, but only 45 minutes by horse from Liliongan EC.

As in the other sitios, women outnumber men in the Lower Malugasa, but there are fewer women in Upper Malugasa than men. Children outnumber adults in both sitios. The majority of the children are attending school, although only 50% complete the end of the school year, due to the sitio's distance from school. Only a few of them finished high school.

The primary source of livelihood is corn farming. However, most of the land in these two sitios at present is untitled. The majority of the farmers cultivate one-hectare of land or more. They also raise backyard animals (e.g., chickens and others) through the livelihood funds provided by CFSI under its LAUR programme. The women work side by side with the men on the farm.

Peace and security in their SOO is uncertain, and they always have to be vigilant. Many households in the area have no toilets. Common illnesses suffered by this population are malaria, dengue, diarrhoea, and cough with fever. Fifteen percent (15%) of the total population in Malugasa was afflicted by diarrhoea. Ten (10) persons died because of malaria in Lower Malugasa. Of this number, five were children seven years old and below. A ten-year-old child died of dengue last year (2001).

In terms of services received by the IDPs of Malugasa, only the Local Government Units (LGUs) of Carmen and its DSWD, Barangay Officials, CFSI and its Sumpats, and Sitio Leaders remain to give them assistance. The mayor supplied them with ammunition and military men; DSWD then promised to help them receive their shelters as soon as possible; and the barangay officials helped them follow up their requests. CFSI has given many services to these communities. These include: Visioning Workshops, Peace Prayers, Peace-Maker Consultations, Women's Psychosocial Training, Construction of the *Pulungan Center*, Safe Return Kanduli, organization and induction of the Malugasa Association for Peace and Development, LAUR Leader Training and livelihood assistance.

Sitio Tabulon

Sitio Tabulon is a purely Maguindanaon community that sought refuge at the sitio Lanitap Evacuation Center of Barangay General Luna, in the town of Carmen. Its distance from the national highway is 1.5 kilometres. The road, constructed by the National Irrigation Administration Region XII (NIA XII), is in good condition. The total population is 54 families comprised of 245 persons. Of this number, there are 95 children whose ages are below 15. Of the 128 adults, seven are 60 years old and above and 12 are widows/widowers.

The first batch returned home on October 11, 2001, consisting of twelve (12) families, headed by the *barangay kagawad* (neighbourhood peace and order officer). More than two months later, on December 2001, the remaining families in the EC finally returned to their place of origin. The majority built their tents in order to show that they are really staying in their SOO. Practically, they went back to their SOO for the same reasons as the other IDPs—their source of livelihood is there, to fast track the construction of shelters, and to avail of the LAUR from CFSI.

The sitio has a land area of about 100 hectares, about 25% of which are swampy, and 75% are rice and corn farms. About 75% of the residents own their farms, while others are tenants of their close relatives. They planted rice, vegetables, root crops and mongo in recent months, but because they lack farm animals, the planted fields are very small. They cannot also avail of the irrigation system because of a lack of resources. Of the 54 families, only 48 have shelters, and until now they have no toilet. The other families live with their close relatives. Their source of drinking water is very far. The only physical facilities present in the sitio are the *Pulungan Center* and the irrigation canals. Their children have to travel 2.5 kilometres, two times a day, in order to attend school. Consequently, four out of ten children who enrolled in the primary school are forced to drop out by the end of the school year.

This community is generally peaceful. Being related either by affinity or purely consanguinity, they share the same history and culture. They also have good relations with the neighbouring Christians. But like other sitios in Carmen, they are not 100% certain of the peace and order in the area.

The services they received include the 48 shelters from the Provincial Social Welfare Department (PSWD), the *Pulungan Center*, the psychosocial training for women, Safe Return Kanduli, the LAUR Leader Training, the livelihood assistance averaging P1,150.00 per person for 44 persons for farm inputs, the Peace Education Seminar, and the women's livelihood assistance for goat raising and others—all from the Pilot Project through CFSI. They are hoping for resources from the PSWD and the Municipal Social Welfare Department (MSWD) for the completion of the 54 shelters, plus the 54 latrines.

