



Peace Frames & Tapestries

Frontliners' Perspectives on Peacebuilding Dimensions



ACT for Peace Programme

**Peace Frames and Tapestries:
Frontliners' Perspectives on Peacebuilding Dimensions**

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FOREWORD

Anxiety and uneasiness are written all over the faces of the 14 men and women who met at the Marco Polo Hotel in Davao City in December 2008 for a writing workshop. Funny but the expectation that they will be writing by themselves the narrative of their years of valuable experience and a life dedicated to service of their once troubled communities sends jolts of nervous tremors racing through their nerves.

They admitted during their sharing session that these creepy thoughts keep racing through their senses as if they have to venture into yet another strange territory, of another skill foreign to their life exposed to real risks, of dodging bullets and keeping guerrillas in disciplined formations.

Yes, they dared venture into another strange realm, when the Moro National Liberation Front that they belong to, agreed to a peace settlement in September 1996 and sending their seasoned field commanders to apply their combat skills to peace-time livelihood and community-cohesion activities and was hence ascribed as peace and development advocates (PDAs).

The uneasiness has accompanied many of them even as early as during their trip to the venue, several hundred kilometers away from many of their hometowns in central and southwestern island provinces of Mindanao.

They will bargain for more time, to rest perhaps and collect themselves to sanity.

That's how the writeshop begins to accumulate the aura around the writers that they wish they never had ever dared accepted the invitation from the Act for Peace Programme.

And so it came to pass, days later, the story framework that they had to write began to emerge in the skill's training from the shadows of their fear of the unknown.

Some of them can already write fairly well and easy, having pursued it personally in their leisure. However, for the rest of the 14 participants to the three-day writeshop, writing was like wringing mud sticking close to the denims but still holding on to the effort to write like a prized bounty worthy of the picking.

"Hindi ako natulog buong gabi" (I did not sleep all night), said Kublai Elias, 57, president of the PDAs in Tawi-tawi. He added, that whenever he felt like quitting, he just kept on writing as suggested by his coach.

"Nagdurugo ang aking mga kamay" (My fingers are bleeding), said Khanappi K. Ayao, 49. This he said, not to describe his revolutionary exploits that included leading the assault on Awang Airbase in Cotabato City in the 1970s, but as a simile to the writing process that he was undergoing.

Mama D. Binangon, 64, who, like Ayao, was also a battle-scarred field commander of the MNLF almost quit the writeshop. He said: *"Noong ika-tatlong araw ng ating writeshop, gusto ko na sanang tumakas, aalis nang hindi magpapaalam. Ngunit naisip ko ang kahalagahan ng ating ginagawa, kaya't nagdesisyon akong manindigan, magpatuloy at isulat ang dapat isulat"* (On the third day of our writeshop, I wanted to escape, leave the venue unnoticed. But I realized the value of what we are doing and decided to take a stand, continue and write what needs to be written).

How did it happen that the one skill – writing – that many participants never ever dreamed of getting into, turned out rudimentary narratives and literary pieces at the end of the writeshop?

The writers of this book went through a reflective evaluation workshop process that surfaced ground theories and experiences. These were processed through discussions and juxtapositions of established theoretical frames in peace peacebuilding, including "theories of

change”, “peacebuilding dimensions of change” and “factors for voluntary behavioral change”. While these theoretical frames were used in the main, the process was open to other lenses and frames that the participants were free to use in the efforts to consolidate their knowledge and experiences and evolve ground theories.

After the reflective evaluation, the writers then, went into a writeshop that enabled them to communicate their experiences and ground theories in written form. The manuscripts generated from the writeshop served as materials and subject of this book.

To overcome the barrier of language, the writers were encouraged to write their ideas in the language that they are comfortable with. Few of the writers directly wrote in English, while many wrote in Tagalog because this is the more common language that both them and coaches could easily dialogue and understand with. This is indicated by the Pilipino versions of a number of stories included here with an accompanying English version.

Through the process of reflective evaluation and coaching, the writers slowly shed away of the fears and uncertainty that they can never write at all beyond love letters and snippets of daily memoirs. In creative fashion they eventually sniffed and snipped out and identified the highlights of their years of work and presented back to them in big bold strokes that these are the things that must be communicated across.

Anxiety and the fear of the unknown were soon replaced with excitement, as the single significant subject that must be communicated has also surfaced in every other individual storyline that was being formed.

The magic word is Peacebuilding. Everybody agrees that this must not be wasted away unreported in those remote and unheard places.

“Gusto kong ibahagi sa iba pang PDAs kung papaano namin pinanday ang isang organisasyong aktibong tumutulong sa pagsasakatuparan ng kapayapaan sa mga komunidad” (I want to

share with other PDAs how we built an organization that actively help communities build peace), said Hadja Giobay Diocolano, 62, President of the Kadtabanga Foundation, of her reasons to persevere in writing her story.

Kublai, who came to the writeshop bringing along her daughter Jaifa to assist him in writing but, who eventually wrote her own story, said, *"Patunayan ko sa aking mga anak na kaya ko ring sumulat"* (I will prove to my children that I, too, can write).

It has to come out into the open, to tell the world that in those communities, formerly wasted by war and neglect, has waged another kind of battle in building back peace and security to bring back hope and restore the dreams in each and every resident.

The storytellers show the various stages of their and their villagers' transformation, from their shift of focus from areas of combat to rebuilding communities after the government and the Moro National Liberation Front signed the peace agreement in September 1996

Stories are about the changes of individual viewpoints and perspectives, of their relation with their neighbors and other villagers, of how institutions have changed through time, and how the community harnesses traditional systems and structures to change them.

It is how communities put up their own systems of resolving conflict, bringing about more cohesion in mixed communities, of how they muster the voice and courage to demand from government their due share of attention and assistance, and how they manage the resources accorded them and to account for them in transparent manner.

And so stories about prejudices and bloody clannish conflict, death and desolation are pieced together again, alongside recent milestone in community leadership and Bayanihan-type of cooperation that allowed the so-called peace and development

communities to derive social services that were not there before and could never be had, unless by and through their collective efforts.

Slowly, stories about seeing potable water system for the first time, acquiring farm implements impossible to own before, and getting ready financial and technical support from local government units and the academe, have popped up hope and new dedication to really write them down and better.

Like when they first became PDAs, reorienting themselves to the new work as writers of their own history would never be easy. Each one of them, however, knew by heart that their individual stories would be placed alongside the rest to weave a tapestry of the peacebuilding efforts in the communities of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. They took pride in the thought that Peace Frames and Tapestries is the first ever attempt to document community peacebuilding from their words and perspectives. Them, the former combatants and operatives of the MNLF and peace practitioners from the academe and the local government units. Them, the residents of the region that continues to struggle and to gradually shape the course of its right to self-determination.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The making of this book would not have been possible were it not for the invaluable work of the chapter editors who ably guided the writers to wring out their storytelling prowess and come up with narratives of rich human experiences in transition phases of violence and war, to peace efforts and settled life in the communities:

To **Gingging Avellanosa-Valle**, a veteran in news and feature reporting in Mindanao peace and conflict situations, who helped the writers in this book extract the vital and substantial highlights and lessons about the early days of peace and development advocacy;

To **Geejay Arriola**, whose wealth of theatre and musical experiences made it easier for community organizers and peace and development advocates to illustrate and demonstrate the slips and successes in injecting self and collective confidence and harnessing the innate strength and energy among former troubled communities toward development goals;

To **Don Pagusara**, a respected playwright in Mindanao and Palanca multi-awardee, guided academicians to dramatically lay out and build the artistic presentations of their efforts to educate the communities to hold on to peace;

To **JhayR Tolentino**, whose deep background on community organizing and institutional-building catering to disadvantaged sectors in Mindanao, provided depth and breadth to narratives about local government efforts to infuse peace governance; and

To **Manuel Cayon**, whose coverage and editing of a wide range of issues on and about Mindanao for several national newspapers and foreign news organizations, made it easier to manage and supervise the knitting of the different chapters of the book.

And to the **Act for Peace Programme**, for laying out the foundation to make a wider documentation effort of how people have struggled for peace and defending it, that these little success stories on peacebuilding would not come to naught but become the lighthouse of other efforts for peace in many troubled regions in the world.

chapter 1

PDC: *MORO*

SELF-DETERMINATION

AT THE

GRASSROOTS

“PAGSUMADJA” • PEACE IN THE HEART OF THE MORO
• PDC TAMBAK STRUGGLES FOR WATER • THE NEW
STRUGGLE: CROSS-CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION • KM. 21
• PEACE BRIDGES BABAG AND BOLOH-BOLOH



INTRODUCTION

“All peoples have the right to self-determination.

By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

- *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*
23 March 1976

- *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*
January 3, 1976

Self-determination is defined as free choice of one's own acts without external compulsion, and especially as the freedom of the people of a given territory to determine their own political status or independence from their current state. From this broad definition of the concept of self-determination, the United Nations ratified and enforced the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights where the right to self-determination of peoples is recognized.

Twelve years after the signing of the Peace Agreement between the National Government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in September 1996, self-determination remains a daunting task for the Moro People. The peace agreement, aside from providing the mechanism that ended the violent conflict between the MNLF and the national government, also was meant to provide the blueprint for the realization of Moro self-determination. As the core mechanism to actualize self-determination, the peace agreement provided for the strengthening of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). At this juncture, the regional government is still grappling with the politics of self-governance. Down the line, the provincial and municipal governments within the ARMM are in similar situation, struggling with the difficulties of delivering basic services to their constituencies. On the same milieu, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) continues with the armed struggle to secure the same objective: self-determination.

If viewed from the realities at the macro level, self-determination seems to be too complicated to undertake and too ideal to materialize. However, a different perspective, one that is viewed from the vantage point of the grassroots, will indicate that self-determination is doable, practical and is slowly taking shape in various communities in the ARMM.

This chapter of the book, explores this grassroots perspective of self-determination occurring in selected Peace and Development Communities (PDCs) in the region.

A PDC, as defined by the Act for Peace Program, a peacebuilding endeavor of the national government and the United Nations, is a “social unit upon which peace and development framework is founded and implemented”. By itself, the PDC has symbolized change and transformation. It touches base with ordinary residents and involves them in building peace and development of their very own community.

The writers who contributed their stories in this chapter came from these PDCs. They are community leaders, organizers and MNLF members. From their experiences in working with the people in the PDCs, a working formula for the actualization of the principle of self-determination is evolving. That is, self-determination can materialize through hard work of community organizing coupled with meaningful and active people’s participation.

In the stories that follow in this chapter, each of the authors is one in his or her individual desire to sew back the ruined stitches of the social fabric that unites communities and different cultures for centuries. The stories also tell of the former MNLF combatants’ active involvement in peacebuilding at the grassroots level as community organizers. They provide glimpses of the various challenges that the COs have to address in building PDCs and how these are surmounted when working together with the local residents. The stories are reflections of self-determination in action.

THE AUTHORS

At a glance, **Nurisa U. Bakil** is not the kind of woman who can intimidate an armed soldier in their community in *Lupah Sug* or the island of Sulu Province. But when she spoke to one of the soldiers in one occasion to tell him not to go any farther into their community because they have no business there, it was with authority and firmness that commands respect and awe.

She would recall later that such act surprised her to see that the soldier moved away, seemingly understanding what she meant.

Unlike before when women would just keep their silence in front of men, she says that all that has changed, as women in their community now are organized and are learning a lot about other basic rights and issues like health, nutrition and hygiene, with the help of funding partners, especially the Act for Peace that assisted them in various ways.

In her account of the transformation of the three barangays that are covered by the peace and development community (PDC) Batu Habah where she is a community organizer (CO), Nurisa paints a community that has learned the ropes of change and took the challenge towards transformation despite the obstacles. Her piece also shows how the community dealt with the modifications that came into their lives.



▲
1. Bakil; 2. Ayao;
3. Binangon; 4. Abdulgani;
5. Agting

Coming from a former commander of the MNLF-turned-peace advocate another personal account depicts how change became too strong an influence on him and his fellow MNLF combatants.

The author, **Khanappi “Sonny” K. Ayao** outlines the social and economic developments in the PDC where he is working with, and what has strengthened the capacity of its community organizations and social structures.

His travel to Canada, the US and Columbia as a trainee and resource person to spread his peace advocacy works, also moved him to write how livelihoods were rebuilt through sustainable agriculture and micro-enterprises.

Meanwhile, cross-cultural transformation has characterized the changes of consciousness influencing the people around the PDC, so writes **Mama Binangon**. An MNLF leader who also became a peace advocate, Binangon emerged as the leader in the PDC that includes not only Moro but also Christians and Indigenous Peoples.

He writes about the peaceful co-existence of these three groups, who live and share resources together, and help each other in ways most people outside their community might think improbable. His story debunks usual claims in the news media that Mindanao is nothing but “war-torn” and bloody.

For many COs, it is easier to do manual labor than to talk about their experiences as combatants and later as organizers in the PDCs. It is

even more difficult for the COs when they are asked to write down about their experiences. **Abadia Abdulgani**, however, tried and wrote in bits and pieces the many things that he would have wanted to tell the world about his PDC in Barangay Babag, Basilan.

Born and coddled in the heart of MNLF communities in the midst of war in the heart of MNLF communities, Abdulgani personifies self-transformation and appreciates the basics of peace, and what this means for him and his people. Turned PDA and recently was elected vice mayor of his municipality, Abdulgani discloses the community problems like family feud and land conflict before the Act for Peace Programme came into their community.

When the assistance came, changes and new activities also came like fishing boat, bakeshop, health services and health center. Sustaining these activities has proved easier now for Abdulgani because of the joint efforts of other PDAs under the PDA League.

The largest among the three barangays in the newly created municipality of Tabuan-Lasa (literally, market of love), in Bubuan Island, Barangay Babag was declared a PDC in 1998 purportedly because of 95% of its populace were former MNLF combatants. Like the rest of the Moro communities turned PDCs, during Martial Law, Barangay Babag figured in several AFP-MNLF skirmishes, driving the residents away to evacuate several times in the past.

Another story on cross-cultural transformation is written by a CO of Kadtabanga Foundation, Inc., one of the leading provincial peace and development advocate leagues, which is also operating as a non-government organization (NGO).

Oting A. Agting became a PDA in 2003 by virtue of a joint resolution of the Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) of Alamada and Kristlam Multipurpose representative. Agting, the PDA who went on international training in Australia due to his community organizing experiences, narrates how the people in the community have transformed into an organized and peace-loving people despite differences in beliefs and cultural practices.

He says “development is served by the people themselves through their own initiatives and local efforts”.

In his story, he reports the number of PDC Alamada’s household that benefited from various economic assistance coursed through their cooperative, the KRISLAM Multipurpose Cooperative. It has a membership of 171 individuals.

One of the striking things seeing the COs relating their stories is the impression that they seem to have cocooned out from being a “silent minority” to a more expressive and responsive participants. Yet even so, talking about their PDCs comes naturally for many COs mentioned above. It is as if the changes within themselves and the people around them are all etched into their psyche so that when they start to think or talk about these, they gush out like refreshing spring water. In the eyes of these COs and leaders, the following stories only show that the fruition of the Moro people’s dreams have finally come to their lives, and that they are actively involved in their transformation as well that of their communities.

“PAGSUMADJA”

BY NURISA U. BAKIL

Maraming pagbabago ang naganap magmula ng magkaisa ang tatlong barangay ng Maimbung na nasasakop ng PDC Batohabab. Ang tatlong barangay na ito ay ang Barangay Matatal, Duhol Kabbon at Tanduh Patong. Sa salitang Tausug, ang tawag namin dito ay “pagsumadja”, o ang pagbubuklod-buklod ng mga komunidad. Ang mga pangyayaring naganap ay nagpatingkad ng panibagong pag-asa para sa aming mga Tausug na naninirahan dito sa bundok ng Lupah Sug, sa PDC Bato Habab.

Ito ang buod ng aking kwento.

Sa maikling panahon, ang dating kampo ng MNLF sa Batohabab ay, ngayon, isa nang fertile, agricultural land. Noong 1993 lamang, itong sitio ng Barangay Matatal na nasa pamumuno noon ng namayapang si Kumander Abdul Nasiep

Jalalain, ay may mangilanngilan lang na mga tao dito.

Subalit nang ang mga suporta galing sa ibang lugar ay pumasok na at sa tulong ng pinuno nito, dumami ang tao at umabot na sa 700 na pamilya ang nakatira sa kampo.

Karamihan sa mga tao dito ay pagtatanim ng agricultural crops tulad ng vegetables, cassava at citrus ang ikinabubuhay nila, at ito ay nakakatulong sa kalusugan nga mga tao.

Lahat ng ito ay nasimulan noong magkaroon ng 1996 Peace agreement sa pagitan ng MNLF at GRP (o government of the Republic of the Philippines). Mas lalong naging maliwanag ang buhay para sa mga tao, hanggang sa pumasok ang UNMDP (United Nations Multi-Donor Program) for emergency assistance. Magmula noon nagkaroon ng maraming pagsasanay tulad ng Capacity Building sa 1999 at training sa CO-CD (community development) kung saan isa ako sa mga dumalo, at pagkatapos noon, nagbuo na ng PDC sa Batohabab at nag-umpisang mag-organize.

Sa bandang ito, nag-organize na rin ang karatig barangay ng Duhul Kablon ng farmers' cooperative sa pamumuno pa rin ng dating kumander na si Abdul Nasiep

Jalalain. Ganoon din ang mga kababaihan na na-organize at tinawag na Rhaja Yatim Association.

Sa paglakbay ng panahon, ang PDC Batohabah ay naging evacuation center noong 2000 nang magkaroon ang military ng malawakang operasyon laban sa Abu Sayyaf. Naapektuhan ang pag-unlad ng barangay, bagkus, naging tirahan na ng mga evacuees ang Barangay Matatal, Duhol Kablon, dahil sa ayaw na ng mga taong bumalik sa kani-kanilang tahanan dahil sa takot.

Ang nabasag na katahimikan ng barangay ay nanganganib na mawala ng tuluyan nang magkaroon ng kampo ang military at mga Amerikanong sundalo sa lugar, mismo sa puso ng PDC noong 2003. Mula noon wala ng control ang community at ang mga pananim ay malaya ng nakakain ng baboy-damo.

Pansamantalang naantala ang takbo ng buhay sa Batohabah tungo sa kaunlaran.

Itinayo din ng katabing barangay ang kanilang PDC dahil sa nakita nila ang kahalagahan nito sa pagpanatili ng kapayapaan. Pumasok na rin ang UNDP (United Nations Development Program) sa Tanduh Patong kung saan maraming magagandang pangyayari ang naranasan ng mga tao.

Isa na dito ang pagbalik ng magandang pakikitungo ng mga pamilyang naglalaban-laban sa family feud umpisa noong 1993 sa Barangay Tanduh Patong. Nagkaroon ng peace covenant kung saan ang barangay ay idineklarang “peace zone”, na ibig

sabihin, wala ng gulo. Nagkaroon ng active participation ang community sa pangkalusugan kung kaya’t nakapagpatayo na ng health station at nabawasan na ang mga problema sa pangkalahatang kalusugan ng mga tao. Nagkaroon na rin ng mga basic health services.

Ang mga nanay ay natuto ng makabagong pamamaraan sa pagtingin sa pangkalahatang kalusugan ng mga bata at sa pagtanaw sa family planning lalo na sa spacing ng panganganak. Ang community ay nagkaroon ng active participation sa pagbabago ng pananaw ukol sa kapayapaan.

Sa huli, ang mga community at BLGUs ay nagkaroon ng plano tungkol sa pangkalusugan, sa pagpapalano ng project para sa basic health services, project proposal para sa water system at pag-apruba sa social preparation para sa BLGUs.

Kahit merong mga problema kami sa suporta ng LGUs sa pag-implement ng water system ito ay may kalunasan din. Ang importante dito ay natututo na ang mga tao tungkol sa pagpanatili ng kalinisan lalo na sa sarili at dahan-dahang nagbago para sa kaunlaran at kapayapaan ng komunidad.

Sa ngayon kami ay umaasang mapanatili ang kapayapaan sa PDC at magpapatuloy ang magagandang pangyayari sa buhay ng mga tao dito sa aming PDC.

“PAGSUMADJA”

BY NURISA U. BAKIL

There were many changes since the three barangays of the municipality of Maimbung under the Peace and Development Community of Bato Habah became united. They were the Barangays of Matatal, Duhol Kabbon and Tanduh Patong. In the Tausug dialect, we call this “pagsumadja”, meaning, the coming together of the communities. The events that took place sparked a new hope for the Tausugs living here in this far-flung place of Lupah Sug called Bato Habah.

In such a short time, the once MNLF camp in Sitio Batohabab of Barangay Matatal in 1993, has transformed into a fertile agricultural land. This was under the leadership of erstwhile leader Abdul Nasiep Jalalain (deceased). There were only a few people then, but since financial assistance came in, the inhabitants grew in number until they reached 700 families who live within the camp.

The livelihood of most of the people here include planting agricultural crops, vegetables, cassava, citrus and other crops that have greatly helped the health of the people.

All of these came about upon the signing of the Peace Agreement between

the MNLF and the GRP in 1996, and thereafter, when the UNMDP came in with emergency assistance. Since that time, there were many trainings such as Capacity Building in 1999, and those for the CO-CD where I was one of those who were able to attend. After that, the PDC of Batohabab started to organize.

At this point, the neighboring barangay of Duhul Kablon has started to organize a farmers’ cooperative under the leadership of then Commander Abdul Nasiep Jalalain. Likewise, the women have formed their own organization called Rhaia Yatim Association.

In 2000, PDC Batohabab became an evacuation center when an all-out operation was launched by the military against the Abu Sayyaf. The development of the barangay got affected especially when the evacuees refused to go back to Barangay Matatal, Duhol Kablon because of fear.

Then in 2003, the peace and quite of the barangay was further threatened when the AFP and the American soldiers set up a camp in the heart of the community.

Then another neighbouring barangay formed their PDC after they saw its importance to the maintenance of peace in the community. Also during this time, the

UNDP programme came into Tanduh Patong, where the people benefited from the assistance.

One of these benefits was the restoration of the good relationship among families who have been engaged in bloody family feud since 1993 in Barangay Tanduh Patong. A peace covenant was written and the barangay was declared a “peace zone”, which means there will be no more armed fighting in the area.

The mothers learned new ways of looking at the overall wellness among children, and also learned about family planning, especially the spacing method. Overall, the community was actively involved in health promotion, thus, a health station was built and basic health services were provided that problems on health decreased.

TRANSFORMATION OF THEIR WORLD VIEW TOWARDS PEACE

Recently, the community and the BLGUs came up with plans toward having more basic health services, such as a project proposal for a water system and approval for social preparation for the BLGUs.