II. ANALYSIS OF HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS IN CARMEN

In October 2001, CFSI conducted a detailed household survey in Carmen in order to better understand the circumstances of the displaced persons. The following are some of the key findings regarding the IDPs surveyed in the Carmen research sites only.

A. Profile of the IDPs

The IDPs totalled 1,235. Of this number, the males comprised 54.33% (671) and were more numerous in all the five age-ranges. In the 50 and above age bracket, they constituted 63.39% (71), although in the 5 to 14-age range, they were about 2% more than their female counterparts.

Four of five displaced persons identified themselves as Christians. Islam had its own share of victims of displacement, recorded at 3.14% (48). The proportion of those who professed other religions was 8.96% (137). Others did not indicate a religious preference.

The two ethnic communities with the largest number of displaced persons were Cebuano (57.29%) and Ilongo (24.40%). The Manobos accounted for 7.19%. The Maguindanaons and the Iranuns were not spared from this experience, as evidenced by 3.34% and 0.13%, respectively, of the total number of victims of displacement.

Comparatively, the IDPs were not illiterate as manifested by their educational attainment. From a total of 1,529 respondents, 704 (46.04%) completed elementary; 315 (20.60%) high school; 28 (1.70%) college; and 13 (0.85%) graduate studies. In contrast, those without formal education numbered 258 (16.87%).

The farmers (41.32%) formed the largest group, although 57.88% were included as in the category of unnamed occupations. The drivers, professionals, vendors, and electricians recorded at less than half a percent each.

Table 1. Profile of Carmen IDPs

| Characteristics | N | % |
|------------------------|------|-------|
| RELIGION | 11 | 70 |
| Christianity | 1238 | 80.97 |
| Islam | 48 | 3.14 |
| Other religion | 137 | 8.96 |
| None | 25 | 1.64 |
| No response | 81 | 5.30 |
| Total | 1529 | 2.20 |
| ETHNIC ORIGIN | 1025 | |
| Cebuano | 876 | 57.29 |
| Illongo | 373 | 24.40 |
| Manobo | 110 | 7.19 |
| Maguindanaon | 51 | 3.34 |
| Iranun | 2 | 0.13 |
| Others | 46 | 3.01 |
| No response | 71 | 4.64 |
| Total | 1529 | |
| EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT | | |
| Postgraduate | 13 | 0.85 |
| College | 28 | 1.70 |
| Secondary | 315 | 20.60 |
| Elementary | 704 | 46.04 |
| Technical | 3 | 0.20 |
| No education | 258 | 16.87 |
| No response | 210 | 13.73 |
| Total | 1529 | |
| OCCUPATION | | |
| Farmer | 419 | 41.32 |
| Driver | 3 | 0.30 |
| Professional | 2 | 0.20 |
| Vendor | 2 | 0.20 |
| Electrician | 1 | 0.10 |
| Others | 587 | 57.88 |
| Total | 1014 | |

B. Resources at their Place of Origin

The displaced persons are, by and large, impoverished. They have few resources in their home communities. Of the 309 households, 187 (60.52 %) had agricultural implements. Only 89 (28.80%) owned seedlings. The proportions of those with cows and goats were 25.57% (79) and 21.04% (65). Despite the inaccessibility of some areas to public transport, three (0.97%) reported ownership of motorcycles.

In Carmen, more than one-third (125 persons) of those surveyed assessed their total resources at less than P5,000. Fifty-eight persons estimated the value of their resource as being between P5,000 and P10,000; 58 persons reported values between P10,000 and P15,000; 24 persons suggested the value of their resources totalled more than P15,000.

Of the 309 respondents, 63% (195 persons) claimed to be landowners. 29.23% (57 persons) claimed to possess between one to two hectares; 23. 59% (46 persons) owned two to five hectares; and 16.92% (33 persons) reported owning more than five hectares.

As to communal resources, close to 70% cited planted land, in contrast to more than one-half claiming unplanted land and less than one-third unproductive land. That this land

contains fruit-bearing trees was attested to by 52.10% (161 persons) of the population and non-fruit bearing trees by 41.10% (127 persons). The land also contains forest, according to one-eighth of the respondents.

At the evacuation site, an overwhelming number (198 or 84.08%) of these displaced families had resources worth less than P5,000. Those with more than P15,000 constituted less than 3% (9 persons) of those surveyed.

Well more than four out of five families (90.29%) reported owning their residential houses.

About two out of five houses were semi-permanent. Those built of light materials were counted as represented approximately one-third of the total and those of permanent materials less than one-fifth.

Close to one-third of these houses were constructed at a cost ranging from P5,000 to P10,000. The most expensive—more than P15,000—was owned by seven families; and the cheapest—less than P5,000—by 27 families.

Landowners in their home communities totalled 195 (63.11% of the total surveyed). The non-owners totalled 80 (25.89%).

Table 2. Resources of IDPs at the Place of Origin

| Families with own home at Place of Origin and Make of Home $(N = 279)$ | | | |
|--|-----|-------|--|
| Carmen | n | % | |
| Semi-Permanent | 108 | 38.71 | |
| Permanent | 54 | 19.35 | |
| Light | 88 | 30.82 | |
| No response | 31 | 11.11 | |
| Total | 279 | | |

| Families with own home at Place of Orig | in and Vali | ue of home | | | |
|--|-----------------------|------------|------|-------|--|
| > P5, 000 but < P10, 000 | | 81 | | 29.03 | |
| > P15, 000 | 7 | | 2.51 | | |
| > 10, 000 but < P15, 000 | | 19 | | 6.81 | |
| < P5, 000 | | 27 | | 9.68 | |
| | | 134 | | 46.03 | |
| | | 11 | | 3.94 | |
| | | 279 | | | |
| Families with own Land at Place of Orig | in | | | | |
| Yes | | 195 | | 63.11 | |
| No | | 80 | | 25.89 | |
| No response | | 34 | | 11 | |
| Total | | 309 | | | |
| Families with own Land and Size of Land | $l\left(N=195\right)$ | | | | |
| > 5 has | | 33 | | 16.92 | |
| > 2 but < 5 has | | 46 | | 23.59 | |
| > 1 but < 2 has | | 57 | | 29.23 | |
| < 1 has | | 43 | | 22.05 | |
| No response | | 16 | | 8.21 | |
| Total | | 195 | | | |
| Family Resources at Places of Origin | | | | | |
| | Yes | | no | | |
| | F | % | f | % | |
| Cash | 158 | 51.13 | 151 | 48.87 | |
| Motorcycle/Tricycle | 3 | 0.97 | 306 | 99.03 | |
| Cow/Cattle | 79 | 25.57 | 230 | 74.43 | |
| Goat(s) | 65 | 21.04 | 244 | 78.96 | |
| Farming Equipment | 187 | 60.52 | 122 | 39.48 | |
| Fishing Equipment | 11 | 3.56 | 298 | 96.44 | |
| Sewing Equipment | 12 | 3.88 | 297 | 98.12 | |
| Seedlings | 89 | 28.80 | 220 | 71.20 | |
| Other Negotiable Goods | 33 | 10.68 | 278 | 89.32 | |
| Other Resources | 92 | 29.77 | 217 | 70.23 | |
| Estimated Value of all Family Resources at Place of Origin | | | | | |
| < P5, 000 | | 125 | | 40.45 | |
| > P5,000 but < P10,000 | | 58 | | 18.77 | |
| > 10, 000 but < P15, 000 | | 54 | | 17.48 | |
| > P15,000 | | 24 | | 7.77 | |
| No response | | | | | |
| No response | | 48 | | 15.53 | |

C. Interfaith Attitudes and Experience

On the frequency of interaction with people of different religious and political beliefs, the results show 60.19% responding "often" and 31.39% "seldom."

More than 90% of primary respondents disclosed a positive and pleasant attitude in dealing with people adhering to different religious, political, and social beliefs and practices.

57.61% and 4.53%, respectively, reported experience discrimination "to some extent" or "frequently" while 36.25% did not experience discrimination.

The 309 primary respondents indicated varied feelings and perceptions of their experiences in the evacuation centers. 41.28% of the respondents described their conditions as hopeless. Other comments included angry (10.7%), depressed ((9.40%), and frightened (9.06%). On the other hand, 13.42% declared themselves recovering, while 9.73% said they were happy.

Regarding the situation in Mindanao, more than one-fourth was angry and about one-third was depressed. However, only 12.71% reported pessimism about the future.