Even if we encounter problems like the support of the LGUs to the implementation of the water system, we are confident there is a solution to this. The important thing here is that the people have learned how to maintain hygiene, and are slowly working towards development and peace in the community.

We are hoping that peace will remain in our PDC and the good things will continue to happen in the lives of the people here in our PDC.

PDC Batu Habah

Named after the rocky hill situated in the heart of Maimbung, PDC Batu Habah is actually a small sitio of Barangay Matatal that was previously occupied by MNLF combatants largely encamped in this particular sitio during Martial Law days in the 1970's.

The place was a known battle field at that time. After the GOP-MNLF Peace Agreement was signed in 1996, the camp was strategically organized into PDC and became one of the pilot areas where peace and development was tested. Different POs were organized and trained on community organizing and community development. It was also during these times when the community started to avail of assistance from GOP-UN program.

Some of the strengths and opportunities within PDC Batuhabah include the existence of functional BLGUs with their own Barangay Development Plan (BDP) and mechanism for coordination among the three BLGUs involved. There is also a high degree of social cohesion with local peace champions and POs and deep desire for peace among the residents.

Moreover, the area has a wide agricultural land and access to agricultural technicians and knowledge of diversified farming system, access to foreign-assisted projects, and access to basic social services, with an on-going water system construction.

Most of all, the residents have deeper appreciation of the issues of culture of peace and human rights. These strengths make up for the weaknesses and constraints recognized by the community organizers in the PDC, which include a weak agricultural production due to lack of farm facilities, lack of medicines, and vulnerability to military operations.

There are also incidence of human rights violations and weak PO capacities in enterprise management and organizational development. ■

PEACE IN THE HEART OF THE MORO

BY KHANAPPI K. AYAO

A people's struggle through violent means can result to deep wounds, whose scars will be etched throughout one's life. This I realized now.

Our serene life was disrupted by the powerful bombs of the Philippine government armed forces. The promised "development" in the land of the Bangsa Moro territory turned out to be weapons of mass destruction poured on us like OV-10 bombs, bullets, tanks and government soldiers.

I grew up under tumultuous circumstances: guns and bullets were my constant playmates. There were times when I wondered about the world in which I live. I observed that my childhood friends had clean clothes and carried books. I felt extremely envious but what always nagged in my mind was the idea that these Moro youth were cowards.

My young and tender mind was filled with determination to defend my Moro,

Christian and Indigenous brothers and sisters. When I became an MNLF combatant it grew into a motivation to continue our struggle against the military elements of the government of the Philippines, and the oppressive methods of their cohorts in the island of Mindanao. The excessive landgrabbing, repression of human rights and fragmentation of the heart of the Moro, Christian and Indigenous people, were all wrought by the unjust war against the Bangsamoro land.

NOW, AN ADVOCATE FOR PEACE

Waging a different kind of war now a war against poverty through my development initiatives, and as a Peace and Development Advocate (PDA) people know me for my passionate plea to my fellow combatants: "Yakapin natin ang kapayapaan" (let us embrace peace).

This was my message that I delivered before delegates from 70 countries who attended the international conference on Participating Development for Global

Change on July 2002 at the University of Guelph Ontario, Canada.

The greatest challenge facing the MNLF at present is how to bring the benefits of the peace agreement forged between the government and the MNLF in 1996 to the ordinary residents of the community. A bold solution to this challenge was made through the establishment of the Peace and Development Communities (PDCs).

As a PDA, I'm in charge of different PDCs in North Cotabato, taking on roles in community organizing and peace and development advocacy, project management and implementation, networking and linking. I was late though, in joining the rest of PDAs in the joint activities supported by the UNDP Human Resource Development Program in 1999-2000. My concept of peace and development is concretely visualized in the presence of warehouse, farm inputs, and loans.

I would later realize that the tri-people dialogue that I had been promoting all the while in our areas was actually one of the major roles of the PDA. In Pigkawayan, I have boasted the fact that there are no more armed conflict and I attribute this to the local peace council that facilitated it.

As chairman of the Taliawid Multi-purpose Cooperative which I have helped organize together with 124 members like-minded MNLF combatants, I have always explained the reason why I took

on this new role. I am fighting for the masses, not [Nur] Misuari. I'm fighting for the rights of the people whether they are highlanders, Christians or Muslims. I want people to gain adequate sources of livelihood.

NEW ARENA

In this new arena of struggle, the rules are different and so I have to learn the ropes from cooperative management project development to resource accessing. Through the help of funding partners like Growth Equity in Mindanao (GEM) which came after series of capacity-building activities by the United Nation Multi-Donor Program (UNMDP), I continued to lead my comrades in the transition to being productive farmers and fisherfolk as a part of the confidence-building measure under the peace agreement.

Among the projects we have successfully implemented was the fresh-water fish culture such as black eel-fattening and training on tilapia-production. The Department of Agriculture also came in with two water pumps to help the cooperative deal with the threat of the El Niño dry spell. Marketing assistance was provided by GEM which taught our group how to link with other donor agencies.

In our cooperative everyone is transparent. We discuss everything from planning to dealing with agencies, all

the way to project implementation. I also cite consequences in decision-making as a crucial task in every step of our organizational activities which elicit the support of all.

My devotion to the projects of the cooperative had led me to the extent of selling my farm animals just to get funds. Our cooperative is now supplying electricity to about 70 households in Barangay Matilac through the generator brought from NAPC (National Anti-Poverty Commission)- awarded funds.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Believing in the value of participation and dialogue, I also volunteered myself for training as a community organizer with the Community Organizer (CO) Multiversity, through which I had been serving other communities for the past two years. The engagement with the CO Multiversity was facilitated by GoP-UNMDP 3 and ACT for Peace Programme as these peacebuilding programs tapped the expertise of PDAs in order to further harness their skills in community organizing.

I have been helping the CO multiversity achieve its goals of community development in the seven peace zones that were organized through series of seminars social mobilization and LGU-CSOs partnership in the municipality of Datu Odin Sinsuat, Matanog, Barira, Buldon in Shariff Kabunsuan, Balabagan, Kapatagan in Lanao del Sur, Bagumbayan in Sultan Kudarat, and Municipality of Jolo province of Sulu.

I find it easier to organize people now because everything is being done in the open. Credibility is likewise an important factor in the task of organizing, because people will only trust you when they know that you do your work well.

People's needs are really very basic, like a good water supply, electricity, farm animals or post harvest equipment. Meet the needs of the people and you win their hearts and minds. I always believe that people in Mindanao are not obsessed with war, neither do the Moro believed that going to war is a part of their lives.

The goal of our war was to have an equal sharing of resources, recognition of our rights, effective governance and respect for the cultural identity of the indigenous communities.

Concretely in my work as organizer, I facilitate the process of linking government and civil society organizations in achieving the urgent goals of strong and effective governance. In order to bring back the trust of people in government basic services need to be delivered effectively. I believe that empowered and organized communities are necessary for people to participate in decision-making process that directly affect their lives.

POWER-BARGAINING

Having led revolutionary activities in the past, I know fully well the importance of bargaining of power. While the use of armed resistance had proved to be a good leverage in achieving political

clout and eventually a peace agreement with the government, this time I see the value of alliance-building as a way to demonstrate people power in number.

Together with other PDAs in the entire Mindanao, I facilitated the organization of peace and development league (PDAL), the 175-strong alliance of MNLF former combatants who are now working for peace and development like us. I am also the operation officer of the Kadtabanga Foundation, which was very instrumental in providing relief assistance to the displaced communities in year 2000.

It was Kadtabanga's response to the relief and rehabilitation needs of the various communities in Kutawato State, one of the 18 State Revolutionary Committee of the MNLF which roughly corresponds to the provincial level governance of the Philippine government.

Through this alliance and foundation, the PDAs have become more visible and have lobbied for or against broader issues affecting us. Some leaders have been criticized for having forgotten their comrades once they come to positions of power. I use the term "Culture Shock" to explain why this thing is happening to people who have come out of the dark to see the light but were blinded by the glare of the corrupt world.

They had been overcome by greed and self interest.

I have no ambitions of becoming rich and that I just want the people to live peacefully, abundantly and be able to send their children to school. I do not have the need to perpetuate myself in office. What I aspire for is that even when I'm no longer an officer, its chairman, this cooperative will be able to continue. I could still be an adviser later.

PDC Tambak struggles for water

Accessibility to potable water in the upper part of Barangay Tambak Datu Odin Sinsuat Shariff Kabunsuan Province was one of the basic problems of the community. With collective action and determination, the people discovered a new sense of power that they had all along. Barangay officials, local residents and different sectors agreed to find a solution on how to access potable water on top of lack of basic services in the PDC of Tambak.

A conflict-affected community during the war in the 1970's between the MNLF and the government, Barangay Tambak had been idle for years. Its residents were caught in the middle of the war that they had no control over with. Hence, after the government of the Philippines and the MNLF have finally agreed in 1996 to resume talks, Barangay Tambak was among the areas that literally saw the light when it was declared as a Peace and Development Community (PDC).

To have their own water system, the residents of PDC Tambak, led by the project proponent, Bualan Taliawid MPC, joined hand in hand to set up a deep well. The project was supported by the Kadtabanga Foundation for Peace and Development Advocates, Inc., the Barangay local government unit, and the United Nations Act for Peace Programme, which provided assistance for the construction and installation of water system project.

The spirit of volunteerism was evident. Residents of PDC Tambak offered their time to help. Moreover, local government officials promoted awareness on proper hygiene as well, alongside the water system, to ensure the reduction of incidence of water-borne disease in the community.

The Bualan Taliawid MPC, barangay officers and local residents also continued monitoring the water system in the PDC to ensure its sustainability to serve the two neighbouring non-PDC barangays: Barangay Tanuel and Barangay Dulangan. All the three barangays are situated in the municipality of Datu Odin Sinsuat.

BAGONG LABAN

BY MAMA D. BINANGON

Sakop ng Lalawigan ng Maguindanao, na tinaguriang summer capital ng probinsyang ito dahil sa labis na kalamigan, ang PDC Lamud ay binubuo ng tatlong klase ng tribo/relihyon, ito'y Muslim, Christian and Highlanders. Ang Maguindanaon Muslim 20%, Christian 10% at Highlanders Teduray ay nagtataglay ng 70% sa kabuuang population na 2,516.

Ang Barangay Lamud ay nasasakop sa Bayan ng South Upi, isa sa mga liblib na lugar na karaniwang saksi na sa kahirapan, kaguluhan at kawalan ng pag-asang maangat ang kabuhayan.

Ang pagkakalayo ng mga kabahayan sa isa't-isa ay dahil sa bulubundukin nitong kaanyuan. Madilim kapag kinagabihan na mapagtanto mong malayo nga sa kabihasnan dahil sa hindi pa naabot ng kuryente at ang tanging pananglaw lamang ay ang mumunting ilaw na pamana pa ng kanilang kanunu-nunuan.

Ang barangay ay may kalayuan sa mga kabayanan at may kahirapan din ang pagsakay dahil sa sira-sirang nitong kalsada kaya't ang madalas na gamitin ng mga tao ay kabayo at single motor (skylab) kong tawagin. Dati ay wala itong mga health centers, daycare centers at ang tanging mayroon lamang ay ang lumang gusaling paaralan para sa Grade (1) hanggang ika (4) na baitang. Matumal ang kaalaman dahil sa nag-iisang gurong nagsusumikap na mabigyan ng kahit kaunting dunong ang kanyang mga nakakaawang kabataan.

Bago pa ito naging Peace and Development Community ay dumaan pa sa maraming paghihirap at pagsubok ang Barangay Lamud. Nagkaroon dito ng labanan ang mga CAFGU at CVO laban sa grupong lumalaban sa pamahalaan. Maraming nasawi at nagkaroon pa nang maramihang paglilikas ang mga mamamayan.

Napunta sa iba't ibang lugar ang mga tao, nagkasakit ang mga kabataan at sa kahirapan ng buhay ay lalo pang tumindi ang paghihirap. Sa kautusan ng MNLF

hierarchy, under Datu Muslimin G. Sema, naging Community Camp ang barangay, dahilan upang mapanumbalik ang kaayusan at unti-unting pagbabalik ng mga taong nagsipaglikas noon.

Nagkaroon ng kasunduan ang GRP at MNLF noong 1996, kaya't naging PDC ang barangay. Binigyan ng pagkakataon ang isa sa mga kasamahang freedom fighters na makapag training bilang Community Organizer.

Nagkaroon ng malaking pagbabago ang barangay lalo na't mayroon na kaming community organizer na siyang nagpapasimuno ng pag-organisa sa mga kababaihan at ang pagbuo ng kooperatibang tulad ng "Muslim-Christian and Highlanders MPC" na kinabibilangan ng tatlong tribo. Nagkaisa sa pananaw tungo sa kaunlaran ang mga mamamayan at ang "... local na pamahalaang pambarangay kong kaya't nakabuo ng Barangay Development Plan sa pamamagitan ng Participatory Resource Appraisal.

Ito ay naisagawa sa pamamagitan ng technical support galing sa Kadtabanga Foundation for Peace and Development Advocates, Incorporated (KFPDAI) na pinunduhan ng Act for Peace Programme-AMO-ARMM. Sa patuloy na pagbibigay nila ng kaalaman, trainings at seminars sa mga PDAs ng PDCs ay naging malakas ang ugnayan ng Barangay sa Local Government Unit ng South Upi, at ang BDP ng Barangay Lamud ay na-integrate sa Municipal planning.

Sa pamamagitan ng patuloy na pagpupulong at consultation sa lahat ng stakeholders at sitio leaders, nakabuo naman ng Project Management Committee na siyang nangangasiwa sa lahat ng proyekto at development initiatives sa PDC. Nakapagpadala kami ng isang Lumad (Teduray) na Scholar sa school of midwifery UP, sa Leyte na kaloob ng ACT for PEACE Programme sa PDC.

Si Rhea Rumpaan, ang aming naipadala, na dahil sa kahirapan ng pamumuhay ng kanyang mga magulang hindi sya nakapagpatuloy sa pag-aaral ng kolehiyo. Naging usap-usapan siya ng kanilang tribo sa iba't ibang barangay na may halong pagkamangha sa kanyang natamong oportunidad.

Ito rin ay naging inspirasyon ng iba pang mga kabataan, na sa ilang dekada, ay mistulang kuntento na lamang na makapagbasa, makapagsulat, at kaagad makatulong na lang sa pagbubukid ng mga magulang.

Bilang kahandaan sa pagtatapos ni Rhea, ayun sa kasunduang maglilingkod siya sa barangay bilang health worker ay gumawa ang BLGU ng isang Resolution sa Act for Peace para makahingi ng Multi-Purpose Center sa kagustuhan ng Barangay People's Assembly na kinapapalooban ng Learning and Training Center at Health Center.

Ang Multi-Purpose Center ay ginawa at sa kakapusan ng pundong nakalaan at bilang counterpart kaya't nagkaroon ng bayanihan system sa paggawa at ang magulang, pamilya ng scholar ang siyang nangunguna dito.

Sa Center na ito ginaganap ang mga maraming meetings, seminars patungkol sa kahalagaan at kaalaman sa iba't-ibang uri ng herbal medicine, panghihilot at iba pang mga bagay. Ang center din ay pansamantalang nagagamit din ng mga kapatid na Teduray sa pag-aayos ng di-pagkakaunawaan sa kanilang Tribal Justice System at sa mga kapatid na Muslim ay ang Shari'a Court.

Ako po na dati isang mandirigmang Moro na naging Peace Advocate sa paniniwala na ito ay isang uri ng laban na aking nasimulan sa pamamagitan ng sandatahang pakikipaglaban upang makamit ang tunay na kapayapaan at self determination.

Nahirang po akong Punong Barangay sa PDC ng Lamud sa pangalawang pagkakataon at siguro ito'y dahil sa pagtitiwala ng aking mamamayan sa kakayahang maipagpatuloy ang nasimulang pagbabago. Kaya't sa nagdaang Barangay at SK Election ay wala akong naging katunggali.

Bilang pagtitiwala ng Local na Pamahalaan at ng karamihan, ako po ay nahalal na ABC President sa Liga ng mga Barangay, South Upi Chapter at nagsisilbing Ex-officio member bilang Municipal Councilor ng aming Bayan. Kasunod dito ay ang pagkakahirang sa akin bilang Vice President sa Liga ng mga Barangay, Provincial Chapter, Lalawigan ng Maguindanao.

Ang mga nasabing position na matatawag nating authority sa pag-ganap at pagpaparating ng mga karaingan ng aking mga kabarangay ay maganda sana kong itoy masusuportahan at mapapakinggan ng ating mga opisyaes sa Local Government Unit sa Municipal at Provincial level.

Ang patubig at pailaw na nakasaad sa aming Barangay Development Plan na pinakahihintay ng aking mga kabarangay ay hindi pa namin naisasakatuparan dahil sa hindi sapat na 20% development fund para sa kagyat na pagsasagawa nito.

Gusto naming pukawin ang inyong pananahimik at kumatok sa inyong mga puso at ipinapaalam na sa maliit naming Barangay sa kaloob-looban ay may mga batang nagkakasakit dahil sa di-malinis na tubig na iniinom at hindi nakakapag aral ng aralin sa gabi dahil sa walang ilaw.

THE NEW STRUGGLE: CROSS-CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

BY MAMA D. BINANGON

Known as summer capital of Maguindanao Province because of its cold weather, PDC Lamud is composed of three groups of inhabitants coming from the Muslim which is 20% of the total populace, Christian 10% and Highlanders or Indigenous Pilipinos, which is 70% of the total 2,516 populace.

Barangay Lamud is part of the municipality of South Upi, a far-flung place where poverty, political instability and lack of hope for economic uplift are commonplace.

The hilly terrain of the place has distanced the populace from each other. Only the stars and the bright night illumine nighttime in Barangay Lamud, and each household makes do with a small “gasera”, which they inherited from their ancestors, to light their homes.

People traverse this place only through horse-ride and through a single

motor (called “skylab”), which are the only means of transportation that can maneuver the dirt road.

Lamud used to have only the school structure in place, which houses Grades I to IV handled by a single teacher, who strives to impart learning to the impoverished children.

Before becoming a Peace and Development Community, Barangay Lamud was in dire difficulty. There were skirmishes between the CAGU and the CVO against those opposing the government. There were many casualties and evacuations commonly happened.

During that time, the people’s suffering was aggravated and children were getting sick. Soon after, upon the order of Datu Muslimin G. Sema, Lamud became a community camp, and things began to settle, the evacuees started to come back.

In 1996, the GRP and the MNLF had an agreement, and Lamud was made into a PDC. One of the freedom fighters was trained as a Community Organizer.

There were many big changes that happened in the barangay, especially because there was already a community organizer who initiated organizing the residents, particularly the women. Then a cooperative called “Muslim-Christian and Highlanders MPC” composed of the three tribes was formed.

There began a unified vision among the people towards their economic uplift, and with the Local government unit, a Barangay Development Plan was hatched through the Participatory Resource Appraisal.

This was made possible through the technical support from Kadtabanga Foundation for Peace and Development Advocates, Inc. (KFPDAI) funded by the Act for Peace Programme – AMO-ARMM. Through the skills training and seminars the Act for Peace provided to the PDAs and the PDCs, the coordination between the local government unit of the Barangay in South Upi was strengthened, and the BDP of Barangay Lamud was integrated into the municipal planning.

A project Management Committee that oversees all the projects and development initiatives of the PDC was organized as an offshoot of all the meetings and consultations among all stakeholders and sitio leaders.

As a result of all these efforts, the organization was able to support an IP scholar who was sent to a School of Midwifery in Leyte, still with assistance from the Act for Peace.

Rhea Rumpaan, a Teduray, was the recipient of the scholarship. She became a model for her community who was amazed at her opportunity. She later became a source of inspiration for the youth in their community who, for a long time, seemed to content themselves in helping their parents at the farm.

Rhea is expected to serve her barangay as a health worker after she finished her studies. The BLGU on the other hand wrote a resolution requesting the Act for Peace for a multi-purpose center that would also serve as learning and training Center, as well as health center.

Not long after, the people in the community worked together in a “bayanihan” to build the Multi-purpose Center, with the parents of the scholar leading the group.

This Center houses the meetings and seminars related to the importance of knowledge on herbal medicine, physical therapy and others. The Center is also being used by the Tedurays to settle conflicts among them through their Tribal Justice System. It has also been utilized by the Muslims as well for their Shari’a Court.

I used to be a Moro combatant who became a Peace Advocate with the belief

that this is one kind of fight that started with an armed struggle to achieve genuine peace and self determination.

I was elected as head in the PDC of Barangay Lamud for two consecutive times, perhaps because the people has confidence in my capability to pursue what we have started to change in our barangay. This was the reason why I was unopposed during the last SK elections.

I was also elected as ABC League president among the barangays in South Upi chapter and served as ex-officio member as municipal councilor in our municipality. Moreover, I was also elected as vice-president of the Barangay League in the provincial chapter of Maguindanao.

Said positions are authoritative in acting on and bringing the aspirations of my fellow

citizens with the support of the LGUs at the municipal and the provincial levels.

Basic services such as water and light, which are indicated in our Barangay Development Plan, are not yet fulfilled simply because the 20% development fund is just not enough in bringing these about.

We are rousing your silence and knocking at your hearts and would like to bring to your attention that in our small Barangay in the hinterland there are young children getting sick because of contaminated water they are drinking. There are children who could not study at night because there is no illumination.

And for those who are struggling against poverty, continue what you are doing because your fight is my own.

KM. 21

BY OTING A. AGTING

Ang kakulangan ng kaalaman sa modernong teknolohiya sa pagsasaka, patuloy na pagtaas ng farm inputs, kakulangan ng capital at pagkaubos ng mga kahoy sa kabundukan ang iilan sa mga suliranin na kinakaharap ng mga magsasakang miyembro ng Km.21 KMPC sa PDC Alamada.

Simula noong 1970's hanggang 2007, sila ay patuloy na gumagamit ng traditional system of farming. Ang mga farm inputs na nabibili sa mga traders ay walang humpay sa pagtaas ang presyo. Ang mga pananim sa kapatagang bahagi ay nasisira dahil sa flash flood at land erosion, dahil sa pagkaubos ng mga mga punong kahoy sa bundok, kung kaya ang mga magsasaka ay patuloy na nakabaon sa kahirapan dahil sa sitwasyon na ito. Ang mga kabataan ay hindi halos nakakatungtung sa koliheyo dahil hindi kayang tustusan ng kanilang mga magulang ang gastusin.