Of the 309 primary respondents, 70.87% indicated that the armed conflict had affected women differently compared to men.

Three out of five expressed optimism on the possibility of Mindanao regaining peace and normalcy.

Table 3. Inter-faith Relations among Primary Respondents

| Frequency of interaction with people of different religious and political beliefs | | |
|--|-----|-------|
| | N | % |
| Often | 186 | 60.19 |
| Seldom | 97 | 31.39 |
| Never | 8 | |
| No response | 18 | 5.83 |
| Total | | |
| Attitude of primary respondents (enjoy talking with people of different religious, political and | | |
| social beliefs) | | |
| | n | % |
| Yes | 286 | 92.56 |
| No | 18 | 5.83 |
| Total | 309 | |
| Frequency of discrimination experienced by primary respondents | | |
| | n | % |
| Frequently | 14 | 4.53 |
| To some extent | 178 | 57.61 |
| None | 112 | 36.25 |
| No response | 5 | 1.62 |
| Total | 309 | |

D. IMPACT OF THE ARMED CONFLICT ON THE IDPS

The armed conflict affected the Carmen IDPs in several ways. Just like other IDPs, about 45% of the families experienced separation from their respective families. However, the majority of these separations were of short duration, with more than 82% claiming to have been separated for less than a month. The education of the children underwent unnecessary disruption. The length of time varied with more than 55% out of school for less than a month, and almost 20% from one to two months. It should be noted, however, that about 17% claimed to have lost a year or two of schooling.

Table 4. Impact of the Armed Conflict on the IDPs' families

| Table 4. Impact of the Affiled Connict on the IDI's families | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------|--|
| Separated from immediate family men | ibers | | |
| Yes | 140 | 45.31 | |
| No | 164 | 53.07 | |
| No response | 5 | 1.62 | |
| Total | 309 | | |
| If separated, for how long? | | | |
| Less than 1 month | 256 | 82.85 | |
| 1-2 months | 24 | 7.76 | |
| 3-5 months | 11 | 3.55 | |
| 6 months or more | 18 | 5.81 | |
| Total | 309 | | |
| Education of the children of the prima | ry respondents disrupted | | |
| Yes | 307 | 99.35 | |
| No | 2 | O.65 | |
| Total | 309 | | |
| Number of months education of childr | en disrupted | | |
| Less than 1 month | 172 | 55.66 | |
| 1-2 months | 60 | 19.42 | |
| 3-5 months | 17 | 5.50 | |
| 6-11 months | 5 | 1.41 | |
| 12 months or more | 53 | 17.16 | |
| Total | 307 | | |

The primary respondents deplored the impact of the armed conflict on the behaviour of the children in the evacuation centers. The majority of them noticed undesirable changes on children and about 56% on the youth. They (56.96%) declared that a number of the displaced children had personally witnessed violence.

Death and trauma were the most serious damages inflicted on the IDPs. Sixty-five percent (65.05%) had knowledge of a death related to armed conflict, with 27% indicating that the dead were a member of the family. The armed clashes, according to more than 70% of the primary respondents, traumatised some members of the community.

Table 5. Impact of Armed Conflict on the IDPs

| Table 5. Impact of Armed Conflict on the ID | | |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Did the respondents notice changes in the beha | v | |
| Yes | 181 | 58.58 |
| No | 90 | 29.13 |
| No response | 20 | 6.47 |
| Total | 309 | |
| Did the respondents notice changes on the beha | iviour of the youth of | the community? |
| Yes | 174 | 56.31 |
| No | 71 | 22.98 |
| Don't know | 37 | 11.97 |
| No response | 27 | 8.74 |
| Total | 309 | |
| Respondents' observations on the children of th | e community who wi | tnessed violence arising |
| from the armed conflict | | |
| Yes | 176 | 56.96 |
| No | 90 | 29.13 |
| Don't know | 37 | 11.97 |
| No response | 6 | 1.94 |
| Total | 309 | |
| Respondents' observations on the people of the | community who appe | eared traumatised |
| Yes | 217 | 70.23 |
| No | 78 | 25.24 |
| No response | 14 | 4.53 |
| Total | 309 | |
| Respondents' personal knowledge of death resu | llting from the armed | l conflict |
| Yes | 201 | 65.05 |
| No | 89 | 28.80 |
| No response | 19 | 6.15 |
| Total | 309 | |
| Was the dead a family member? | <u>.</u> | |
| Yes | 54 | 26.86 |
| No | 147 | 73.14 |
| Total | 201 | |
| | | |