Ang PDC Alamada ay isa sa mga barangay na saklaw ng munisipyo ng Sultan Kudarat at ito'y bahagi ng war-torn community noong panahaon ng Martial Law. Nagsimulang magkaroon ng pag-asa ang mga residente

dito noong ma-deklara bilang isang Peace and Development Community noong 2001.

Ito ay naisagawa sa pamamagitan ng joint effort ng MNLF, local government unit ng Sultan Kudarat at different stakeholders sa lugar na naging dahilan ng pagpasok ng mga funding agencies tulad ng UNMDP-3, DAR, IPHO at DA. Sa pagpasok nila nagkaroon ng mga proyekto sa area tulad ng barangay health station, kalsada, livestock at bio-intensive gardening. Kasabay nito ay naitalaga ang mga Peace and Development Advocates na silang nagpa-facilitate sa mga proyektong dumarating sa PDC kasama ang mga Barangay officers.

Dumating ang Act for Peace Programme, AMO-ARMM noong 2005. Ito ang nagsilbing successor phase ng UNMDP-3 na siyang nagpatuloy sa mga nasimulan na programa. Sa pakipag-partner nito sa Kadtabanga Foundation for Peace and Development Advocate, Incorporated ay nagkaroon ng Community Organizing intervention. Ang PDA-CO ay nakapag-launch ng isang Barangay Peoples Peace Assembly na dinaluhan ng different stakeholders at lahat ng mga sectors.

Sa naturang pagpupulong, napag-usapan ang mga priority issues na gustong tugunan ng mga mamamayan at mga kasapi ng Km 21 Krislam Multi-Purpose Cooperative, at isa dito ay ang kawalan ng capital at kakulangan ng makabagong system sa pagsasaka.

Nagpatuloy ang pagtutulungan ng mga peace advocates at cooperative members hanggang sa sila'y nakagawa ng project proposal at nai-submit ito sa Act for Peace Programme.

Dahil sa matinding pangangailangan ng kumunidad, sila ay nabiyayaan ng proyektong Diversified Agro-Industrial and Cash Crop Production and Reforestation Project galing sa Act for Peace Programme-Area Management Office for ARMM.

Ang naturang proyekto ay binubuo ng apat na major components: 1. Sustainable agriculture and agro-forestry training; 2. Installation of 1 unit jetmatic pump para sa nursery; 3. Pagtatanim ng mga gulay, mais, palay at niyog; 4. Reforestation sa pamamagitan ng pagtatanim ng permanent crop tulad ng guma at fruit trees.

Prior to the implementation of the above-mentioned project, ang Km.21 Krislam Multi-Purpose Cooperative ay bumuo ng Project Management Committee galing sa mga officers ng Cooperative at Barangay. Ang naturang grupo ay responsable sa pamamahala, pagmonitor at pag-evaluate sa project. Gumawa din sila ng policies at guidelines upang masiguro ang transparency at sustainability ng project.

Isa sa mga recovery mechanism ay ang

pagbibigay ng repayment sa cooperative galing duon sa kita ng beneficiary upang mapaghandaan ang iba pang nangangailangan ng tulong.

Kasabay ng pag-implement sa project na ito ay nakaroon din ng capability-building training galing sa Act for Peace Programme. Nagtalaga sila ng local service provider na siyang nag-coach sa cooperative upang mapalago ang pag-implement ng project at pagpapatakbo ng organisasyon. Ito ang naging instrument ng pagbabago at pagpapanaliti ng kapayapaan.

Dahil dito, ang mga residente, cooperative members and officers at Barangay officers ay nabigyan ng mga trainings tulad ng: Leadership and management Training; Culture of Peace; reproductive health, alternative medicines using herbal, recording system; conflict resolution training; project management and trainers training on cooperative development and management.

MGA NABIBIYAAN

Mayroong 171 na beneficiaries ang nabiyayaan ng mga farm inputs tulad ng binhi, pataba, seedlings at mga gardening tools. Ang ibinigay na mga inputs ay naaayon sa kagustuhan ng bawat isa. Sila ay tinawag sa isang General Assembly meeting at tinanong isa-isa kung anong klaseng produkto ang kanilang itatanim. Kasabay nito, nai-present ang project policy upang kanilang ma-ratify at masiguro ang ownership.

Ang bawat member ay dumaan sa screening na isinasagawa ng screening committee. Para ma-ensure na ma-monitor ang bawat beneficiary, bumuo ng 14 na clusters at bawat cluster ay mayroong group leader at ito ay nagrereport sa project manager twice a week. Nagkaroon din ng bayanihan system ng pagtatrabaho ng walang kaukulang bayad.

Ang naturang proyekto ay nagresulta ng malawakang pagtanim ng gulay, mais, palay at iba pang pananim ng mga magsasaka. Nabawasan ang gastusin sa pagsasaka dahil sila ay nabigyan ng quality na mga farm inputs. Nakapagtanim ng mga punong kahoy na siyang makapagpanumbalik sa kagubatan sa mga bundok dahil sa mga seedlings na nakuha sa project. Higit sa lahat, nagkaroon sila ng kaalaman sa makabagong teknolohiya sa pagsasaka.

Nagkaroon din sila ng maraming ani. Nadagdagan ang kita ng bawat pamilya dahil sa magandang ani at mababang gasto. Ang kanilang mga anak ay nakakapasok na hanggang koliheyo.

Isa si Zainodin Baganday sa mga beneficiary nagkaroon ng magandang pamumuhay ngayon dahil sa pagtanim ng gulay galing sa project na ito. Ang kanyang isang anak ay kaya na niyang papasukin sa koliheyo.

PANUNUMBALIK NG KASAGANAAN

Humigit kumulang sa 80 hectares ang nataniman ng mga permanent crops tulad ng

niyog, guma at fruit trees na maging dahilan upang maka recover ang mga kabundukan sa pagkaubos ng mga punongkahoy.

Sa kabilang dako, ang mga trainings naman ay nakatulong ng husto sa mga PDA at Cooperative officers. Kaya na nilang magpatakbo ngayon ng organization kahit wala ng intervention galing sa labas. Magaling na rin sila sa networking, lobbying at linkaging. Naka-develop na rin sila ng mga trainers na sila na ngayon ang nagtuturo sa mga trainings ng cooperative. Ang mga nanay naman ay gumagamit na ng mga alternative medicine at alam narin nila ang proper hygiene at nutrition.

Dahil sa tuloy-tuloy na pagkilos at aktibong pakikilahok ng mga kasapi ng cooperative, muling napaigting ang magandang relasyon sa pagitan ng mga Muslim at Christian sa lugar. Sila ay nagkaroon ng regular na pag-uusap at pagtalakay sa mga isyu tungkol sa kapayapaan.

Ang intervention ng Act for peace Programme ay siyang naging instrument sa pagbabago ng PDC Alamada. Sila ay nabigyan ng pagkakataon na mapaangat ang antas ng kanilang pamumuhay, lalong-lalo na sa mga members at officers ng Km.21 Krislam Multi-Purpose Cooperative. Ang cooperative na ito ay mayroong bagong sibol na mga leaders na magpapatuloy sa larangan ng Peace and Development initiatives.

Dito napagtanto na sa kakarampot na tulong galing sa labas ay kayang pag-ibayuhin at ito ay makakabago sa tamang landasin ng sambayanan.

KM. 21

BY OTING A. AGTING

The lack of knowhow in modern farming technology, continued increase in the prices of farm inputs, lack of capital and the loss of trees in the forest are just some of the problems confronting the farmer-members of Km. 21 KMPC of PDC Alamada.

Starting in the 1970s until 2007, the farmers continued to use traditional systems of farming. The prices of farm inputs they bought from traders increase incessantly. And the forested areas in low-lying areas are being destroyed by flash floods and land erosion, as mountains continued to be denuded.

With this situation, the farmers were further pushed to impoverishment. Their children could not even go to school for higher education as their parents could no longer support them financially.

PDC Alamada is one of the Barangays under the municipality of Sultan Kudarat, which was part of the war-torn communities during martial law. Hope dawned in on residents when it was declared as Peace and Development Community in the year 2001.

This was done through a joint effort of the MNLF hierarchy, local government unit of Sultan Kudarat and the different stakeholders in the area.

It became a signal for other funding agencies to come in, such as the UNMDP-3, DAR, IPHO and DA, and for projects to be implemented in the community, including the barangay health station, road network, livestock and bio-intensive gardening. Coupled with these are the assigning of Peace and Development Advocates (PDAs) together with the Barangay Officers to facilitate the projects coming into the community.

In year 2005, Act for Peace Programme, AMO-ARMM came into PDC Alamada. It was the successor of UNMDP-3 tasked to continue the development started here.

In partnership with the Kadtabanga Foundation for Peace and Development Advocate, Inc, the Community Organizing intervention started. A Barangay People's Peace Assembly was launched, attended by different stakeholders and sectors.

Priority issues were discussed, including the lack of capital and new farming system which the general membership of Krislam Multi-purpose Cooperative have wanted.

With the cooperation of the peace advocates and cooperative members, a project proposal was submitted to Act for Peace Programme. Much later, a project on Diversified Agro-Industrial and Cash Crop Production and Reforestation Project was funded by the Act for Peace.

This project has four major components: sustainable agriculture and agro-forestry training; installation of one unit jetmatic pump for the nursery; planting of short and medium products such as vegetables, corn, rice and coconuts; and reforestation through planting of permanent crops such as rubber and fruit trees.

A Project Management Committee composed of officers from the Cooperative and the Barangay was organized to manage, monitor and evaluate the project. Policies and guidelines are also in place to ensure transparency and sustainability of the project.

Moreover, there is one recovery mechanism mounted by the cooperative and involves giving repayment to the cooperative from the income of the beneficiary to ensure that there will be funds when other members need assistance.

Initially, there were 171 beneficiaries who availed of farm inputs and gardening tools. The processes were put in place and started in a General Assembly (GA) of the

cooperative, where the members were asked what products they would want to plant.

Also discussed at the GA were the project policies involved and the screening of members who want to avail of the funds. To facilitate an easier monitoring of the project, the beneficiaries were grouped into clusters where a group leader who would make the report for the group was elected.

A bayanihan system was also done without any payment.

Upon the implementation of the project, training on capability building was launched by Act for Peace Programme. A local service provider was assigned to coach the cooperative personnel on how to improve the implementation of the project. This process will become the instrument for change and sustain peace efforts.

Some of the skills training provided include the following: Leadership and management Training; Culture of Peace; reproductive health, alternative medicines using herbal, recording system; conflict resolution training; project management and trainers training on cooperative development and management.

The project resulted to large areas planted to vegetables, corn, rice and other crops; decrease in expenses on farm inputs which was provided; planting of trees that helped to restore the forest through the seedlings availed of from the project.

Best of all the farmers learned new techniques in farming.

The bounty brought about by the abundance from the farm also increased the income of every family. This had allowed them to make their children pursue education eventually.

Zainodin Baganday was one of those beneficiaries who is now experiencing a better life because of the vegetables he planted. He is now ready to send his children to higher education.

More or less there are 80 hectares planted to permanent crops like coconut trees, rubber and fruit trees, which would help recover the forest cover of the hills.

The capability-building through trainings has likewise assisted the PDA and Cooperative officers in running their organization. They are now capable of running their organization even without outside intervention. They are also good at networking, lobbying and linkaging.

The organization has also developed trainers who now handle the seminars in the cooperative. Moreover, the mothers of PDC Alamada have learned alternative medicine, proper hygiene and nutrition.

Overall, the active participation of the Cooperative members has rekindled the good relationship between the Muslims and Christians in their area. Communication was opened for each religion.

The intervention of Act for Peace Programme became an instrument of change in PDC Alamada. Residents are given the chance to alleviate their means of livelihood, especially the members and officers of Km. 21 Multi-purpose Cooperative.

PAGKAKAISA NG BABAG AT BOLOH-BOLOH

BY ABADIA ABDULGANI

Ang Barangay Babag sa isla ng Bubuan, South of Basilan ay dati ng hindi magkasundo, pati na rin ang katabi nitong Barangay Boloh-Boloh. Nagkakaroon ng hindi pagkakaintindihan ang mga nasangkot na mga pamilya dahil sa land conflict.

Ito ang nagdulot ng family feud and tribal feud sa pagitan ng mga Samal at Tausug tribes.

Ang mga tao sa komunidad ay nag-evacuate sa iba't-ibang barangay dahil apektado sila sa gulo. Sila ay nagkagulo dahil sa alitan sa lupa. Ang marami sa kanila nawasak ang pamumuhay at may nawala rin sa kanilang mga mahal sa buhay.

Noong nagkaroon ng peace agreement ang MNLF at ang gobyerno ang Barangay Babag ay naging PDC. Pumasok ang iba't-ibang donor agencies tulad ng UNMDP nagbigay ng pamumuhay sa PDC, tulad ng Bangka para sa pangangisda at pagluluto ng tinapay.

Ang hindi pagkaunawaan ng dalawang tribo na Samal at Tausug tribes ay unti-unting nagbago sa takbo ng panahon. Sa ngayon ang PDC Babag ay nakatanggap ng kaalaman mula sa Act for Peace Program kung saan natutunan nilang magkaroon ng respeto sa bawat isa upang maiwasan ang hindi pagkakaintindihan at magkaroon nga katahimikan sa pamumuhay.

Dagdag pa dito ay nagbibigay din ng assistance ang Act for Peace para sa pangkabuhayan at pangkalusugan, kaalaman sa Peace Building Capacity Training at pagsasanay sa Community Organizer.

Sa ngayon, ang suliranin sa pangkalusugan na matagal ng tinamasa ng mga tao sa Barangay Babag na noon ay nagkakasakit sa malaria ay may pagbabago na sa kadahilanang sila ay mayroon ng Barangay Health Center at naagapan na ang sakit na ito.

PEACE BRIDGES BABAG AND BOLOH-BOLOH

BY ABADIA ABDULGANI

There are many reasons why a barangay becomes a Peace and Development Community. Sometimes there is a need to give support to all the sectors especially those who are impoverished.

Barangay Babag is an island in Bubuan, South Sumisip, Basilan that has conflict with neighboring Barangay Boloh-Boloh. Land conflict is the source of misunderstanding among families in this said barangays. What started as a family feud later became a tribal feud among the Samal and Tausug tribes.

The escalating conflict had resulted to evacuation of people from communities in the two barangays, affecting other neighboring barangays.

Many of those who were directly involved in the conflict have lost their livelihood and even their loved ones. However, when the 1996 Peace Agreement was signed, Barangay Babag became a PDC.

The UNMDP became one of the donor agencies that extended assistance to the PDC, like the “Bangka Pare sa Pangisngisda” and bread baking.

The changes that came about in the PDC gradually transformed the two warring tribes among the Samal and Tausug as days went by. Recently, PDC Babag has availed of new knowledge from Act for Peace Programme where the community learned about respect for each other so that misunderstanding could be avoided.

In addition, assistance in terms of livelihood, health services, knowledge on Peace Building Capacity Training and workshop on Community organizing was also provided by Act for Peace.

The health problem that has long been borne by the people of Barangay Babag, which was that of malaria, has been given due attention with the help of the Barangay Health Center that takes care of it.

FRONTLINERS'
PERSPECTIVES ON
PEACEBUILDING
DIMENSIONS

REFLECTIONS

The stories told by the stakeholders representing their collective communities are vivid evidence of self-expression that is borne out of self-confidence anchored on clear knowledge and direction. The COs' act of taking on the challenges and responsibilities of pursuing peace in their respective communities and communicating these act, is a sign in itself that they are capable of directing their course.

Proven in these stories is that the Moro people have capacities needed in building peace and development in their communities. What is needed only is the adequate education and skills-training to improve confidence and to believe that a community well informed can move things.

However, it can do well with genuine support from partners in development which include those in government and even foreign funding agencies to speed up the delivery too, of basic social services while the community is still building on its capacities.

As a microcosm of the development paradigm in Mindanao, the PDC becomes the social thread that could weave efforts of peace from tiny bits of dreams into a big reality and fruition of aspirations.

EMERGING ELEMENTS OF SELF-DETERMINATION AT THE GRASSROOTS

For the authors, self-determination simply means building self-capacities through pursuit of education, exercising leadership, harnessing community capacities through organizations and collective actions, setting aside family feuds and striving for reconciliation, and being in the forefront of Barangay government with capacities to plan and implement programs.

Mr. Ayao's expressions of self-determination in his narrative are apparent in his self-transformation, paradigm shift, leadership,

organized actions, transparency, participation in local governance, and continued assertion of basic human rights.

Mr. Binangon's self expressions are evident in forging understanding and unity between Moro, Lumad and Settlers. Moreover, it is self-governance through the BLGU and MLGU, self-governance through Project Management Team, education and community service, physical centers for meetings and decision-making, functionality of the Tribal Justice System and Shari'ah, self-transformation, and delivery of basic social service.

Mr. Agting saw it in the PDAs Kadtabanga's Economic development, Education of the youth and People's unity through cooperatives.

And finally, Mr. Abdulgani relates that the resolution of rido between tribes is one expression of self-determination and governance among themselves.

Beyond the predicament of national politics, the PDCs have shown that self-determination is something practical and doable. Moro people at the community level are exercising their right to political governance. They decisively participate in planning and implementing the course of development of their communities. They pursue the enhancement of their cultural traditions. They bridge the differences in cultures and shaping stronger relationships among peoples. They toil to improve their economic conditions and quality of life. They are saying, self-determination is in our hands.

TWO KEY FACTORS FOR COMMUNITY PEACE TRANSFORMATION

The stories in this chapter illustrate two key factors in the transformation of war-torn areas into peace and development communities (PDC). These factors are community organizing, on one hand and community participation, on the other.

In the PDCs, from which these experiences are culled, the PDAs play the role of a community organizer. The personal transformation of the PDAs have translated themselves into active involvement in the task of peacebuilding.

Most of the COs and PDAs narrated that they have attained a limited education, a number of them having only reached primary levels of formal education. This however, did not deter the MNLF COs from becoming better educators who could guide the direction of the community towards development. The essential element here is the chance to exercise leadership given to them by programs like Act for Peace.

Exercising leadership was a key in generating interest in supporting non-violent efforts to achieve tangible economic gains, like harnessing manual labor to construct a potable water system, finding ways to develop the idle lands. In providing leadership, communities gel around and find common hope to work together and trust in their collective effort.

Another essential element is the knowledge and skills of the PDAs as organizers, which were learned from their days as organizers or combatants of the MNLF. These recreatively applied to the current development work. It also helped that former MNLF leaders served as mentors to the new generation of peace weavers.

In general, the COs can facilitate community development and transformation only if they are capable of going through the intricacies of the work and are equipped with the tools of handling different situations that may crop up. The PDAs have proven that they have all these requisites. The high point of the PDAs achievement as COs is indicated by the willingness of parties-in-conflict to settle differences and prevent further bloodshed in the tribal vendettas. This is a proof of the trust given these PDAs.

The second factor in the transformation of communities to PDCs is community participation.

The stories narrated here by the COs indicate that only through the active participation of the people in the community can genuine community development be realized. Without people's participation, community development will be hollow and can only bring fragile peace.

People's participation is often harnessed through various forms of people's organizations (POs). Through the mobilization of POs,

tasks that may seem Herculean for individuals become doable when combined efforts of community residents are applied. This is demonstrated in the PDCs in the construction of the water system in PDC Tmabak and Batohabab, the rehabilitation of the agricultural production in Km. 21, the resolution of conflict in PDC Babag and Boloh-Boloh and the building of cross-cultural harmony in PDC Lamud.

People's participation also facilitated transparency in local governance. The transparency in the management of the communities and the projects entrusted to the leaders have been crucial in developing the trust of everyone, transforming old paradigms and making it easier for a new design to present itself.

Indeed, the value of POs in pursuing change and transformation can be measured by the breadth of development in the community and how the relationship between and among the residents, has improved, including the relationship with people in neighboring barangays.

PEACE AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION

What is so unique about the peacebuilding efforts in the PDCs is the active involvement of former combatants of the MNLF in development work, which have not only proven that the Moro people are open to better options other than armed struggle. It is becoming clearer now that the Moro land can have genuine peace if its people are left alone to do the task of harnessing their own resources.

Community organizing and community participation have been shown to the world that if given the chance, the Moro people and the people in Mindanao can work together in peacebuilding more than government policy-makers thought possible. In this context, development assistance can only come in as far as these are needed by them.

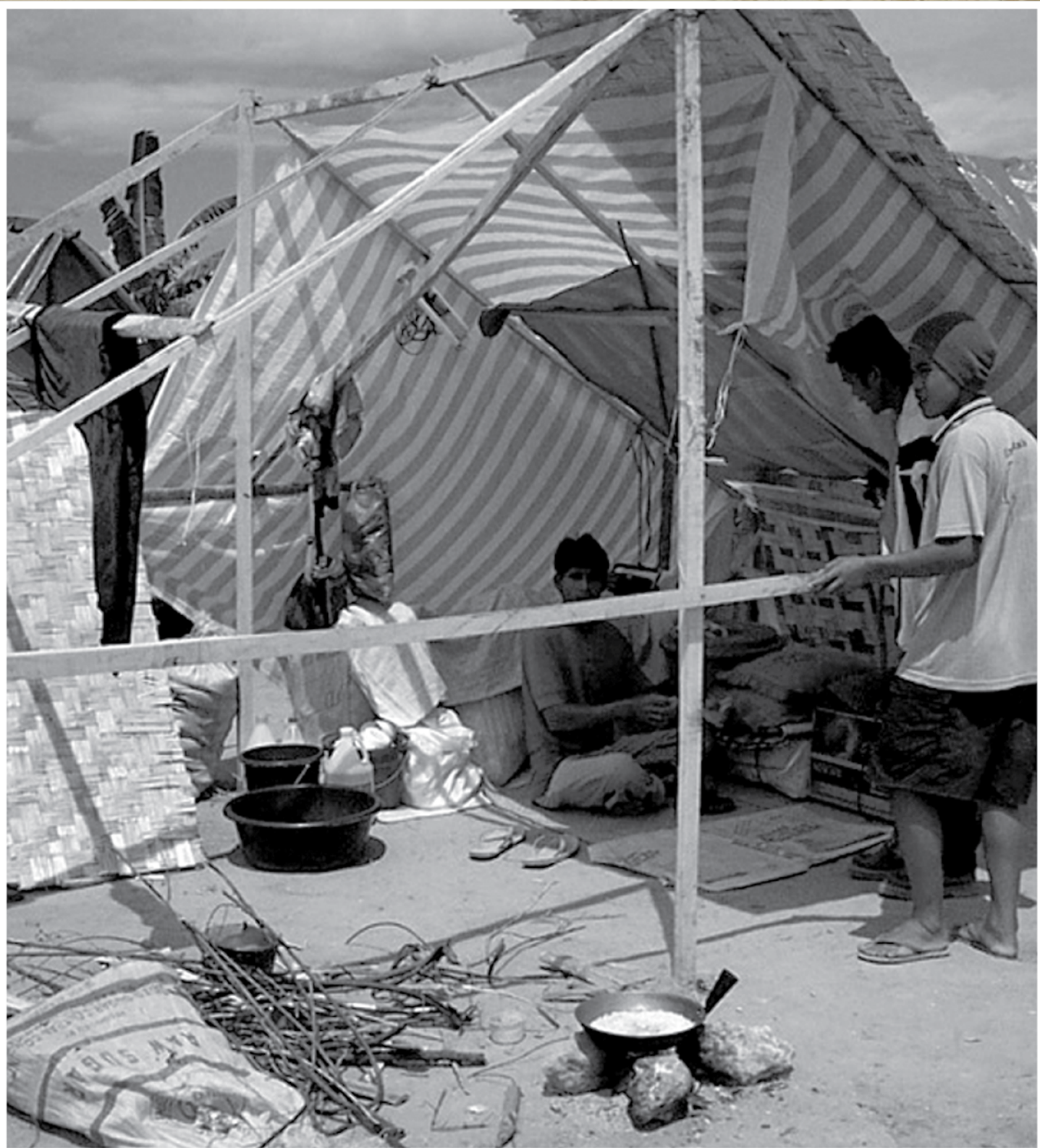
Having seen how their communities could make a difference for peace to reign in their areas, the COs have made it sure that a people, given the right assistance and tools for self development, can make it work.

Given the leeway to transform their lives and their communities for the better, the Moro people are now in the process of realizing what self-governance and self-determination is all about.

chapter 2

PDALs: BUILDING ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURES FOR PEACE GOVERNANCE

PEACE VOLUNTEERS: PLANTING SEEDS
OF COMMUNITY • PIONEER PDAs: TRAILBLAZING
AND EARNING RESPECT • WELL OF SCARCITY,
TANK OF HOPE • HOUSES OF CHANGE



INTRODUCTION

A new generation of Moro People is evolving. A generation distinctively unique from the familiar. They are men and women building not barricades for war, but structures for community development. They are young and old alike, providing alternative leadership for self-determination not from the powers of the guns or elected positions, but from the paradigm of the Culture of Peace.

The new generation of Moro People emerged from the Peace Agreement that ended the more than 20 years of war between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the national government. They are MNLF combatants, sons and daughters of martyrs, and war survivors who joined forces with government and non-government organizations to toil the new fields of peace. They have converged in the different provinces of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) into provincial organizations called by their generic name Peace and Development Advocates' League (PDAL).

The PDALs are legal organizations duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and are recognized by the provincial and municipal governments in the region. PDAL has distinctive names indicating that each one is an individual unit: Kkadtangbang for the PDAL in Maguindanao, Kkipdanai for Lanao del Sur, LSAPDI for Sulu, Kkamahardikaan for Basilan, and for Tawi-Tawi, the group retained name of Tawi-Tawi PDAL. As such organizations working within their geographical location, they govern their members on the basis of provincial jurisdiction and they are concerned with the development of the Peace and Development Communities (PDCs) within the specific province.

The PDALs are mechanisms organized by their members in order to gather their strength together, inspire themselves, validate and legitimize their existence, share experiences and resources, and develop more institutional partnerships in the pursuit of community development.

At the regional level, the provincial PDALs converge through the Regional Peace Parliament. This parliament is a mechanism developed by the PDALs to enable them to bridge the geographical divide and forge unity across various issues and concerns in the region. It envisions to influence national and regional policies and programs relative to the pursuit of peace in Mindanao. The Peace Parliament meets regularly, with the provincial PDALs taking turns in hosting the meeting.

The stories in this chapter are narratives of how the PDALs are formed, the challenges they face, the harvests of energies, and what sustain them. They demonstrate emerging social structures of peace. They are narrated and written by the few of the many PDAs who made a difference in their communities.

The story of Sulu's PDAL, also called Lupah Sug Advocates for Peace and Development, Inc. (LSAPDI), is a story of strength and unity amid challenges, and how PDAs have changed the lives of people in communities forever.

The Tawi-Tawi story is similar to that of Sulu, but emphasizing on changes in relationships, values, and behaviors.

Adjunct to the Tawi-Tawi story is PDA Kublai Elias's account of how PDAL successfully initiated the installation of a water system in a community.

The Maguindanao story, written by Hadja Giobay S. Dicolano, touches on the many wonderful things that happened in the "two houses of change" that are built on trust, camaraderie and determination by members of the Kadtabanga Foundation for Peace and Development Advocates, Inc. (KFPDAI).

THE AUTHORS

Only a high school graduate, **RENE JAMIH** stopped going to school when his parents died from the war in Sulu. He was a member of the Sons of MNLF Martyrs when he was recruited and trained into community organizing through the UNMDP in 1998. He would recall back then that as he was still starting and familiarizing his work in the community, his mouth and knees trembled when he spoke before crowds. Today, he is a skilled worker and executive director of LSAPDI handling two Peace and Development Communities (PDC).

ALHAJAR B. ABDULGAFOR, once a sailor and a member of a shipping crew, is site coordinator of Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQUALS) in Sulu. He is currently a businessman while helping communities in Patikul Municipality, Sulu, and is the treasurer of LSAPDI.

KUBLAI ELIAS, currently the president of PDAL Tawi-Tawi, was formerly an MNLF commander who became municipal project coordinator. A memorable and amiable character, Kublai is a man with a wonderful sense of humor whose two of many achievements include his son Haigder and daughter Jaifa—both highly-esteemed PDAs in Tawi-Tawi.



1. Jamih;
2. Abdulgafor;
3. Elias

4. *Jumsali*;
5. *Diocolano*



ARCID S. ABDUKAHAL was a farmer-turned-NGO worker who now works as planning officer of Panglima Sugala, Tawi-Tawi.

EDWINA T. JUMSALI, was once a barangay health worker and worked as coordinator of the NGO Sinerhiya, and is now a volunteer Teacher.



And finally, **HADJA GIOBAY S. DIOCOLANO**, was an MNLF community organizer for 20 years before she became chairperson of the MNLF Bangsamoro Women State, from 1995 to the present. She is the executive director of KFPDAI.

PEACE VOLUNTEERS: PLANTING SEEDS OF COMMUNITY

AS TOLD BY RENE JAMIH AND ALHAJAR B. ABDULGAFOR

Dedicated full-time volunteers “It is this spirit of volunteerism that sets us apart; it is rare in NGO work.” That’s how Rene Jamih describes with pride, the uniqueness of the PDA members that comprise Sulu’s PDAL, more known as Lupah Sug Advocates for Peace and Development, Inc. (LSAPDI).

The LSAPDI was formed in 1999, but it wasn’t until September 2, 2003 that it was formalized and registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

“Walang legal identity ang mga PDA kaya nag-organize ng PDAL bilang legal na organisasyon, (PDAs don’t have legal identity, that is why PDAL was organized to serve as the legal organization),” says Rene.

There was a series of meetings but pretty soon “na-realize naming mahirap pala magtayo ng samahan especially kung may mga miyembrong hindi nakikita ang objectives ng organisasyon (we realized it is difficult to put up a group especially if

there are members who don’t see the objectives of the organization),” adds Al Abdulgafor.

So one of LSAPDI’s earliest challenges was to level off with every member’s understanding of the organization’s works and objectives.

The setting up of LSAPDI inspired individual PDAs to become more driven and to be more conscious of their mission. “May dapat kang gagawin,” says Rene, “hindi ka na makaiwas; especially ang mga COs— kahit hindi sila lapitan parang feeling nila accountable sila sa community. (You feel there is something that you need to do; you can no longer escape, especially among COs—even if they are not being approached, they still feel that they are accountable to the community.)”

When LSAPDI was put up in 2003, “there was not even a shadow of an office,” narrates Al. He proposed to set up the office tentatively in his home. Soon, office equipment arrived with the help of Act for Peace. Today, LSAPDI rents an office

that is paid for by the savings from budgets of community organizers.

The LSAPDI has 25 members in 10 PDCs.

THREADS OF PEACE

One of LSAPDI's major tasks, which yielded a few predicaments, was networking and cutting across political boundaries. "Dahil PDA tayo (Because we're PDAs), we need to be open and talk with others, to be strong for peace and development, to be open to all sectors, including the military, the LGUs," says Rene. Despite this openness, the PDAs would hear rumors coming from non-PDCs that they are being suspected of being government assets by other armed groups. "Nakakapanghina ng loob (It weakens our resolve)," says Rene.

Indeed, PDAs in Sulu hang on precariously to a thin thread of peace, and the perils of their work sometimes get into their nerves. There was, for example, one CO who abandoned a project to implement 20 core shelter units in a community. "Napagod na siya kasi matagal matapos ang project at tuwing kinakausap siya humahawak ng baril ang leader na kausap niya (He got tired because the project took so long to finish, and everytime the community leader talked with him, the leader was always holding a gun)," narrates Al.

Still, it can be said that so much has changed in PDCs since the advent of

these peace advocates. Rene emphasizes that relationships among peoples have improved. "Mahirap i-pursue ang peace and development kung walang pagkakaisa at pagkakaunawa sa community (It is difficult to pursue peace and development if there is no unity and understanding in the community)," he says.

Relationships with political leaders strengthened, says Al. For example, PDAL was able to earn the commitment of the Barangay chairpersons to support the implementation of a water system in the three development communities. Moreover, barangay officials have become project consultants and project proponents.

Rene says they have been using traditional ways of involving the community: "May 'bayanihan' spirit na kung tawagin ay 'magdangin,' na naging malaking instrumento sa pag-improve ng relationships - na ikinatuwa ng mga nakatatanda (There is a community-helping spirit called 'magdangin,' that became instrument in improving relationships—which pleased the elders)."

"Noon, kanya-kanyang buhay ang iba't-ibang mga tribo. Nang magkaroon ng mga CO, lumakas ang mga people's organizations (POs) at naging tulay ito para sa cohesión ng mga tribo. Nag-umpisa na silang mag-usap-usap, magplano nang sabay-sabay, at samasamang mag-implement ng mga projects (Before, the tribes had their own separate lives. When the COs emerged, POs became stronger, and this became the bridge for the

cohesion among the tribes. They began to talk to each other, to plan together, and to implement projects together),” Rene adds.

YES, WE CAN

Internally, LSAPDI grew more confident and strong. It has become a partner of several NGOs in implementing community projects. It constantly assesses itself and it has availed of more trainings that helped strengthen its organizational capacity.

Members continue to be inspired and become closer to each other. Meetings are conducted regularly. Worthy of mention is the initiative of Barangay Chairman Hadji Mohammad Basiri of PDC Bangas and Hadji Panglima Tabil, who, according to both authors Al and Rene is the one who often calls the meetings. Meetings are conducted in the different barangays; merienda is provided for by the host barangay with the PDAs paying for their own fares.

And when there’s a co-member who is in need, the PDAs contribute from their own pockets.

In the communities, the air of hopelessness that once pervaded its residents has been replaced by enthusiasm for the future. Says Rene: “Naka-build ng hope sa communities. Sa conflict-affected areas, ang isip nila, ‘kahit sino pa ang gobernador, mayor, barangay kapitan...kahit anong gawin natin walang mangyayari - wala na tayong mararating.’ Pero nagbago na ang ganitong pananaw. Ang community mismo ang gumagawa ng pagbabago.

(We were able to build hope in the communities. In conflict-affected areas, people think ‘whoever is the governor, mayor, barangay captain...no matter what we do, nothing will happen—we won’t go anywhere.’ But this perspective has changed. The community itself is the one creating change.)”

When there are projects being implemented, based on the barangay development plan, the entire community is involved. There is now a sense of ownership of community projects because members of the community - all stakeholders in the development work - have participated in the planning.

While livelihood intervention (e.g. ownership of cows, vegetable farming, bakeshop) is limited to a few individuals, basic services such as the health care and water systems have improved in the communities.

PEACE AGREEMENT

As the LSAPDI plods on in its happy toil to make life better for many, its members - sons and daughters of the 1996 Final Peace Agreement – it looks forward to the signing of another peace agreement, this time between the MILF and the GRP.

It is the basis for the continued and lasting peace in Mindanao, says Rene.

PIONEER PDAs: TRAILBLAZING AND EARNING RESPECT

AS TOLD BY KUBLAI ELIAS, ARCID S. ABDUKAHAL, AND EDWINA T. JUMSALI

The PDAL in Tawi-tawi was established on December 5, 2003 but movement was slow because those who trained under the UNMDP lacked the skills to echo their trainings to the communities and implement what they have learned. “Nahirapan ang mga pioneering PDAs dahil mababa ang kanilang pinag-aralan (The pioneering PDAs had a hard time because they had little education),” says Arcid Abdukahal. It wasn’t until the pioneers decided to get young second-liners and included them in succeeding trainings did Tawi-Tawi’s PDAL begin to quickly develop.

LEADERSHIP

Even then, the PDAL that time was not without serious challenges, albeit they served to provide color and dynamism to what would otherwise have been just another one of those thousands of community-based organizations. These challenges help strengthen the organization’s

capability to withstand crisis situations.

The first challenge that confronted PDAL was the crisis of leadership. When the league was formed, an interim government was established soon after its registration with the Securities and Exchange Commisison (SEC). There were constant difficulties with the president of the interim government who extended his stay to three years (from the official one-year term) during which time decisions were made solely by him.

“Taon-taon, pinagbibigyan namin siya at pina-patch up namin ang mga bagay-bagay, dahil ayaw namin masaktan ang bawat isa (Every year, we give him a chance and we patch things up because we don’t want each one to get hurt),” says Kublai Elias.

On the fourth year, however, the disgruntled members began to challenge each other to run for presidency.

“Nagtutulakan kami kung sino ang tatakbo pagka-presidente hanggang sa ako ang napiling tumakbo (We were pushing each other to run for presidency until they finally chose me to run),” adds Kublai. The tension-filled election resulted in the institution of Kublai as the new president of Tawi-Tawi’s PDAL.

Under Kublai’s leadership, the PDAL quickly blossomed. More young people were trained to become PDAs, and the league assumed major responsibilities including fund-sourcing for big projects, mobilizing resources, networking among local government units (LGUs) and other sectors, installing water systems, strengthening the barangay health stations, and cassava production.

Committees were set up, including communications, barangay development planning, training and research, livelihood projects, and community organizing.

“Pag ang leader ay mabuting tao, magkakaroon din ng mabuting followers (If the leader is a good person, there will be good followers),” says Edwina Jumsali.

RELATIONSHIPS

The organization was constantly beset with objection, especially coming from the LGUs, about its existence and authority to implement community projects. While the assistance from the then UNMDP-GOP3, and now ACT for Peace helped legitimize the organization and commanded respect to its existence,

the LGUs began to look at PDAL as a competitor for financial and logistical interventions in the communities.

Slowly and patiently, though, PDAL members made government officials understand that they were partners in development. PDAL conducted courtesy calls, meetings, and focus group discussions (FGDs) with the LGUs and other sectors (e.g. women, youth, academe, traditional leaders). Eventually, PDAL made the barangay chairperson in each PDC an official signatory in every barangay project initiated by the former. And PDAL constantly apprised the barangay office of the status of projects (*see story in previous chapter*).

This relationship with the LGUs grew stronger each day so that it can be said that one of the major accomplishments of PDAL Tawi-Tawi was the reconstitution of local special government bodies to involve PDAs. For example, PDAL now sits at the Peace and Order Council of the Tawi-Tawi Provincial Government, and some other PDAs have assumed positions in local barangay councils, including Kublai’s own son Haigder, who was appointed to the barangay council (*see story in previous chapter*).

The military also respected PDAL. On one occasion - Kublai narrates - his logs (Kublai owns a small logging company) passed through a checkpoint without much scrutiny because, according to one soldier, “kahoy yan ni Kublai (those are Kublai’s logs).”

But Kublai says that her daughter Jaifa has often reprimanded him for his logging activities. “Iwan mo na iyan (Leave that),” she would say, reminding him that PDAs are not supposed to be involved in logging. “Sabi ko sa sarili ko, iba na ang mundo ngayon, tatay na ang tinuturuan ng mga anak (I told myself, the world is different now, it is the father who’s being taught by the children),” says Kublai.

“Mga anak ko namulat sa PDA (My children were enlightened through the PDA experience,” referring to daughter Jaifa, a PDA and budding writer, and son Haigder, also a PDA and respected leader—two of Tawi-Tawi PDAL’s youthful pride.

ON SOLID GROUND

More trainings followed, including those on organizational development, computer literacy, and office management as preparation for the setting up of a new office.

Kublai built PDAL’s small office in his property using his own money. “Babayaran din ng PDAL pag nagkaroon na ng pera (PDAL will pay for it eventually, if it already has the money),” says Kublai. “Gumawa kami ng proposal for office equipment at agad nagkaroon ng equipment (We wrote a proposal for office equipment and immediately we had the equipment),” says Arcid.

“Posibleng kami ang unang nagka-internet sa lahat ng PDAL sa Mindanao (It is

possible that of all the PDALs in Mindanao, we were the first to have an internet connection),” adds Kublai. The youth, Arcid claims, contributed a lot in the planning and conceptualization of a modern office.

Soon Tawi-Tawi’s PDAL has become acquainted with more service providers and it is looking forward to implementing its sustainability framework vis-a-vis a business plan. It is currently saving money to help fund their proposed business venture while waiting for a financial grant. It is also looking at outsourcing and project-contracting as potential areas for sustainability.

Other barangays are also beginning to request PDAL to conduct barangay development planning in their communities. One of the differences between PDCs and non-PDCs, Arcid says, is that members of PDCs are involved in formulating and implementing barangay development plans.

“May sense of ownership ang members ng barangay sa mga projects dahil kasali sila sa pagplano nito (Barangay members have a sense of ownership of their projects because they took part in their planning.)

COLORS OF PEACE

In its bid to institute structural and cultural changes in the communities, PDAL embraces all political colors and crosses political lines. Kublai insists “Wala kaming pakialam sa divide-divide ng iba’t-ibang mga political groups, kami ay para sa kapayapaan

at kaunlaran (We don't care about divisions among political groups, we are for peace and development).")

"Mas malaki na ang responsibilidad na aming tinatanaw, hindi na lamang hanggang PDCs, kundi ang buong ARMM (We already have a broader perspective and is no longer limited to just the PDCs, but includes the entire ARMM)," says Arcid. Every PDAL in Mindanao is for a peace agreement—or so Arcid, Kublai and Edwina hope. They are concerned over the MOA-AD and are talking about how Tawi-Tawi PDAL can help

the MILF-GRP finally come up with the peace agreement.

All three agree, that perhaps their greatest realization on their experiences as peace advocates is that warriors of war can turn into warriors of peace. As Arcid declares, "Ang mga former MNLF combatants ay hindi lamang epektibo sa battlefield kundi epektibo rin sila sa development (Former MNLF combatants are not only effective in the battlefield but are also effective in development work)."

BALON NG KAWALAN, TANGKE NG PAG-ASA

NI KUBLAI ELIAS

BALONG NATUTUYO

Bilang mudjahideen nakatira kami noon sa bundok Bihabiha. Nang magkaroon ng Final Peace Agreement sa pagitan ng GRP at MNLF, nagdesisyon akong magpaaral ng aking mga anak at doon na kami tumira sa lungsod.

Nang maghanap ako ng mabibiling lupa, nakasalubong ko si Gaibolla. Sabi niya, “kunin mo itong lupa sa halagang 50,000 pesos.” Nagkasundo kami sa presyo, at lumipat kami sa Barangay Tubig-Tana.

Doon nakita ko si Mabon Jamiri, isang MNLF Commander ng Batch 300. Doon din siya nakatira. Sa aming pag-uusap ay nalaman kong wala palang tubig sa lugar na yun. Pinutol daw ng water district ang linya para sa buong barangay dahil sa illegal connection.

Galit na galit ang mga tao, iba-iba ang mga naging opinyon. Sa madaling salita,

parang wala nang tiwala ang mga tao sa gobyerno.

Marami kaming mga MNLF lider ang nakatira sa Tubig-Tana: ang Provincial Chairman, ang Vice-Chair, at ang Zone Commander ng MNLF combatants. Nakausap ko ang isang kagawad. Siya’y galit na galit sa water district.

Kapag pinatay mo ang tubig ng buong barangay, para mo na ring pinatay ang mga taong nakatira doon.

Ganunpaman, pumunta ako sa water district para mag-apply. Nang malaman nilang taga-Tubig Tana ako ay hindi ako tinanggap. Naisip ko, “mahihirapan kami sa lugar na ito.”

May isang balon kung saan kami umiigib sa pang-araw-araw na pangangailangan. Madalas ay siksikan ang mga tao; nagpapang-abot ang mga siko ng mga umiigib at minsan, magdamagan ang paglinya at paghihintay ng mga tao sa kanilang turno sa pag-igib. Kung tag-init naman ay tumutuyo ang balon.

UMPISA NG PAGBABAGO

Hindi nagtagal, pumasok sa Tubig-Tana ang United Nations Multi-Donor Programme GOP-3 at sinanay nila ang mga MNLF sa iba't-ibang mga kakayahan katulad ng Community Organizing and Community Development (COCD). Sa kalaunan, pumili sila ng isang barangay para gawing Peace and Development Community (PDC). Nakapasa ang Tubig-Tana sa mga criteria; isa na roon ay maraming nakatirang MNLF combatants. Nag-recruit sila ng mga Peace and Development Advocates (PDA) at tinuruan para magkaroon ng sapat na kaalaman at kakayahan sa komunidad.

Nang pumasok ang ACT for Peace, binuo ang mga PDA at gumawa ng isang malakas na organisasyon na kung tawagin ay Peace and Development Advocates League (PDAL). Nag-recruit sila ng mga community organizers (CO), at si Arcid Abdukahal ang siyang nag-organisa sa komunidad.

Nang mag-courtesy call siya sa Barangay, tinanggap siya nang taos-puso at siya'y nagpasalamat. Nakabuo si Arcid ng kooperatiba na pinangunahan ni Mambon Jamiri. Iba't-ibang mga problema ang kanilang pinag-usapan, isa na roon ang kakulangan sa tubig.

TANGKE NG PAG-ASA

Dinala ni Arcid ang isyu sa kakulangan ng tubig sa PDAL at ginawan ito ng proposal na pinasa sa ACT for Peace. Naaprubahan ang proposal at ito'y binalidate ng PDAL at ng ACT for Peace.

Nang mag-press conference, inimbita ang mga opisyaes ng Barangay, mga miyembro ng kooperatiba, at mga tao sa komunidad at ipinaliwanag ang magandang layunin ng gobyerno tungo sa kapayapaan at kaunlaran.