E. Implications of the Household Surveys

From the foregoing, it is quite apparent that many of the IDPs came from the rural areas and engaged in subsistence farming. But their ownership of traditional farm implements, land, residential homes, and domestic animals—in addition to their educational attainment—indicate a certain degree of sufficiency in terms of livelihood. In the context of their own situation, they can survive and hopefully improve their quality of life.

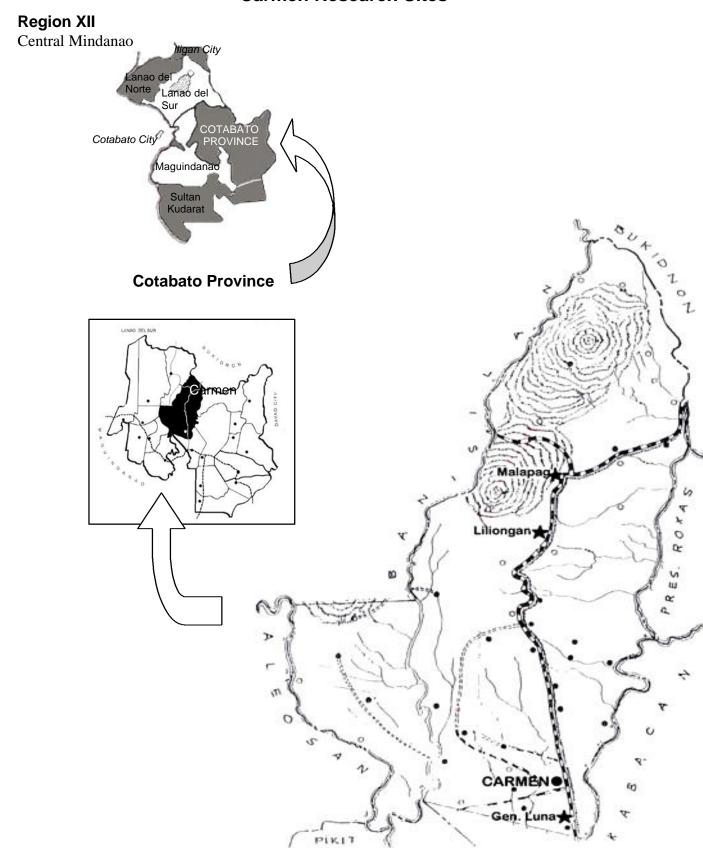
In practically all-internal wars, the consequences weigh more heavily on women. The burden of feeding and caring for the family, along with the worries characteristic of a

situation where assistance is hardly sufficient, rests mainly on them. This was confirmed by the overwhelming response of the primary respondents. However, the impact of this violent confrontation is on the people as a whole, for its toll not only in terms of life and property, but also the harm done to bodily integrity and mental health.

Though the IDPs expressed pessimism and other negative views of their conditions in the evacuation centers—which are natural reactions arising from unpleasant experiences—the majority of them did not waver in their belief on the possibility for peace and political stability to be restored in Mindanao. Given their number, most of the victims in this area were Christians. However, the Muslims and the Lumads (indigenous groups) had also their own share of displaced persons. It is interesting to note that on the part of the affected tri-people, a great majority of them maintain a healthy and pleasant attitude and harmonious interaction with each other.

This survey of conditions faced by displaced persons reinforces the idea that it is the poor and the marginalised in the countryside that have to endure the unnecessary and wasteful consequences of armed struggle. Displacement exposes the many problems and difficulties of an impoverished people. As such, they are in desperate need of relief assistance. It is more important, however, to provide them with opportunities to take care of their own lives. This should be the situation of the IDPs in Mindanao. Their stay in evacuation centers and return to their home communities must be premised on the principle of justice that demands that they be treated as agents of their own rehabilitation, not objects of charity.

Carmen Research Sites



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