Nang umpisahan ang proyekto, marami ang natuwa at tumulong sa pagtayo ng tangke ng tubig. Sila'y tumulong sa paghakot ng buhangin at mga bato, at iba pang mga gawain. Matapos ang walong taong kawalan ay sa wakas nagkaroon na rin ng tubig ang Tubig Tana. Unti-unti nang nanumbalik ang tiwala ng mga tao sa pamahalaan dahil nararamdaman na nila ang kaunlaran at katahimikan.

Sana hindi lang ito ang magiging proyekto ng PDAL at ng ACT for Peace, at marami pang ibang mga donor ang papasok sa komunidad para matugunan at matulungan ang mga kapos nating mamamayan.

WELL OF SCARCITY, TANK OF HOPE

NI KUBLAI ELIAS

A WELL THAT DRIES UP

As Islamic warriors (mudjahideen) we lived in Mt. Bihabiha. When the Final Peace Agreement between the GRP and the MNLF was signed, I decided to send my children to school and we went to live in the city.

As I was searching for a piece of land to buy, I met Gaibolla. He said, "Buy this land for 50,000 pesos." We agreed on the price, and the family moved to Barangay Tubig-Tana.

There I met Mabon Jamiri, an MNLF Commander in Batch 300 who lives in Tubig-Tana. During our conversation, I found out that there wasn't any water in that place. According to him, the water was cut off by the water district in the entire barangay because of illegal connection.

The people were very angry; and while they had varying opinions, it seemed like the people no longer had any trust in the government.

Nonetheless, I went to the water district to apply for water connection. When the employees at the water district found out I was from Tubig-Tana they didn't accept my application. I thought, "We're going to have a difficult time in this place."

There was a deep well from where we get water for our daily needs. Often the area was crowded that the elbows of those fetching water were touching; sometimes people would queue up overnight and wait for their turn to get water through the next day. And during the hottest months, the well dries up.

Many of us MNLF leaders live in Tubig-Tana: the Provincial Chairman, the Vice-Chair, and the Zone Commander of MNLF combatants. I spoke with one councilor. He was very angry at the water district.

When you block the water connection of an entire barangay, it is like killing the people who live there.

THE BEGINNING OF CHANGE

Not long after, the United Nations Multi-Donor Programme GOP-3 (UNMDP-GOP3) set foot in Tubig-Tana and trained the MNLF on various skills, including Community Organizing and Community Development (COCD). Soon, the institution started choosing a barangay that it would turn into a Peace and Development Community (PDC). Tubig-Tana passed the criteria—one of which was that many MNLF combatants lived in the place. UNMDP-GOP3 recruited people into being Peace and Development Advocates (PDA) and taught them knowledge and skills for community work.

When ACT for Peace arrived, the PDAs were organized into a strong organization called the Peace and Development Advocates League (PDAL). ACT for Peace recruited community organizers (CO), and Arcid Abdukahal became in charge of organizing Tubig-Tana.

When he conducted a courtesy call in the Barangay, he was warmly accepted and for that he was very thankful. Arcid was able to set up a cooperative led by Mambon Jamiri. They discussed various problems, one of which was the lack of access to water.

TANK OF HOPE

Arcid brought the issue of lack of access to water to PDAL and the latter wrote a proposal that was submitted to ACT for Peace. This was subsequently

approved, having been validated by both PDAL and ACT for Peace. When a press conference was held, PDAL and ACT for Peace invited the officers of the Barangay, members of the cooperative, and people in the community; and they explained the good objectives of the government towards peace and development.

When the project was started, many community members were pleased and helped install the tank of water. People helped in shovelling and getting sand and stones, and other tasks. Finally, after eight years of deprivation, Tubig-Tana now has access to water. The people have slowly begun to trust the government because they now experienced development, and peace and quiet.

We hope this isn't the only project of PDAL and the ACT for Peace, and that many more donors will come to the community to help and respond to the needs of our poor people.

MGA BAHAY NG PAGBABAGO

NI HADJA GIOBAY S. DIOCOLANO

Noong Agosto 2008, sinimulan ang paggawa ng opisina ng Kadtabanga Foundation for Peace and Development Advocates, Inc. (KFPDAI) na bigay ng ACT for Peace Programme. Habang ginagawa ang gusali, bakas sa mukha namin ang labis na kagalakan dahil sa wakas ay magkaroon na kami ng opisina na masasabi naming “Amin ito!”

Lalong napalalim ang pagkamalapit namin sa isa’t isa dahil nagkikita na kami araw-araw. At para mapadali ang konstruksyon ng opisina ang bawat officer at staff ng PDAL ay binigyan ng katungkulan sa pagtulong sa mga manggagawa. May mga tumulong sa paghakot at pag-pile ng hollow blocks, at sa pagtimpla ng semento. Sa paggawa ng lahat ng ito, kitang-kita na inspired na inspired ang lahat.

Ang bagay na ito ay isa lang sa napakarami naming gawain at pakikibaka tungo sa kapayapaan at kaunlaran.

SA BAHAY KUBO

Sa aking pagbabalik-tanaw, noong 2005, kami ay nag-oopisina sa isang maliit na bahay kubo sa Gutierrez, Gonzalo Javier St., R.H.F. Yari ito sa tabla at ito ay laging binabaha.

Mayroon din kaming maliit na Knowledge and Learning Center (KLC) na mapaglagyan namin ng mga kagamitang pang-opisina katulad ng computer, fax machine, xerox machine, mga lamesa at upuan, at mga cabinet at aparador na bigay ng GOP-UNMDP3. Itong center ay gawa sa sawali.

Dito kami binigyan ng pagsasanay sa KLC Management ng taga Notre Dame University-Knowledge and Learning Center na pinondohan ng World Bank. Binigyan din kami ng RPDO-ARMM ng Project Proposal Writeshop upang makahanap na kami ng mga kabalikat sa kaunlaran. At sa awa ni Allah dito sa bahay kubo na ito namin naging kabalikat ang OXFAM Hongkong sa pag-oorganisa sa komunidad.

May tatlo kaming community organizers (CO): si Oting Agting, Kusain Amino, at Juhaira Bayan. Sila ay gumagalaw sa Taviran, Margues at Tambak ng Datu Odin Sinsuat. At ang project officer nila ay si Khanappy “Sonny” Ayao.

Anim na buwan na sila sa programang ito ay unti-unti na nilang napalakas ang mga komunidad. Sa Taviran at Margues, naging kabalikat ng KFPDAI ang Peace and Equity Foundation para sa pagsagawa ng Margues-Taviran Potable Spring Development Project. Nagsama-sama sa proyektong ito ang mga miyembro ng komunidad, ang Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU), People’s Organization (PO), Association, at ang Municipal Local Government Unit (MLGU).

Dito rin sa bahay kubo namin naging kabalikat ang FAO-OSRO Japan para naman tugunan ang pangangailangan ng mga tao sa peace and development community (PDC) ng Tambak ng farm inputs at makinarya sa pagsasaka.

Bago binigay ang inputs sa pagtatanim ng mais ay nagsagawa muna ng Farm Field Study (FFS) sa loob ng labing-anim na linggo. Hanggang ngayon, nakakabenepisyo pa rin ang mga tao sa proyektong ito, na nangangahulugang naipagpapatuloy ito ng mga tao.

Dito rin sa bahay kubo namin naging kabalikat ang United Nations Development Program (UNDP) -European Union (EU)

Project Rehabilitation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP). Isinagawa ang rehabilitation project sa Nuyo, Buldon, Shariff Kabunsuan at bago ito isinagawa ay binigyan muna namin ang mga IDPs (internally displaced persons) ng pagsasanay sa edukasyong pangkapayapaan, at kulturang pangkapayapaan o Culture of Peace (COP); at pinagawa rin namin sila ng kanilang planong pangkapayapaan o Peace Plan para sa anim na buwan.

Ang rehabilitation project ay ang pagtatayo ng 33 core shelters na may kasilyas, dalawang jetmatic bakery equipment para sa kabuhayan ng kababaihan, 150 kambing para sa mga magsasaka, barangay health station, dryer at corn sheller. Sa ngayon ay kasama ang Nuyo sa expansion ng PDC at kasalukuyang nagagamit pa rin ng mga tao doon ang mga kagamitang hatid ng rehabilitation project.

Dito rin namin naging kabalikat ang Socio-Economic Reconstruction and Development for Conflict Affected Areas of Mindanao (SERD-CAAM) na nagbigay ng pondo para sa baseline data gathering ng mga munisipyo ng Shariff Kabunsuan Province.

At dito rin sa bahay kubo nagsimula ang pag-oorganisa sa komunidad ng ACT for Peace Program. Gumagalaw ang 23 COs sa 20 PDCs upang turuan at ipamulat sa mga miyembro ng mga komunidad ang mga bagay-bagay na

makakatulong sa ikauunlad at ikababago ng kanilang buhay.

Subalit dito sa bahay kubo na ito ay masikip, mainit, at parating nasisira ang computer dahil mainit nga. Dikit-dikit ang pagkakalagay sa mga gamit namin at ang mga lamesa ng mga staff ay dikit-dikit rin. At tuwing may miting, pagsasanay o kaya'y tuwing dumarating ang mga CO namin ay naroon lagi ang pangamba at takot na bibigay at magigiba ang bahay kubo.

Gayunpaman, dito sa bahay kubo kami nakaipon ng pambili ng 400 sq. meters na lupa na masasabing pag-aari ng KFPDAI kung saan ngayo'y nakatayo ang konkretong KLC.

Ang KLC ay pinondohan ito ng Save the Children at ang bagong opisina ay pinondohan naman ng ACT for Peace.

SA BAHAY SEMENTO

Noong Oktubre 2008 ay lumipat na kami sa aming bagong opisina. Ito ay maluwag, nakahiwalay ang sulok ng Executive Director na may sariling computer. Nakahiwalay ang Finance Department na may sarili ring computer. Nakahiwalay rin siyempre ang Operations Department na may sarili rin niyang computer, at kung saan nakalagay ang xerox machine, telepono, fax machine, binder, at ang iba pang mga kagamitang pang-opisina.

Malamig dito kahit walang aircon dahil open air siya. May tubig pa kami.

May mosque pa na malapit sa aming bagong opisina. Hindi lamang kami ang nakakagamit kundi ang mga taong dumadaan na inaabutan ng oras ng sambayang.

Dito sa konkretong opisina dumami ang aming mga CO dahil nagkaroon ng dagdag na limang PDCs. Sa ngayon ay may 25 kaming COs, may limang supervising COs, at may dalawa pa mula sa komunidad mismo na nakapagtapos ng Training of Trainors - isang taong pagsasanay na pinondohan ng OXFAM HK.

Sa ngayon kabalikat namin ang Local Governance Support Program in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (LGSPA) sa kanilang equitable access to potable water supply, sanitation, and hygiene services (WASH) program sa apat na munisipyo ng Shariff Kabunsuan, ang pag-oorganisa sa komunidad ng AMORE Project ng USAID at Winrock International.

At siyempre pa, kabalikat din namin ang ACT for Peace sa pagsagawa at pagsubaybay ng pagkarami-rami nilang mga proyekto.

Maluwag at malaya na ring nakakakilos ang mga PDAs at COs sa mga miting, mga pagsasanay, at mga buwanang Tactic Session. Kahit sabay-sabay ang kanilang pagdating sa opisina ay wala kaming pinangangambahan.

DALAWANG BAHAY

Hindi hadlang ang munting bahay kubo lamang sa pagsagawa ng pagbabago. Sa mga staff pa lamang ng KFPDAI, mga PDA, at mga

CO, makikita na ang larawan ng pagbabago.

Unang-una ay ang pagbago ng kanilang pananaw mula sa paniniwala sa armadong pakikibaka patungo sa pagiging peace advocate. Ikalawa ay ang pag-unlad ng kanilang mga kakayahan sa facilitation, networking at linkaging. Naroon na rin ang kanilang pagkakaroon ng kakayahan sa plumbing, masonry, carpentry at electric wiring. At higit sa lahat, ang pag-unlad ng kanilang kakayahan sa pamumuno, pangangasiwa, at pagresolba ng mga alitan.

Makikita rin ang pagbabago sa mga relasyon at pakikitungo na isinahalimbawa ng pagtutulungan ng mga officers at staff sa paggawa ng gusali. Nagkakaroon na ng mga regular na miting ang Board of Directors (BOD), mga officers at staff. Mas lalong napatibay ang samahan ng mga PDAs, COs, Supervising COs at Project Manager sa pamamagitan ng maayos na daloy ng mga buwanang Tactic and Education Session.

Ang KFPDAI ay nakagawa na rin ng gabay sa pagsagawa ng mga programa at proyekto na may sinusunod na istruktura, sistema, at polisiya. Maayos din ang pagkalahad ng mga papel at katungkulan ng BOD, ng mga officers at ng mga staff.

Sa kanyang paggawa ng mga programa at proyekto, binibigyang diin ng KFPDAI ang transparency. Napaunlad din ang kanyang kakahayan sa paghanap ng pondo. Sa katunayan, may mga

allowance na ang mga CO at office staff, na labis kanilang ikinagalak.

Sa komunidad naman, ang pinakamalaking pagbabagong naganap ay ang pagsama-sama ng lahat ng sektor (kababaihan, kabataan, magsasaka, mangingisda, MNLF, BLGU, religious at mga traditional leaders) sa paggawa ng mga desisyong kaugnay sa kapayapaan at kaunlaran. Nagtayo sila ng People's Peace Alliance kung saan nakapili na sila ng Peace Core Group at Peace Champions, at nakabuo na ng Project Management Committee.

Sa kabuuan, naputol na ang kultura ng katahimikan sa mga komunidad na sineserbisyohan ng KFPDAI. Sila ngayo'y may lakas at kapangyarihan. Natanggal na rin ang kultura ng favoritism. Lumalim ang pagrespeto ng mga tao sa isa't-isa, at sama-sama nilang ipinagdiriwang ang kanilang kultura.

PAGTATAPOS: PAGYAKAP SA AWTONOMIYA

Masasabing sa mga pangyayaring naganap at patuloy na nagaganap sa dalawang bahay ng pagbabago, ay tapat na isinasakatuparan ang nilagdaang Peace Agreement ng MNLF at GRP. Kahit sa kanyang maselang hugis, ang konsepto ng awtonomiya ay niyakap ng mga manggagawa ng kapayapaan nang buong-buo.

"Kapayapaan isulong, kaunlaran uusbong."

HOUSES OF CHANGE

NI HADJA GIOBAY S. DIOCOLANO

In August 2009, the construction of the office of Kadtabanga Foundation for Peace and Development Advocates, Inc. (KFPDAI) given by ACT for Peace Programme was started. While the structure was being built, our faces reflected so much joy because we finally have an office that we could say, "This is ours!" Our closeness grew deeper because we were already seeing each other every day. To hasten the construction of the office, every officer and member of PDAL was given a task in helping the construction workers. There were those who helped in the hauling and piling of hollow blocks, and in mixing the cement. In doing all this, it is evident that everyone is very inspired.

And this is just one of our many actions and struggle for peace and development.

IN THE HUT

I look back to 2005 and see us set up office in a small hut in Gutierrez, Gonzalo Javier St., R.H.F. This hut was made of wood and was always flooded. We also had a small Knowledge and Learning Center (KLC) where we could place our office equipment and other stuff including computer, fax machine, xerox machine, tables and chairs, and cabinets given by UNMDP-GOP3. This center was made of sawali.

This is where we were given a training on KLC Management by the Notre Dame University-Knowledge and Learning Center, which was funded by the World Bank. RPDO-ARMM also gave us a Project Proposal Writeshop so we could look for partners in development. And with Allah's mercy, it is here in this hut that OXFAM Hongkong became our partner in community organizing.

We have three community organizers (CO): Oting Agting, Kusain Amino, and Juhaira Bayan. They are working in Taviran, Margues and Tambak in Datu Odin Sinsuat. Their project officer is Khanappy "Sonny" Ayao.

Within six months of their working in the program, they have slowly strengthened the community. In Taviran and Margues, the Peace and Equity Foundation became KFPDAI's partner in implementing the Margues-Taviran Potable Spring Development Project. Members of the communities, the Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU), People's Organization (PO), Association, and the Municipal Local Government Unit (MLGU) all took part in the program.

It was also in this hut that FAO-OSRO Japan became our partner in responding to the needs of the people for farm inputs and farming machinery in the peace and development community (PDC) of Tambak.

Before the farmers were given inputs for their corn production, a Farm Field Study (FFS) was first conducted within 16 weeks. Until now, the people continue to benefit from this project, indicating that they have been able to sustain it.

It was also in this hut that the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) -European Union (EU) Project Rehabilitation for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) became our partner. A rehabilitation project was implemented in Nuyo, Buldon, Shariff Kabunsuan, and before this was conducted

we first trained the IDPs on peace education and Culture of Peace (COP); and we also let them craft their own 6-month Peace Plan.

The rehabilitation project consisted of putting up 33 core shelters which had toilets, two jetmatic bakery equipment for the women's livelihood, 150 goats for the farmers, barangay health station, dryer and corn sheller. As of now, Nuyo is included in the expansion of PDCs and the people continue to use the equipment and facilities provided by the rehabilitation project.

It was likewise here that the Socio-Economic Reconstruction and Development for Conflict Affected Areas of Mindanao (SERD-CAAM) became our partner. It provided funds for the baseline data-gathering of the municipalities in Shariff Kabunsuan.

The organizing of communities of ACT for Peace Program also started in this hut. Twenty-three COs were moving in 20 PDCs to teach and enlighten the members of the community on the things that would aid in developing and changing their lives.

But it was cramped and hot in this office, and the computer always crashed because of the heat. Our office materials and the tables of the staff were placed too close to each other. And every time we had a meeting or training, or whenever the COs come to visit, there was always the concern and

the fear that our hut would collapse.

Nonetheless, it is here in this hut that we were able to save money to buy 400 square meters of land—property proudly owned by KFPDAI—where now stands the concrete KLC, which was funded by Save the Children, and the new office, which was funded by ACT for Peace.

IN THE CONCRETE HOUSE

On October 2008, we transferred to our new office. This office is spacious; the office of the Executive Director is separated, and has its own computer. The Finance Department is likewise separated, and has its own computer. And so is the Operations Department, of course, where the xerox machine, telephone, fax machine, binder, and other office materials and equipment are kept.

It is cool here, even if there is no airconditioning because it is designed to allow a lot of air in. And we also have water.

And a mosque stands near the office. Apart from us, other people are able to use the mosque especially when they happen to be nearby during prayer hours.

Here in this concrete office the number of our COs increased by five. Now, we already have 25 COs, and five Supervising COs; and there are two community members who finished a course on Training of Trainors—a one-year training funded by OXFAM HK.

Today, our partners include: the Local

Governance Support Program in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (LGSPA) through its equitable access to potable water supply, sanitation, and hygiene services (WASH) program in the four municipalities of Shariff Kabunsuan; AMORE Project of USAID and Winrock International through their community organizing program; and ACT for Peace, through the implementation and monitoring of its many, many projects.

The PDAs and COs can now openly and freely move around the office during meetings, trainings, and the monthly Tactic Session. We no longer worry, even if they all arrive together.

THE TWO HOUSES

The small hut was never a barrier for change to happen. Among the staff of KFPDAI, the PDAs and the COs alone, the visages of change can be seen.

Foremost is the change in their perspective from the belief in armed struggle to becoming peace advocates. Second is the development of their capabilities in facilitation, networking and linking. They, likewise, have acquired skills in plumbing, masonry, carpentry and electric wiring. And most of all, they have improved their capacities in leadership, management, and conflict resolution.

There are also visible changes in relationships exemplified by the officers and staff helping each other in

constructing the building. Meetings of the Board of Directors (BOD), officers and staff have become regular. The companionship of the PDAs, COs, Supervising COs, and Project Manager have become stronger, through the smooth flow of the monthly Tactic and Education Session.

KFPDAI has crafted guidelines in the conduct of programs and projects that follow particular structures, systems and policies. There is also a smooth layout of the roles and responsibilities of the BOD, officers, and staff.

In the conduct of its programs and projects, KFPDAI emphasizes transparency. It has also developed its capacity to source funds. In fact, to their joy, the COs and office staff already have allowances.

On the other hand, in the communities, the biggest change that occurred is how various sectors (women, youth, farmers, fisherfolk, MNLF, BLGU, religious and traditional leaders) have come together to make decisions regarding peace and

development. They put People's Peace Alliance where a Peace Core Group and Peace Champions have been chosen, and where a Project Management Committee has already been formed.

On the whole, the culture of silence has been broken in communities serviced by KFPDAI. These communities are now empowered. The culture of favoritism has likewise, been dissipated. The people's respect for each other has deepened, and together they celebrate their culture.

CONCLUSION: EMBRACING AUTONOMY

It can be said that the events that occurred and continue to occur in the two houses of change truthfully realize the signed Peace Agreement between the MNLF and GRP. Even in its delicate shape, the concept of autonomy was completely embraced by the workers of peace.

"Advance peace, and development shall flourish."

REFLECTIONS

The construction of an office by Kadtabanga, from a lowly bahay kubo to a two-storey permanent concrete building, goes beyond the symbolism for perseverance and hard work. Yes, it symbolizes paradigm shift adapted by some of the MNLF members; from the pursuit of violent revolution to the promotion of Culture of Peace. Of more significance, however, is the indication of an emerging alternative structure of Moro leadership and governance and the possibilities of a social mechanism for peacebuilding.

The preceding stories suggest how this emerging structure came about.

Transformation leading to the emergence of peace-promotive leadership and governance and the building of a social mechanism for peacebuilding occurred as a continuing process on four dimensions. These are the self, the organizational structures, the relationships among individuals, and the collective perceptions and beliefs.

VOLUNTEERISM

Among the more discernible and significant transformation is the one occurring at the personal dimension or the self. In the former hotbeds of Moro insurgency that were formed into PDCs, the very visible expression is the spirit of volunteerism in both the PDAs and the rest of the community members.

One cannot overemphasize this unique albeit traditional trait among Filipinos in general, which Rene Jamih aptly describes as “rarely found” in development work. From simple demands of any project in the community – from clearing lands of grasses and boulders and digging canals to cooking food for the workers and providing labor to construction of gravel roads and training centers – all able-bodied males and females extend their helping hand in the spirit of *Pagsabhe-sabhe*, a community practice akin to bayanihan.

These collective endeavours have also educated individuals and awakened them to a realization that they have the innate power to move things and change their environment if they will it. In the process, individuals begin to make their voices heard rather than keep their golden ideas to themselves, to analyze and respond to challenges than to react on impulse to situations.

These early results of embracing peaceful means to acquire economic gains and peaceful life served as a satisfying factor for MNLF former combatants and their families to stay and hold on to the peace agreement, and to gradually live the culture of peace that is being promoted. Integral to this factor, however, is promotion of Culture of Peace (CoP) constantly pursued by the Act for Peace Program.

As promoted by Act for Peace, the Culture of Peace is a world view where conflicts are sought to be transformed through the peaceabilities of people, communities, organizations and governments. It presents an alternative to the culture of war. In earlier studies, PDAs attributed their transformation and their renewed spirit of volunteerism to the discernment of this world view, which they acquired through seminars, exposures, reflections and actions on the ground.

With small gains building up to convince them that there's more light and promise ahead, these former MNLF combatants have also learned to volunteer more of their talents and energies that were erstwhile harnessed for war, to community projects.

From volunteerism, emerged new type of leaders and prime movers whose value system is now moulded in the Culture of Peace.

CAMARADERIE AND SHARED LEADERSHIP

As values change, so do relationships.

When individuals and groups adapt new paradigm, in this case among the PDALs - from wielding arms of death to planting seeds of life, a chain of relational changes also commences. From competition to helping hands, from *kanya-kanya* to closeness and camaraderie, communities manifest their communal unity from an awareness that

what they are doing are for the common good of the village.

These changes in the dimension of relationships radiates to people from different cultural and political persuasions in the proximity of the village , who in turn begin to interact and come together, bound by the same geographical identity and pressed by similar issues.

Together now, these peoples of different cultures and persuasions find creative solutions to their perennial problems.

The PDALs have molded this practice in pursuing community development to embrace all political colors and achieve faster rate of change in the community. There are no *palakasan* (favoritism) in who will benefit and who will come first.

In the unique setup in the PDCs, the advocates and the entire communities know that they have to work altogether to remove all biases for or against specific groups in the political map.

Leadership plays a crucial role in cementing unity and ensuring that everybody views the same perspective of achieving change for the community.

What is also a major change in the PDALs is the concept that where before community leadership was the sole domain of traditional leaders and political leaders, leadership is now shared. The old turns to the young for counsel, and consensus is being sought more often as traditional and political leaders cheer in the corner and new leaders take the cudgels.

ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURE AND LEGITIMACY

Because of its leadership in the communities piloted for a new development model for conflict-affected villages, the formation of PDAL has infused legitimacy to the PDAs' leadership role. It is this clout that has often spelled success or failure for many new organizations , as traditional centers of leadership, including the elders, often raise questions to the legitimacy of the PDA.

Positioning itself as a centre of leadership was not easy for all the

provincial PDALs. The stories in this chapter illustrated how provincial leagues have to build their organizational structure, stabilize their operational and financial systems and procedures, professionalize their services and institutionalize system of participation in their organization. Aside from organizational development, they also have to establish accessible physical centres to serve as their office and point of contact for their clients. In addition, the leagues also endeavoured to do networking and build connections and relations with support organizations and government agencies.

Once strengthened, this legitimacy has paved the way in the PDCs for new and alternative governance to influence traditional politics. Primarily, this alternative governance can be seen in the reconstitution of local political bodies, with members now coming from leaders with genuine peace and development framework.

These local government bodies are also sources of new implementation concepts, coursing project-monitoring and evaluation to people-government partnerships.

It is through the PDAL's focus on setting up structures for basic services and for supporting people's livelihood that will help eliminate distrust in government that could lead to violent conflict.

Nowhere has participatory governance been more effectively exemplified than in PDAL's work in communities, where it actively engages community members of all manner and persuasion to plan for their own community, implement this plan, manage this plan, and then plan some more.

And perhaps more importantly, the formation of PDAL hopes to show a model of leadership and governance, and of what good can be possible if local political structures followed the ways of the League.

RADIATING THE CULTURE OF PEACE

Their transformation and the initiatives shown by the individuals and leaders easily caught up with their followers and the rest of the

villagers. From a small group of movers and peace advocates, their number soon multiplied at the community level. It takes time, but it is happening, that a wholesale acceptance of the Culture of Peace as a perspective is taking place among members of the PDCs.

Soon, PDCs inspired other sectors to group themselves into cooperatives, associations and institutions. In the process, education spread to as many persons as can be reached by these organizations.

In summary, the selected stories printed here mirror this important reflection of what are happening to members of various PDALs. These experiences manifest the major changes and developments among individual prime movers and entire communities so used to violence in the past that the word “peace” is almost out of grasp as yet.

As communities develop and flourish, a new generation of Moro emerges and celebrates peace.

chapter 3

IPDM: A DREAMBOAT TO PEACE

AN INTELLECTUAL'S JOURNEY
TO PEACE • A WEB OF UNPEACE • LEGACIES
AND PEACE ASPIRATIONS



INTRODUCTION

The Chinese has their simple and profound way of expressing foresight, even caution, in a venture, in a journey: A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.

In many areas in the world undergoing stages of conflict and resolution, the process of social change to seek the end of conflict is also similar to a long, long journey. It is a journey that requires transformation, if not outright overhaul, of world outlook. The change is not overnight; it entails understanding of the nature of the undertaking and involves courage and decisiveness. Yet still, somewhere and in some point in time, the first step must be made. In the context of peacebuilding in Mindanao, the first step is often confronting a situation of unpeace, of conflict, of war.

Such is the challenge that the Mindanao State University faced up to when it created the Institute for Peace and Development (IPDM), the academe's first step to addressing the Mindanao conflict.

The IPDM spells out the theory and practice of the University's role in the overall work of peacebuilding and promotion of a culture of peace in Mindanao. It establishes the MSU as a Peace University, and must assume a special leadership function in peace and development. It integrates the University into the peace agenda of the national government, with all its complexities and implications, having to contend with the ebb and flow of the process, including the hindrances caused by unpredictable circumstances and events via the route of non-violence.

It is in the nature of its function as a University that it must institute cultural remolding of its students and the youth, in general. As such, it must get into the thick of the "quest for peace" in Mindanao. It must commit itself as a major stakeholder in the peace process.

Toh Swee-Hin (S.H.Toh),

a Professor in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta, Canada, in a paper entitled "Pathways to the Building of the Culture of Peace" puts forward the following definition:

"Culture of Peace (COP) is a growing body of shared values, attitudes, behaviors and ways of life based on non-violence and respect for fundamental rights and freedom, on understanding, tolerance and solidarity, on the sharing and free flow of information and on the full participation and empowerment of women. While it does not deny the conflicts that arise from diversity, it demands non-violent solutions and promotes the transformation of violent competition into co-operation for shared goals. It is both a vision and a process, a vast project, multi-dimensional and global, which is linked to the development of positive alternatives to the functions previously served by war and militarism.

Dr. Toh identified six pathways to the building of a Culture of Peace. These are: 1) Dismantling the Culture of War, 2) Living with Justice and Compassion, 3) Lighting the Candles of Dignity, 4) Caring for the Seven Generation (Care for the Environment), 5) Active Harmony Among Cultures, and 6) Renewing Roots to Inner Peace.

The authors of the stories in this chapter have portrayed the IPDM as a kind of journey aboard a peace dreamboat, a metaphor that perfectly conveys the highlights of their respective involvement in implementing the programs and key undertakings in peace and development advocacy.

It is not, however, a pleasure journey. Who says it is smooth sailing? For even the seas have their unpredictable occurrences too, and thus the dreamboat could sail along rough waters and in stormy weathers, testing commitments, dedication and determination of its sailors in soul-devastating trials and nerve-wracking tests. The long journey should not deplete, though, the helmspersons' reserve of wit and cunning, courage and determination, resourcefulness and creativity.

Yes, the dreamboat may incur damages along its route; its mast cracks, its buntings break, or its sail tears up. Confidently, though, as long as the oarsperson and other key persons at its helm do not lose sight of the quay points in the navigation compass, there is hope they may celebrate the excitement of that age-old shout of the ancient explorer— "Look, land ahoy.. !!"

As in a dreamboat the IPDM is loaded with dreams—vision, mission, goals. But in the rough and stormy waters of human existence, dreams are better translated into real tasks: strategic plans, programs of action, implementing activities, evaluations, revisions, and so on. They refine and enrich the theory and practice of the over-all undertaking along the way.

Common in the experiences shared by the authors of this chapter is their encounter and experiential learning on the Culture of Peace or "COP". The COP, as being promoted by the ACT for Peace Programme is inspired by the Six Pathways to the Building of a Culture of Peace being promoted and advocated by Dr. Toh Swee-Hin, Laureate, UNESCO Prize for Peace Education 2000. While this is so, the Programme also acknowledges the various ground practices of COP in Mindanao, cognizance of its' evolving nature as a body of knowledge and shared values.

All these are provided flesh-and-blood lineaments of what the principal players have gone through, and those they have yet to experience.

For the journey to peace is also a life-and-death adventure.

THE AUTHORS

Badrudin K. Abdul in his Journey Towards Peace Advocacy, expresses confidence that he is sufficiently equipped to bridge the gap between theory and practice in peacebuilding in actual engagements in academic and community extension environments. He is the head of the Quick Response Services (QRS) of the Mindanao State University - Maguindanao Extension Office. Having gone through a string of workshops and seminars and other peace-related activities, he feels his journey to promote and advocate for peace and development can be compared to an intellectual sojourn that is deepened more and more through time.

Radzma Jannaral Suhaili is caught up in A Web of Unpeace with her experiences of tragic incidents from her early childhood to adulthood. There was an episode in her life when she was in a state of confused subjectivity, unable to fully comprehend the complexities of violence that surround her existential milieu.

This characterized her journey from confusion to her later engagements in peace advocacy as the executive director of MSU-Sulu IPDM.

In her reflections she confides that “my present state of mind and heart has affirmed the imperative need for peace in Mindanao. And this crying call for peace is connected to the past events



1. Suhaili;
2. Casan

of my own life—events which may be very personal but somehow are a part of the over-all context of unpeace— in my heart, in my mind, in my community and, in a much larger context, in Mindanao society in general.”

Hameedah Erlinda Ola-Casan heads the MSU-System IPDM, comprising seven different areas in Mindanao. Hers has also been a journey. She muses, “Looking back at that awe-inspiring moment of my appointment (as Executive Director of MSU-IPDM), I cannot help but see it as a milestone event in a lifelong journey that derives the driving force of its beginnings that moment I grasped the significance of my grandfather’s legacy of the slippers.”

Hameedah’s discernment of her position and role at the helm of the IPDM dreamboat, her commitment to the cause of peace and development in Mindanao, parallels her grandfather’s faithful adherence to the cause of freedom and peace as a revolutionary leader in the Filipino-American War. She verbalizes this thusly-

“The journey to capture and fulfill the legacy of the slippers has rocky roads to tread. It entails a work of a lifetime and perhaps the lifetime of generations to come. I know this rare opportunity and noble undertaking would pass only once in my life, but I know it would leave footprints for my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren—descendants of General Simeon Arboleda Ola—to take on the wealth of his story”

AN INTELLECTUAL'S JOURNEY TO PEACE

BADRUDIN K. ABDUL

One morning that I was chopping wood, a loud explosion suddenly shook the roof of my house. The explosion must be very near. I came out and asked an old woman who was running nearby tugging a mother goat with two kids, "What happened?" "The military has assaulted the MILF position in Lower Talitay!"

That was the start of the 2008 war between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the MILF.

In my mind, the 11-year old peace process was put to waste and thrown to the abandoned marshland of Maguindanao. That strengthened my resolve to work harder as peace advocate in the academe and the community.

I recalled a significant event back then on November 2003, in a seminar workshop, that became a timely stimulus to jolt the academic community from relative inaction. It was a seminar-workshop on the Culture of Peace (COP) participated in by selected

faculty members of the Mindanao State University-Maguindanao (MSU-MAG). It was my first acquaintance with the ACT for Peace Programme and my first encounter with the idea of the COP.

In that seminar, the facilitator Dr. Esther Sevilla from the Notre Dame University of Cotabato City introduced many definitions of peace, and what caught my attention and energized me was the one on "Peace may refer to an agreement to end the war".

As a native inhabitant of the place where the remaining homeland is gradually disappearing, where sovereignty has been lost, I think there can still be a peaceful alternative to the raging Mindanao war and a peaceful solution to the long-standing Mindanao problem brought about by colonialism for centuries.

Having imbibed many of the inputs in that 3-day seminar-workshop, I decided to study further so that my journey to peace advocacy in the near future will be

invigorated. I enrolled in the graduate peace program of the Notre Dame University in Cotabato City. It was year 2004.

RAY OF HOPE

The year 2004 was the crucial period of my intellectual journey. At that juncture, I was observing how, on one hand, local structures of governance was succumbing to ills of traditional politics and failed to deliver basic services to the people. Tension in Maguindanao and Cotabato was heightening as politicians contested election results. On the other hand, the MILF was relentless in its pursuit for secession of the Moro homeland. Amid these events, I was looking for viable program from the national government, but found it wanting. In her inaugural speech on June 30, 2004, Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo never mentioned or underscored the peace process with the MILF or any local rebel group, except to say that "... peace will have come to Mindanao, all insurgents shall have turned their swords into ploughshares". My fear was that the sovereignty-based Bangsamoro struggle will turn into civil war.

But in 2005 a ray of hope for peace came into view when I joined the 7-day Interfaith Dialogue organized by the Notre Dame University of Cotabato City. This dialogue was participated by Muslims and Christians and youths and professionals and its primary objective was to understand the dynamics of the Mindanao conflict. There, I saw sincere efforts of fellow Mindanawans to creatively address the conflict through non-violence

and respect for the cultural integrity and rights of all people. My hopes were fueled, and I thought, I too, must contribute my creativity to peacebuilding. But, I needed a mechanism that would translate this renewed hope into action.

FROM PGDEC TO IPDM

It did not take long before I found the right mechanism that I was looking for to actively pursue peacebuilding. This came in two important developments that happened in our academic institution, the Mindanao State University-Maguindanao, in 2006.

First was the creation of Peace and Gender Development Center (PGDEC), which was designated to attend and participate in all peace-related activities in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), as well as those initiated by the national government.

On the last week of August, the ACT for Peace Programme invited some 50 faculty members and administrative staff of MSU-Maguindanao to attend a Culture of Peace orientation and capacity-building conference at the Durian Garden in Polomolok, South Cotabato.

The impact of these activities was far-reaching, in terms of relationships between the faculty and staff on the one hand, and between the faculty and students on the other hand in our University. On the part of the faculty and staff, a discussion was initiated which saw the need to change some structures,

such as the idea of integrating a Culture of Peace (COP) in the Vision, Mission and Goals of the University.

On the part of the faculty and students, change would be in the form of integrating COP in the academic curriculum, requiring teachers to incorporate discussions on COP in their respective courses and subjects.

The second significant development was the institutionalization of COP in the MSU-System.

This structural change in the MSU was manifested by the change in the names of all peace centers of all MSU units into Institute of Peace and Development in Mindanao (MSU-IPDM). Accordingly, our Peace and Gender Development Center in MSU–Maguindanao became the MSU-Maguindanao IPDM.

Much has been accomplished with this development. For one thing, the administration officials and members of the faculty became conscious of the role of the University in the peace process. In short, the academic community has awakened to the realization that the University does not exist in isolation of the Mindanao society; that it is in fact invested with a very important function of being an educational and cultural institution that must mold the minds and hearts of the youth and students, that the issues that confront the larger social milieu need to be ventilated among the members of the academic community.

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

Lucky for me, the string of efforts and activities initiated by the IPDM worked in ways that enhanced and firmed up my commitment to peace advocacy.

When I was sent to Zamboanga City to attend a trainors' training on Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA), I felt a personal transformation having become a facilitator in efforts and actions requiring Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA).

The training was sponsored by the ACT for Peace Programme of the Area Management Office of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (AMO-ARMM), and its impact is incalculable in terms of my overall academic career. Because of it I have become more committed as an advocate of a Culture of Peace.

On the next IPDM-sponsored activity, I was there at the Write Shop on the Integration of PCIA into the local government units (LGUs) at the Paradise Island Beach Resort on March 2007.

The training enhanced further my knowledge on peace advocacy and it further boosted my confidence to face situations that involve peace and conflict impact assessment.

CONTINUING ENGAGEMENT

The year 2007 was a period of continuing growth for the advocacy and promotion of the COP among its IPDM staff, the faculty, school administrators

and the students. A series of trainings, seminar-workshops and other peace actions and activities were undertaken, some of them continuing into the following year, all of which were intended to strengthen the academic community and including the outskirt communities.

In March, the faculty attended a seminar-workshop on the COP on how to enlist the graduating students in peace advocacy.

This was followed by a meeting on May 28-29 that was attended by the IPDM-Maguindanao director. It was a convergence meeting with the ACT for Peace Programme, MSU-IPDM, Asian Institute of Management (AIM) Migrant Center, and the Local Government Support Program in the ARMM (LGSPA) held at Hotel Camela in Pagadian City. As a follow-up action, it did not only expand but also identified certain thrusts on our role as academic persons in the peace program.

Then in June the University Chancellor, IPDM director and ACT for Peace Programme reconstructed the partnership agreement between MSU-Maguindanao and ACT for Peace in Cotabato City. This action sealed the University commitment to the peace process.

As a way of signaling to the public mind and heart about the University's role, the Mindanao Week of Peace was calendared and celebrated in December, through the leadership of the IPDM director. In the same month, Dr. Renato P. Cacayan, Prof. Badrudin K. Abdul and Ronald Halid Torres attended

an Educators' Culture of Peace seminar-workshop for module-making on Peace Education held at Malasag Eco Village in Cagayan de Oro City.

CHALLENGES

The feeling that the challenge ahead would be great brings certain restlessness of the mind and excitement of the heart. I tried hard to prove that I would be equal to the challenge. Keeping in mind always the long and arduous journey, I outlined certain priority moves and actions.

Because, on January 2008 I was asked by the MSU-Maguindanao IPDM to conduct peace advocacy, I chose to start the advocacy action among MSU students. I thought that teachers do have such great influence on their students. Teachers who are acculturated with COP can have a multiplier effect in peace advocacy among the studentry. And so I thought it would be good to start from the student level.

During the open forum, a commotion ensued when one of my Christian students vehemently expressed his opposition to the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE). He said, "Ang ayaw namin sa BJE kasi paalisin daw ang mga kagaya namin na nasakop nito". I answered him, "That is not true, because in the first place, the BJE is not an independent bid on the part of the Bangsamoro. It constitutes a political empowerment which requires a democratic process."

I continued that the BJE is the most democratic solution to the Mindanao problem because to implement it will require the process of consultation through plebiscite and referendum.

In the same month I was appointed head of the Quick Response Services (QRS) of the Mindanao State University-Maguindanao Extension Office. I believe that my training within the IPDM program has equipped me with certain degree of capability and confidence to pursue tasks on peace advocacy or on the promotion of the culture of peace not only in the academic community but also in outskirt communities. In other words, my task would endeavor to bridge gaps between theory and practice in peacebuilding both in the academe and in community extension environment.

When war broke out in August 2008 between the AFP and the MILF in the aftermath of the unsigned MOA-AD in

Malaysia, I found myself in various evacuation centers distributing relief goods to evacuees, internally displaced persons, and offering simple words of console. Surrounded by countrymen languishing in these evacuation centers --hungry, thirsty and tired.

In that little work with the internally displaced persons did I find some sense of real challenge and inspiration to express my academic training in real situations of conflict. I felt that my work became more difficult, yet more inspiring because it entailed serving thousands of IDPs. In that little opportunity to transform what I learned and been trained to do in the IPDM, I felt that greater work ahead in many other ways and situations have been opened to us in the academe.

And that to me is personally rewarding.

A WEB OF UNPEACE

RADZMA JANNARAL-SUHAILI

Humankind needs to take lessons from the past in order to build a new and better tomorrow. Nowhere is this more needed than in Mindanao which has been rocked by violent conflicts for so long. And nothing is more appropriate a guiding principle than this one because there is now a growing consciousness that there might have been big mistakes in the past in trying to end the centuries-old conflict. The stakeholders, like myself, and the entire Moro people, are beginning to realize the need for a lasting peace and sustainable development in Mindanao. Everybody seems to say, "Give peace a chance!"

On the part of the educational institution that I belong this realization has found expression in the establishment of the Mindanao State University as a Peace University. No longer is the educational institution to be regarded as an isolated entity whose sole undertaking is only

the cultivation and development of the individual's (student's) physical and mental faculties. The peculiar context of MSU's existence in the midst of the long-standing war in Mindanao makes her a stakeholder and necessitates her special involvement in the quest for peace.

My life has been like a journey aboard a dreamboat, fervently wishing and hoping that one day it would find a harbor where peace awaits for me and for my people. For all the pains and travails I went through, we deserve a safe and peaceful return to our dreamed Bangsamoro homeland.

Yes, my present state of mind and heart has affirmed the imperative for peace in Mindanao. And this crying call is connected to the past events in my own life - events which may be very personal but somehow are a part of the overall context of "unpeace"-- in my heart, in my mind, in my community and, in a much larger context, in Mindanao society.

I remember a very frightening

incident. Sometime in 1974, in the middle of the night, while I was poring over the pages of my Chemistry book as a student of MSU-Tawi-Tawi, all of a sudden I was informed that a boat from Sulu has docked on the wharf of Bongao with hundreds of evacuees aboard.

"The town of Jolo is burning!" someone exclaimed.

I was deeply bothered and could not anymore concentrate on what I was reading. Early the following morning, my board mates and I went to the wharf and to our dismay we saw a naval boat full of evacuees from Sulu. Our eyes, now in tears, searched for familiar faces - relatives, friends - who might have been among the passengers. Out of nowhere my mind wondered, "What could my sister be doing now in the hills?"

I learned that many of my relatives, including my sister, friends and schoolmates have gone to the hills not just to flee but to join the MNLF fighters for the cause of freedom and independence of the Bangsamoro homeland. I was greatly bothered, "Shall I join them now? What will happen to my studies? Is there hope for me to finish my course?"

I chose to continue my studies. The following year, in 1975, like a special grace from Allah, I found myself among the successful graduates of MSU-Tawi_Tawi. And in June that same year, I was employed as a high school teacher of the University's

community high school in Simunul. I looked at it as another blessing.

Then the two months summer break came, and the blessings did not stop. I was chosen as a NSDB scholar to participate in a Summer Science Institute at Ateneo de Davao University. This was like a respite from the anxieties of war in my homeland.

But back in Tawi-Tawi after that summer, something terrible happened to me. I fell into a state of physical and mental disquiet. It was a very trying phenomenon. I felt I was on the verge of insanity. So many factors came into play - my father's violent death in a "rido" in 1963 when I was only a Grade 3 pupil. The incident was still vivid and clear in my mind. . .

It was around 4:30 in the afternoon when I heard a sound of gunfire some distance from our house in barangay Jati Tunggal in Indanan, Sulu. I was startled and thought, "Oh, maybe Amah...Amah is shot dead...!"

A few minutes later I saw someone running in our direction and he informed us that my father, Maharadja Jannaral Nassaie, and my cousin's brother-in-law, Hatib Tingkasan, were ambushed on their way home by two unidentified men. The informant's elder brother,

Mudjahirin Nassaie, was a witness to the incident. He saw the gunmen and was sorry, saying, "I was not able to fight. I had no gun."

Nassaie, just hid behind a coconut tree. Intently, he saw and identified fully who were the perpetrators of the crime.

He remembered their names.

As a consequence, ten of us siblings were orphaned. Eight were girls and two were boys born to three mothers. Our eldest sister at that time just graduated from high school and our youngest brother was only three years old. It was an episode of sacrifice and difficult existence for our family. It was basically a life of unpeace. My sisters were unable to continue schooling. They were afraid they might be chanced upon and raped by our family's enemies.

A day after we buried our father all our male cousins took chances to avenge his death. They eventually killed our father's killer. But worsening feud between the two clans cost more lives of my male cousins and uncles. This caused a kind of "phobia" on my part to see armed persons, military or otherwise.

Another tragic incident followed, which may have factored in my illness. It was my mother's sudden and violent death when she was hit by a lightning. I kept asking myself, "Why did my parents both die a sudden and violent death? Is this a foreboding of something more terrible to happen in my life?"

What compounded my mental confusion was the intermittent battles between the MNLF and the government troops and frequent evacuations of our people in the community. It was exasperating, so frustrating. Perhaps, these add up to what happened to me in face of the uncertainty of the outcome of the war and my own life. "Why is there no end to these senseless violence in society?"

Whatever may be the significance of all these happenings I did not bother to seek the answers anymore. I decided not to return to MSU-Simunul. I settled in Sulu. And sometime in 1978 I found a job as a Science teacher at Hadji Butu School of Arts and Trades in Jolo.

Still I crave for more knowledge and learnings as if I was searching for something more that I could share with my fellow humans, especially my immediate family.

Luckily I finished my masteral degree paying my tuition from what I earned from teaching. This was a credential that allowed me to teach at MSU-Sulu in 1981. A year later I was promoted to college instructor. At this time peace negotiations between the MNLF and the GRP were going on despite sporadic encounters between the MNLF warriors and government troops in some areas. On my part, being a supporter of the MNLF cause, I was interested in the outcome of the war.

Then the good news came! The 1996 Peace Agreement between the MNLF and the

Government was forged and signed in Tripoli, Libya. It was not only good news, it was the biggest of all big news to have resounded across Mindanao's entire Morolandia.

However, I still had some doubts about true lasting peace to ever reign in my homeland.

In 1989 I got married to a MNLF Commander who was based in Palawan. At that time I was already a college professor of MSU-Sulu, and my salary was enough for me to support a family of four including my jobless sisters. I was the sole breadwinner and had to shoulder my children's education from grade school to college.

The year 1997 was crucial for me. It was a turning point in my life. From a mere classroom teacher I was initiated into a career that made a profound impact on my personal and professional life. I was offered a full-time scholarship by the CHED-FAPE for a Ph.D. in Development Studies at the Ateneo de Zamboanga University. This study provided my initial orientation on peace and development. And I indeed became a peace and development advocate or PDA, conscious of the arduous task of promoting a Culture of Peace (COP) in Mindanao.

Since then, all my classroom activities have been consciously interlinked to peacebuilding and the promotion of COP. Classroom discussions relate to dimensions of peace, such as the need to safeguard the integrity of the environment, respect for human rights, both individually and collectively, the impact of violence against

individuals and society as in cases of "rido", issues of fraud in elections.

All these constitute my involvement in peace advocacy like steps of a staircase in peacebuilding. This advocacy is further enhanced by the making of MSU a Peace University in 2006 and establishing the Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao (IPDM).

This has profound impact on me personally, because I was designated executive director of the IPDM Center of MSU-Sulu. For me, this is not just a position. This serves as a watershed of my commitment to the cause of peace. This constitutes the wellspring of a lifelong dedication to promote a culture of peace in Mindanao.

In short, this became a life-time career that, as a matter of fact, conforms with the core of the Islam Faith - Salaam!

What is expected of me in this lifelong career? The IPDM Program has instituted three key components to the MSU System. Foremost is the "integration of peace education into the school curriculum at all levels". This results in a "paradigm shift" whereby an educational institution serves not merely as a well of knowledge and learning, but also as a leader in peacebuilding.

Reflecting on the course of events in my personal and professional life, I have become fully conscious of how my

past history has contributed in profound ways to my role as a peace advocate. Figuratively, it is like riding on a dreamboat whose destination was to dock at the IPDM Program in MSU-Sulu and for me to take a leadership role in its implementation. The

past events unavoidably lead to the current events deliberately charted as keystones in the IPDM foundation all for the cause of peace in Mindanao. I am happy to be at the helm of the MSU-Sulu pursuing the goals of its IPDM Program.

LEGACIES AND PEACE ASPIRATIONS

HAMEEDAH ERLINDA OLA-CASAN

“Una sola bala de mis fusiles no se puede comprar por todos los oros del mundo”. (One single bullet of my rifle cannot be bought by all the gold in the world.)

In furious voice these were the words of my grandfather, General Simeon Arboleda Ola, when offered (bribed) by Colonel Garwood in exchange for his surrender. Years later, however, in the name of peace, he voluntarily gave himself up to Col. Harry Bondholtz. General Simeon Ola was the last Filipino general to succumb to the Americans during the Filipino-American war. This was on September 25, 1903.

On September 25, eighty-seven years later, in a ceremony that renamed Camp Ibalon of Regional Command 5 in Bicol to Camp General Simeon Ola in his honor, I was asked to deliver reminiscences of my grandfather. It caught me unaware because my only living memory of my grandfather was about his slippers. It was one time that he asked me to get his pair of slippers.

That very moment, it suddenly occurred to me that the pair of slippers could be a symbolic message for me “to follow his footsteps”. It became the theme of the speech I delivered on the occasion.

History would show that General Simeon Ola fought for freedom. He fought against economic and social deprivation, for peace and development. His distinct character of gallantry, courage, honesty and integrity are living legacies that drew the admiration and love of his fellow Bicolanos.

Now, the significance of the slippers has found fulfillment in my present position and commitment as executive director of the Mindanao State University Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao (MSU-IPDM). Looking back at that awe-inspiring moment of my appointment, I cannot help but see it as a milestone in a lifelong journey, deriving the driving force from that moment I

grasped the significance of my grandfather's "legacy of the slippers".

CAPTURING THE LEGACY

In my search for a direction and to capture the legacy of the slippers, I followed the road to collaborative efforts to synergize the MSU System Peace Centers. Somewhere along this road something historical and memorable happened to my life.

It was an early morning of Thursday, sometime in January, my mobile phone rang. Professor Lomala O. Imam of the Presidential Management Staff was on the line, "President de Leon wants to see you at his office".

President de Leon is Ricardo De Leon, popularly referred to in the campus as PRDL. He was the newly installed President of the MSU System. Personally, I hold deep gratitude for PRDL because back when he was still the regional director of PNP Recom 5, he bestowed honor on the memory of my grandfather by erecting him a monument at Camp Ola.

When I saw him in the office, I was surprised. PRDL offered to me the IPDM post. At first I was hesitant because of my plan to go on sabbatical leave. Suddenly, reckoning on my thoughts in 1992 -- "Sana mapasalamatan ko ang nagpagawa ng monumento ng aking lolo" -- I said to myself, "This is the time! God's answer to my wish to express gratitude to the man

who gave significance to my grandfather's achievements."

More than an act of gratitude, accepting the position was to give deeper meaning to my commitment to continue the legacy of the slippers - to work for peace and development with my whole heart and mind, in wisdom and integrity.

THE IPDM

MSU was established as "a social laboratory for integration and as an institution of convergence of diverse cultures of Mindanao. It promotes intercultural understanding as the centerfold of its peace education paradigm". Its establishment was one of the government's responses to the "Mindanao problem" - the violent struggle and quest of the Filipino Muslims for self-determination and cultural identity in the midst of threats of cultural and spiritual assimilation by the majority Christian population. The IPDM is "the engine tasked to propel the University to the way of peacebuilding efforts".

A few months after assumption of office on February 1, 2006, I initiated discussions on the VMG - vision, mission and goals for all MSU System Centers. These were put into action through the first system-wide Strategic Planning Workshop on Peace and Development for Mindanao on May 13-14, 2006.

All the campuses of the MSU System were represented in this historic task of formulating the IPDM VGM by their respective directors. Together with the IPDM Directors were Prof. Jane Ruby J. Asperin, IPDM Program Coordinator for Research; Ms. Aisa G. Minukon, Program Coordinator for Peace Education; and Mr. Camar Ameril, Program coordinator for Peace Action. We were all like travelers aboard a dreamboat in a pilgrimage towards peace and development.

In detail, the Vision is encapsulated in just one clause: A progressive Mindanao, where people live with social justice, harmony in diversity, towards peace and sustainable development. Of course, this is a dream, and like all dreams, it is couched in general, abstract and idealistic terms. The vision is the shore where the IPDM Dreamboat is destined to reach.

The Mission is the Dreamboat itself. It represents the commitment of the University and the academic community to the long journey that it has embarked upon to take. It is conscious of its strengths and weaknesses as a vehicle for change. It identifies its role as the main instrument which must be harnessed to attain what it commits itself to undertake in the over-all peace process.

The Goals represent the ocean waves and the storms that the dreamboat must contend with from day to day, from time

to time, in its long journey. One goal may be sailing on a sunshiny day along calm waters, another goal may be a night sailing or a drifting along strong currents that requires much rowing and maneuvering with the oars. They are the milestones upon milestones of achievements and victories in the tasks and activities that push forward the program for peace building. Goals represent the distances reached in the journey and correspond to the concrete actions and material deeds designed to move ever nearer and closer to the dreamboat's destination.

It delights me to think that my involvement in the peace process has gone headway and has gained momentum. I recall that earlier in the midst of the quest for peace and development, the MSU created the Office of the Muslim Christian Center for Peace Studies. Basically, this was just to pave the way towards the establishment of the IPDM. It is now the central coordinating unit for all existing peace and development centers of the campuses of the University System.

The Institute plays a vital role as a convergence for Muslims, Christians and Lumads to bridge and harmonize their religious and cultural diversities for mutual understanding, tolerance and peaceful co-existence in their socio-

economic endeavors and give credence to the values for life. These expectations are within the three program components of the institute: peace research, peace education and peace action.

These components are big challenges to cross and know no bounds to harmonize our efforts to minimize the rigors of the Mindanao problem. The essence of what we have come upon reverberate in the words of President Ricardo de Leon:

“I believe that MSU has the greatness of purpose and must continue to move forward as a social laboratory of integration of the tri-people of Mindanao. We have reclaimed MSU’s role as a catalyst of peace and development. It is the duty of everyone to shield it from future destruction because of personal interest. If we rest on our achievements, we will miss the opportunity of capturing the Filipino dream of a peaceful and progressive Mindanao...”

INTER-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Things happen rather fast. I haven’t quite made a deep breath while in my new post when on April 13-14, 2007, the MSU System-IPDM crafted the 3 Rs—the essential components of its Education Paradigm - namely, reflective, restorative, and responsive. These are designed to promote inter-cultural understanding to bring about economic, political, social and environmental

empowerment and transformation for a sustained peace and development among the peoples of Mindanao.

Inter-cultural understanding! This constitutes the centerfold of IPDM’s peace education paradigm. The paradigm reflects tolerance attributed to respect, acceptance, appreciation of diverse cultures and harmony in difference, which makes it reflective of and responsive to the root causes of conflict and violence. And thus, it cultivates the Culture of Peace (COP) among the peoples of Mindanao and ensures sustained peace and development through transformation and empowerment on the social, economic, political and environmental dimensions.

THE PEACE UNIVERSITY

Well, this is it! We have established the MSU as a “Peace University”. As a matter of fact, even before the launching of this vision, the GOP-UN Act for Peace Programme signed a partnership agreement with the University to support MSU through the IPDM.

This paved the way for the various activities of the IPDM that include peace lectures, COP trainings for teachers and the celebration of the 2006 Mindanao Week of Peace.

The COP seminars that were held in almost all the months of 2006 and continued to the subsequent year were geared towards creating ‘peace modules’ as ways

of faithfully and creatively implementing Executive Order No. 570, which was about “institutionalizing peace education in basic education and teacher education”.

All in all, this string of activities and actions constitute my program of stirring the academic community and the Mindanao citizenry, in general, to an awareness of the issues and imperatives of peace building.

I remember the article of Prof. Jane Ruby Asperin that appeared in the *Convergence*, a publication of the IPDM in its August 2007 issue. She ends her essay by saying— As declared in the MSU Vision 2020, “...this is our legacy for the Bangsamoro and the other marginalized peoples of Mindanao.” Insha’Allah!

THRILLS OF YOUTH

Peace, action! Peace, action !— words that ring with feeling of vim and vitality. Who would imagine that with my age, I would be experiencing the thrills of youth, when my knees and limbs were yet firm and my feet were still nimble. Ms. Asiah G. Minukon aptly verbalized our happy excursions and communion with Nature in her exhortation to give flesh-and-blood concreteness to our commitment to peace and development – “...stand up stewards of Mother Earth! Let us walk the talk and make a difference!”

And so, one day, the MSU IPDM, along with its partner stakeholders and student

constituents just took to the road, hied on two military trucks to Lumbac, Buadi Poso Buntong and Pagalongan Ditsaan Ragain, Lanao del Sur! These were former war-torn communities. Lo and behold! We literally touched to feel the skin (soil) of Mother Earth to plant trees in celebration of Mindanao Week of Peace.

Taha Cabugata, one-time MNLF warrior, saw the symbolic transformation of “arms to farms” in this act of soiling our hands and seeding the earth with messages of peace and development in our minds and hearts.

But oh, what could be more refreshing and awesome than to soak one’s hands and feet in the legendary waters of Lake Lanao! “It is a dream come true to visit and appreciate the bounties of nature in my own place,” exclaimed one Maranao student who was with us in an Environmental Awareness Tour of Lake Lanao. These students also visited the ‘Balt’ islets in Lake Lanao and distributed trees seedlings.

A non-Muslim participant said, “The tour revealed the richness and beauty of the Maranao culture set in the captivating Lake Dapao and enchanted Lake Lanao—areas that we only know as rido-and-conflict-prone”.

HERCULEAN TASKS

The tasks within the programs and plans of IPDM require some herculean strength. While I dread the thought of the gigantic challenge, the momentum of the peace movement has inspired me more and more. All those collective tasks that have been brainstormed, planned, programmed and implemented according to schedules serve as little victories and successes. Their incremental value to the over-all undertaking in the peace process could spell the difference between inaction and being part of the crew that make up the IPDM dreamboat.

We in the MSU-IPDM are, however, aware of the very long journey to peace.

Our accomplishments in the past few months may seem insignificant. But these are necessary steps that need to be done in order to gain headway in the journey. We have to multiply the crew in number and in competence, so that the whole contingent of peace workers would tilt the balance between those who believe in non-violence as a way to principled peace and those who opt for war to achieve an unstable cessation of hostilities.

The IPDM as dreamboat and vehicle for peace now sails in unison with other forces that have taken the peace agenda for Mindanao as an imperative option for development. No genuine peace, no genuine development. This maxim is at the

same time a demand for a principled social order, because the tall order for a peaceful resolution of the Mindanao conflict takes its sustenance not from mere slogans and propaganda offensives but from the minds and hearts of the grassroot constituencies of Mindanao society who are the real makers of history.

In the final analysis, the University shall be judged not by the banners they fly in the sky proclaiming this and that action, but by how effective it is as a cultural institution in bringing about a culture of peace (COP) among the people of Mindanao, especially the combatants in the struggle for freedom and justice. Much more so, among military officers and soldiers who are acculturated with the mentality that conflict can only be resolved by means of warfare and armed might.

Essentially, the MSU-IPDM has been established for and in behalf of the Mindanao people, especially the grassroots people of the ARMM. But for genuine peace to dwell in every household, in every barangay, in every town and city of this beleaguered island, it must first dwell in the minds and hearts of the people - as peace-loving people of Mindanao - according to what transpires in every classroom in every campus in the MSU-System.

This is the IPDM journey, very much encapsulated in the legacy of my grandfather - the legacy of the slippers.

The journey to capture and fulfill the legacy of the slippers has rocky roads to tread. It entails a work of a lifetime and for my generations to come. I know this rare opportunity for a noble undertaking would pass only once in my life, but I

know it would leave footprints for my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren - descendants of General Simeon Arboleda Ola to take on the wealth of his story and the legacy of his pair of slippers.

REFLECTIONS

True peace is as evasive as a dream. It may be a dream forever to be dreamed, or it may show itself in the far distance as a vague shape of an island that appears near and will soon be reached. It may remain forever a beacon in the distant horizon, enticing but unreachable.

Will the dreamboat ever reach its destination amidst turbulent ocean waters and stormy weathers? In more real terms, is the quest for peace in Mindanao an attainable proposition? Will peace in Mindanao come in our own time? Or anytime in the near future?

US President Barack Obama, in his book *Audacity of Hope* exudes the same familiar tone in viewing the state of war that has hitherto beset the Middle East or thereabouts, "I looked down at the Old City, the Dome of the Rock, the Western Wall, and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher . . . and pondered the possible futility of believing that this conflict might somehow end in our time. . ."

It's good to hear words that engender peace values or the choice of redirecting outlook towards non-violent pathways to peace: peace advocacy, peace action, peace research, peace transformation, culture of peace and what other axiomatic phrases about peace.

It is refreshing to hear personal accounts of the Mindanao conflict - stories of the people in the grassroots, among elements from the academe and the local government units, who have known how the conflict has brought about pain to bear down on their lives. One can never mistake the honesty and sincerity with which they have retold their respective journeys to peace advocacy. They have staked their dreams and hopes for the future in this grand endeavor of peacebuilding.

With their stories, hope glimmers like a beacon in the distant horizon. It is heartening to be among the harbingers of hope in the people's quest for peace. They have bared their souls in the purest of intentions.

One could almost witness the details of how the IPDM helped clear the mud of unpeace in the minds of the peace advocates in the academe. Their stories show how the trainings on governance and promoting a culture of peace created the impetus to reflect, and to craft those solutions to violent rido and war, evacuation and disorder in the community.

The IPDM has placed them in real situations of the poverty, war and lack of education in many conflict-affected communities

And so it has become irrevocably clear to peace advocates, in the academe, that the alternative to unpeace is peace - peace in the mind, in their life, in society.

The IPDM as a vehicle for peace education and remolding, continues to transform not only the perspectives of the individual implementers but also the paradigm of the university in its extension services.

The transformation among individuals in the academe came about after the IPDM turns classrooms into open discussions about biases and prejudices, of common desire for peace among tribes and mixed communities, and even among the different sectors of the academe.

The transformation continues as peace principles and learning are also imparted outside the campuses and into the communities. In turn, these help change the unresolved viewpoints among some teachers and implementers. Thus, IPDM has opened doors wider for advocacy and encouraged volunteerism.

To roll the wheel of peace education, concepts and trainings must be applied consistently and with predictable frequency. Like Radzma Suhaili, Hameedah Erlinda Ola-Casan and Badrudin K. Abdul's, peace advocacy that is confined in the academe should not be taken as mere desk and textbook commitments. For them, advocacy must be tried in the crucible of concrete practice.

The potential contribution of the academe to pummel the peacebuilding stakes stronger in the ground remains untapped, with

the program being only recently applied. This means that more work should be exerted to sustain the program, gather more advocates and gain evident support from within the academe.

It must be difficult for these advocates though, being avid supporters of the Bangsamoro cause, to embrace the path of non-violence in the middle of intermittent military operatives and troops in their respective home towns. Yet, they seem to have put aside biases already to enable them to perform their role well within the IPDM Program. One would think the vital significance of the MSU-IPDM is tantamount to that “magic wand” whose magical spell has touched the consciousness and conviction of people allowing them to muster the energy, competence and dedication.

It would not be a surprise if, with the advance of the peace process, the advocates in the academe would stand out as an exemplary and unbreakable link in the peace efforts in the region. We would soon witness them steering the MSU dreamboat in the turbulent waters of the peace process, defying odds, unafraid.

chapter 4

LGUs: MAINSTREAMING CULTURE OF PEACE

STRENGTHENING LGU MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT AND PEACEKEEPING • MISSING PIECE
OF THE PUZZLE • LGUs IN THE FRONTLINE

Problem

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Strategies

- ⇒ voters education and other IEC activities;
- ⇒ community seminar on Islamic nation and value integration
- ⇒ through seminar-workshop of TIGD, and other related laws
- ⇒ continuous education on value integration and transformation
- ⇒ Conduct dialogue
- ⇒

Indicators

- ⇒ use information school media official academic sectoral
- ⇒ massive for social
- ⇒ transparency

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⇒ massive
for social

- ⇒ clear-cut direction of plans and information
- ⇒ transparency

INTRODUCTION

Like posts that keep the house standing, the local government units (LGUs) in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) are crucial to the Moro People's aspiration for self-determination. The LGUs are empowered to support the platforms for self-governance by transforming the Moros' aspirations into feasible programs. They are given the legal mandate to strengthen and mobilize local social formations toward broad participation in building the ummah, a community where Filipino Muslims can fully practice and enjoy their way of life. With posts wobbling, the house remains uncompleted but still.

This chapter tells stories of how, in select provincial local government units within the ARMM, some civil servants are mustering the strength and ingenuity to continue building the Moro dream for self-determination. Like foremen in a construction site, they exercise leadership and diligence in directing the construction of the house. Daily they are on the ground, working hands-on. They encounter problems and resolve it to the best of their abilities. Holding on to the master plan, they labor. They believe it can be done and that peace can come about in their respective provinces of Basilan, Sulu, and Shariff Kabungsuwan (now, relegated back to the province of Maguindanao).

Central to the experiences narrated here by the LGU officials is the application of the concept of Integrated Peace Governance (IPG). It is an innovation in local governance that puts emphasis on crafting and enforcing laws and programs that help combat poverty through development interventions, and promote justice through equitable

implementation. It is about promoting peace and trying to resolve causes of conflict, allowing public participation in planning and implementation.

In essence, IPG hopes to mainstream the Culture of Peace in local governance as an important element of self-determination.

To facilitate the application of IPG in the systems and procedures of the local governments, LGU bureaucrats were earlier oriented and trained on Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA), which provides the “means of anticipating, monitoring, and evaluating the ways in which an intervention may affect or has affected the dynamics of peace or conflict in a conflict-prone region.”

The mainstreaming of the PCIA in the LGU systems is undertaken because government policies and programs affect the peace and conflict situation in the area they govern.

Describing the rationale for PCIA mainstreaming in governance, the “Mainstreaming PCIA Field Guide” crafted by the Local Government Support Program in the ARMM (LGSPA) and the Act for Peace Programme said:

“Thus, the LGU has a strategic role to play in creating an environment of peace and unity within and between different communities. LGU activities have a strong potential to positively contribute to peace. On the other hand, LGU projects can inadvertently create conflict by increasing competition for scarce resources or increasing inequities in service delivery. PCIA will enable the LGU to anticipate, monitor and evaluate the impact of their interventions on peace and conflict.”

In their narratives here, the authors reflect on the changes on the personal level, among local government officials and personnel involved in the program, as well as on the LGU structural dimensions as a result of the application of IPG and PCIA.

THE STORIES

The first narrative, “Reviving Mechanisms, Developing Attitude to Peace” is a story of seeing from the ground level the more valid factors that gravely affected the “Mindanao Problem” (peace and development). The story focuses on raising the awareness of people in government on the need to address centuries-old Muslim practice of “rido” or clan feud.

The second narrative, “The Missing Piece of the Puzzle” illustrates the capacity of individuals to transform themselves from ordinary government workers to peace and development advocates. It indirectly explains how, like a piece in the puzzle that we wish to complete, everyone’s role is important.

“LGUs on the Frontline” on the other hand highlights the challenge encountered by the Technical Working Group (TWG) of the Province of Basilan. The story recounts how the TWG and the Peace and Development Advocates League (PDAL) bridge people from various ideologies and perspectives in order to work together for a common goal.

Lastly, “Trekking the Road” shares an important milestone on peacebuilding work for the province of Sulu. It highlights the efforts of various sectors in Sulu, including the military, to facilitate the mainstreaming of Culture of Peace in a land beset by violent conflicts.

THE AUTHORS



▲
1. Asim; 2. Macarongon;
3. Trumata; 4. Abdulmajid

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* In the stories of Asim and Macarongon, the repeated reference to Shariff Kabungsuwan as a province was unavoidable. The Supreme Court later ruled that the creation of the new province from Maguindanao was unconstitutional and was directed to revert back to its mother province.

STRENGTHENING LGU MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND PEACEKEEPING

BY ENGR. ABDULRAKMAN K. ASIM

The quest for peace and development has been a truly challenging job in many Muslim communities. Here in the province of Shariff Kabunsuan, I witness how violent conflicts waste lives and stall economic development. Everyday as I go to work, my heart bleeds at the stark realities confronting my fellow Maguindanaons and my mind never cease to try to understand the helplessness of the situation.

As Muslim and local government employee myself, I am a participant to the various efforts of promoting harmonious and peaceful life in Muslim communities. Yes, the government efforts are there, yet nothing seem to work. Like an acrobatic act in a circus, we always end up trying to douse the fires caused by conflicts while hastening to put together the building blocks of economic and social services.

One of the sources of violence that the provincial government of Shariff Kabunsuan had been trying to address for a very long time now is the intermittent outbreaks of rido.

“Rido” is a Maranao term which means conflict. It is a common tribal practice of exacting vengeance, dating back to old history. It is supposed to be a defence of one’s pride and honour; where an individual, a family, or even a clan protects itself and its pride from becoming oppressed, exploited, and their right to rule to be taken away. It is a prevalent practice in Muslim communities even nowadays which to some extent is even confused as religious obligation (though in Islam, it is clearly forbidden).

The provincial government, as per directions from the Department of

Interior and Local Government, established a system and mechanism to address occurrences of rido and other incidences of armed violence. This mechanism cut through the various levels of governance, from the provincial government to the municipality and down to the barangay level. These mechanisms, however, were good to read on paper but, were never functional.

If you were a Muslim and a government employee sincerely trying to make the idealism of autonomous government work, how would you feel in such a quandary?

ADVENT OF IPG

This challenge is causing internal struggle in my mind and my heart, and perhaps of other people in ARMM government as well. Generally, this is the personal and structural context that the introduction of the IPG found itself in.

My participation in the Trainer's Training on IPG organised by the ACT for Peace Programme awakened my awareness on peacebuilding, forming an advocacy within me to take part, in my humble capacity, in the promotion of development projects. At first, I did not really understand what is entailed in being a peace builder, but after the exposure to IPG, I was able to grasp that peace should not be relegated to becoming an end result, but rather it should be part and parcel of the system, procedures and processes of governance. I realized that peace itself is a tool and a framework that the LGUs can adopt. And yes, peace is a long and winding road

that we have to journey together with other members of the society.

After completing the training, I was deployed to facilitate two other provincial trainings on IPG in the provinces of Basilan and Shariff Kabunsuan. The experience supplemented my fresh and raw understanding of the dynamics of working for peace but it re-affirmed my growing commitment to work for peace not only for the people of Shariff Kabunsuan but more so for my people, the Moro.

APPLICATION AND INTEGRATION OF PEACE IN GOVERNANCE

The concepts and principles of IPG found popular acceptance among my co-employees in the province of Shariff Kabunsuan.

One major change that results from the application of IPG happens in the area of project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The IPG has enabled the employees of the provincial government to infuse a peace-oriented method to the purely technical approach of project development and management. The provincial government has employed the PCIA, a process introduced in IPG which focuses on participatory planning and implementation.

Another change occurs in the area of peacekeeping and conflict-resolution. Through the IPG perspective, the peacekeeping policies and mechanisms of the provincial government are revived. The provincial government, once again,

has convened the Peace and Order Council and invited private groups and individuals to become members and participate in the efforts to address local security issues. The Committee on Culture of Peace has also been organized to facilitate awareness-raising among provincial government employees and among the provincial constituency. Finally, the Council of Elders has been revived with a promise of more regular consultations and involvement in peace governance. This provides the provincial government with an appropriate channel that is traditionally embedded in the social structure of the community.

In summary, IPG awakens an understanding that greater tasks can be done if the various peacekeeping mechanisms in the LGU are utilised. It re-opens avenues where local residents can cooperate and support the implementation of the peacekeeping policies and mechanisms.

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD

I am grateful that I am given an opportunity to journey in the road to peace. Though, to some extent, it transformed my perspective as an individual in the bureaucracy, it had been a transformation to be proud of. The opportunity afforded to me, creates hope for more people to realise that there are better ways to see things through the uncertainties of the peace situation and the lack of development in Mindanao.

There has been contentment on my part in this continuing journey as

peacebuilder. I am looking forward to be able to share the significant learning I got from the various exposures provided by the ACT for Peace Programme.

The Culture of Peace raises my awareness to what an ordinary person like me, an LGU employee can do to advocate for peace. The set of processes contained in the PCIA introduce me to a more dynamic approach in designing, planning and implementing development interventions with careful consideration for impacts on peace and conflict. On the other hand, the totality of the IPG concept provides me with a more mature and more vibrant perspective on how local governance can be adapted to the pressing demand of the present time.

Where at first, the concepts of IPG and PCIA sounded strange and totally insignificant to my consciousness, they became a life-changing experience when they begin to produce milestones and make impacts in the provincial government. This led me to embrace change – change in understanding peace and development.

MISSING PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

BY BAI MONINA K. MACARONGON

Witnessing the struggle of the Moro people for our one dream of peace and development, I come to realize a saddening truth. The truth that after decades of development efforts plowed in Mindanao, the dream has remained a dream. Despite the many hearts and minds searching for the missing piece of “a puzzle”, Mindanao landscape remains fraught with different faces of victims of war, collateral damages, displacements, oppression, injustices, and lawlessness.

Shariff Kabunsuan, being a new province by itself is a witness to the many conflicts and violence common to the landscape of ARMM. Because of this, the promotion of a culture of peace becomes a priority programme in the roadmap of the province. This priority is focused at ending the culture of fear and hostility in the province as anchored on its primary goal to promote human security.

My work in the provincial government has exposed me to the many realities and situation of unpeace among our people in Mindanao. A common experience is encountering persons who say they lost life’s meaning after losing their loved-ones from conflicts and violence.

Time and again, it has been said that PEACE is the missing piece of the puzzle. As a public servant and a new peace advocate, I ask myself, where is PEACE? To whose hands is the responsibility being laid upon? What initiatives can still be done to ultimately find peace? Whatever happened to the various interventions coming to Mindanao?

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

With a provincial roadmap to peace and development of Shariff Kabunsuan in place, the leadership of the provincial government

realizes that the work to promote human security and culture of peace is a multisectoral job. It proves that the LGU also has a vital role in peacebuilding.

The realization comes timely when a programme of the ACT for Peace calls for the involvement and participation of the LGUs of ARMM. Given the right timing, the provincial government of Shariff Kabunsuan in all commitment also responds to the challenge.

This response to the challenge has started my journey to constructing the missing piece of the puzzle.

ENCOUNTER WITH IPG

In response to the call of the ACT for Peace to involve LGUs in its programme, the provincial government of Shariff Kabunsuan sent me and some others to represent the LGU in the Trainer's Training on Integrated Peace Governance (IPG) for ARMM LGUs. The participation wasn't at all clear to me at first.

After the training, I was deployed to facilitate two (2) trainings for the province of Shariff Kabunsuan and the municipalities of Buldon and Mamasapano. Both trainings answered the many questions rushing through my heart and my mind during my participation in the trainer's training. And true to the context of peace and development situation in Mindanao, I proved myself that I can do something to help affect change.

The IPG, where the PCIA and Culture of Peace were introduced in that training to be

mainstreamed in local governance, made me understand that in everything, there's always a better way of doing to ensure that development interventions would not be all in vain. It enhanced my understanding of the culture of peace where it can be a primary actor in governance to effect change at these crucial times.

The introduction of PCIA in the IPG provides a guiding light to the provincial planners of Shariff Kabunsuan to pursue the planning of a "zone of peace". It proves that the principles of peace when put into action can generate best practices worth replicating in development efforts. These create an avenue for the planners to appreciate and adopt the principle of PCIA in planning for development interventions in the province.

A zone of peace is a community where members independently define the living conditions that they aspire and participate collectively to achieve it. They use alternatives to violence when solving their problems and discard any methods which would violate human rights. A zone of peace hopes to promote free and full expression of rights, be they economic, social, cultural, as well as the civil and political rights recognised in international pacts of human rights, conducted under conditions that conserve and protect the environment.

The peace legislation component of

the IPG on the other hand aims to promote multi-sectoral participation in planning and decision-making processes in local governance. It encouraged the enhancement of procedural patterns in handling development and legislative interventions in local governance from among the members of the provincial government.

WORKING THE PUZZLE THROUGH

From all my exposures, the IPG has opened my eyes to see things beyond and my heart to understand the nobility and magnitude of work in peacebuilding. From it, I am able to conquer my doubts that a humble public servant like me can do something to promote peace. It opens my awareness to take part and be

a peacebuilder and hopefully, one day, sees the reality of the dream which today remains a dream.

My call to pursue advocacy for peace has been affirmed. I have understood quite well now the dynamics of governance and the viability of peacebuilding projects in ultimately promoting peace and sustaining development.

As I venture into a new paradigm, I dare myself to look ahead to better contribute to solve the missing piece of the puzzle. My young experience in peacebuilding is still raw, but I take courage to uphold and believe in the principles of peace to hopefully make a difference to myself and share it to others.

LGUs ON THE FRONTLINE

NI EMILY A. TRUMATA

The Province of Basilan is one of the most affected areas in Mindanao in the more than 20 years of the MNLF struggle for a homeland. To date, physical evidence of destruction can still be seen and most of the residents can still recall the hardship, the losses and the struggle for survival during the period.

At the onset of the ACT for Peace Programme, Basilan was identified as one of its priority areas for peacebuilding. In this respect, the crucial role of the local government units (LGUs) was recognized.

Looking back, the process of establishing the partnership did not come handy. The administration of former Rep. Wahab M. Akbar was not easy to convince to adapt to the initiative since the thrust of his leadership was on tangible development projects. The Programme however persisted until the partnership agreement was finally signed and the journey to peace for the people of Basilan began.

ROADMAP

To officially implement the partnership agreement between the ACT for Peace Programme and the Provincial Government of Basilan, key personalities were picked to work up the partnership. The 1st Technical Working Group (TWG) was formed to craft the roadmap to peace for the Island province of Basilan. The roadmap's primary and vital strategy is to capacitate and involve all stakeholders and actors in peacebuilding.

Series of capacity-building activities were scheduled for members of the TWG to get a clearer understanding of their newly defined roles. It was not easy, but narrow as the road may seem, the work never lost its vivid challenge.

The ACT for Peace Programme also introduces to the TWG the concept of the Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA), as a holistic tool in the design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of

projects. The PCIA deepens their perspective on peacebuilding and provides an opportunity for development planners to assess the impact of development projects and programs on peace and conflict.

To compliment what the ACT for Peace Programme has already established with the LGU of Basilan, a training on Integrated Peace-based Governance (IPG) was also conducted for the members of the TWG. The IPG guides the shift in the paradigm of the TWG and LGU employees from the traditional mindset of local governance to a holistic and broader perspective of governance integrated with peace.

The TWG later on identified the need to establish a point of convergence, coordination and collaboration among the peace and development stakeholders in Basilan. The identified need led to the establishment of the Peace and Access Resource Center in Basilan in partnership with the ACT for Peace Programme.

The Peace and Access Resource Center (PARC) aims to serve as information and learning center to agencies, NGOs, PDCs and to anyone in the promotion of a culture of peace. It also serves as a common ground for the people of Basilan to come together for peace and development.

Also later, the TWG evolved to what it is now today, a special government unit of the province catering to peace and development, from being a mere organized group of key personalities to implement the partnership

agreement of the ACT for Peace Programme and Provincial Government of Basilan.

NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

The mandate of the ACT for Peace Programme states that the Peace and Development Advocates League (PDAL) is the primary beneficiary of the Programme's peace and development interventions. The TWG, serving as a local resource partner of the Programme, is also mandated to establish relationship with the PDAL.

It was a challenging journey for the provincial government. Some development interventions of the TWG ultimately provided a space for the LGU to interact and reach out to the PDAL. From then on, the TWG continuously provides technical assistance to PDAL on projects such as the expansion of the Peace and Development Community (PDC), and project management and monitoring. On the other hand, the PDAL also assists in data-gathering and feedback on the impact of development interventions in the PDCs to the TWG.

BRIDGING THE DISTANCE

The journey to peace is narrow and complex but having taken the first step is all what it takes to get to where we are heading. It may not be a smooth ride, nor a calm sailing but it is just a matter of storing strength to bridge the distance.

The greater challenge when I started my journey to peace with the TWG and the ACT for Peace Programme was in making peace with myself. That was the toughest, yet once conquered, it led me to a self-transformation where the road to my journey came crystal clear.

To continue with my journey, I realize later on the importance of engaging and building relationship which is a crucial requirement in moving forward. This is a confirmation that no one could journey alone, that no one

could effect change alone, for the load is too heavy to carry.

The journey of the TWG and the ACT for Peace Programme to peace is “my journey”. The journey might have already achieved formidable milestones but the journey for a genuine and sustained peace in Basilan has just started. More are to be done, more relationships are to be nurtured, more efforts are to be sustained, but above all, more of “us” should journey the road altogether.

TREKKING THE ROAD

BY MS. JAINAB A. ABDULMAJID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is synonymous with the conflict in Sulu and the wounds of the past are mostly associated with military clashes with the locals. Given this reality, will there be place for healing and reconciliation in the hearts of the people of Sulu ?

Will “Tausugs” embrace the military group as partners in peacebuilding? Will the paradigm shift of the military fit the “Tausug” realm of peace? Will a common interpretation of the phrase be reached and agreed? Will the actions of the military interpret their real intent of winning peace?

Answers to these questions had been laid down in the peace policies of the provincial government under the administration of Governor Abdusakur Tan. The provincial government envisions a peaceful Sulu. Current initiatives include the revival and strengthening of

mechanisms for coordination of peace and development initiatives in province. Toward this end the governor established Area Coordination Center (ACC) where peacebuilding initiatives are coordinated and facilitated. This also serves as the jump-off point in mainstreaming PCIA following the campaign on the Culture of Peace.

With favorable provincial government policies, various civil military operations around the Province of Sulu allow the military to engage in many development projects at the community level. Such engagement heightens awareness on things that the military can contribute to ensure that development is rightfully delivered to the people.

A PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

My transformation from “a development worker to a peace advocate” did not come as a matter of chance. It came through as a result of the process

brought about by my acquaintance with the ACT for Peace Programme.

The process started with getting a better grasp of the causes of conflict in Sulu, of understanding Sulu and its dynamics and the MNLF struggle. From all the reflections expressed by participants in the many of the sessions on Culture of Peace my personal perspective on peace and peace-related issues has broadened. This new perspective also reaffirms my growing interest and consciousness on peacebuilding amid the stereotypes of leadership and structure in the local government unit.

While I continue my journey in an uncertain road, my confidence to work with peace advocates, share visions and perspectives with development agents, would ultimately come to terms to journey together.

However, my deeper understanding of “peace” comes from knowing that peace should start from within oneself to be able to establish peace with others. Then my journey to peace and development would start like “trekking the road of the unknown”. My own personal transformation has confronted some serious issues with people in my workplace and my constituents but these did not stop me from continuing the advocacy.

MUSTERING PCIA

Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment, more commonly called as PCIA, is a process of assessing the ways in which an intervention may affect or has affected the dynamics of peace or conflict in a conflict-prone region. PCIA focuses on peacebuilding impact, those factors that strengthen the chances for peace and decrease the chances that violence or conflict will break out (Bush 1998).

From the Trainer’s Training on PCIA organized by the ACT for Peace Programme, I came to have a better grasp and understanding on how development initiatives create varying impacts. It gave me a substantial understanding of peacebuilding which I took pride in sharing with the rest of the members of the Technical Working Group of Sulu and the academicians of the Mindanao State University (MSU).

As I muster the courage and determination to advocate for peace, I learn that in sharing what I’ve come to know, I am also developing a passion to be involved at the same time. It means that I learn to listen, to open my mind, and for my heart to be ready as I embark on a new journey in life.

I took the formidable role in introducing the PCIA to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), which adapted the PCIA processes in the conduct of activities of the AFP's Civil Military Office, that are more culture-sensitive.

When I changed hat from working with the LGU to becoming a part of a civil society organization, the learning experience from the interventions of the ACT for Peace Programme came handy as I continue my peacebuilding work. My direct engagement with people provides me an avenue to better understand the need to mainstream PCIA in the processes of governance and development.

Efforts soon followed to mainstream PCIA into the local government processes and were undertaken by the Local Governance Support Programme. I proactively participated in the writeshop conducted for PCIA facilitators to draft a guide book to mainstream it.

CHALLENGING THE TRAIL

Peace is fragile. It should be handled with care and such responsibility is not

only laid upon in the hands of peace advocates and LGUs. It is a natural responsibility of everyone.

And though everyone wishes for peace, the road to peace is still seldom traveled, and travelers either stay for good or stay for a while. Seldom traveled it may be, but the most important thing is that the desire for peace inherently comes natural to a few, at least.

For some who have championed winning hearts and minds of people to ultimately cooperate and collaborate for peace and development, the journey can be said to have been well travelled. To many who failed, it is not a matter of getting to where we are heading, but it is a matter of keeping the faith to never stop trying.

The ACT for Peace Programme portrays itself as an institution of peacebuilding in the landscape that is the Province of Sulu. After what the Programme has done to promote peace, the struggle continues. But what is important is that it would leave a legacy which might just be in the eyes of the few, but in the hearts of the many.

REFLECTIONS

The efforts of the local government units in the ARMM to address challenges of peace and development is by itself a statement of the struggle of the Moro people for self-determination. Residents in the autonomous region have legitimate expectations on the local government units, foremost of which is the management and resolution of the various violent conflicts and the maintenance of peace in the locality.

This chapter reports changes slowly emerging in the area of governance in provinces of Shariff Kabunsuan, Basilan and Sulu. It is not much, but it signifies the start of the change process. It may not yet exhibit concrete gains, but it flickers with hope.

THE CHANGES

Shariff Kabunsuan operationalises its Provincial Peace and Order Council, establishes a Committee on the Culture of Peace and revives the Council of Elders on the ground. Parallel to these participatory mechanisms, the provincial government adapts measures to make overall development planning peace-promoting and conflict-sensitive in its bid to eradicate the atmosphere of fear, hostility and trauma. The provincial government actively lobbies for the creation of the zone of peace in the province and allows personal transformation to happen and flourish among the people in local government and to the peace builders. While the province had been reverted back to the political jurisdiction of the Maguindanao, the latter may still support and sustain these mechanisms in the area.

Basilan at this point has taken the challenge way ahead than the other two provinces. When it establishes the Peace and Access

Resource Center, it creates the common ground for the people of Basilan to come and work together for peace and development. The provincial government also succeeds in strengthening participation of the civil society organisations in peacebuilding where people from the local government actively build interpersonal relationships among each other.

The Sulu provincial government, on the other hand, mainstreams the concept of culture of peace to both academe and military sectors, and working with the civil society organisations. The importance of personal transformation in the course of peacebuilding is also an important milestone from the perspective of the public servants.

THE PROCESSES

Like the cases of the three provinces in this chapter, the realisation of the LGUs to take part in peacebuilding did not come overnight. Each LGU went through a process where existing paradigms were being influenced to adapt to a more holistic design of promoting development and gradually putting up the building blocks of peace.

At the outset, based on the sharing of the authors, the introduction to the principles of PCIA, Culture of Peace, and the IPG, have undeniably greatly contributed to the beginning of the transformation process of the LGUs.

The process is not complex. It works through the orchestration of the predisposing, enabling and satisfying factors for change to take place.

It starts with the acknowledgement of the destructiveness of the violent conflicts on the ground and to gravity of the human security needs of the people. As articulated in the perspectives of the writers here, this stage of the process proves to be easy as every Moro bureaucrat has inherent desire to serve their people and improve the living condition in the region. This serves as predisposing factor to work for change.

Building on this aspirations, the Act for Peace Programme has provided capability-building trainings for select government functionaries and equipped them with knowledge, skills and attitudes.

These are needed to mainstream the Culture of Peace in bureaucracy. These include trainings on PCIA, Culture of Peace and IPG. The individuals who attended these trainings serve as internal champions within the government system. Coupled with this, the program has supported the establishment of structural mechanisms that would facilitate the mainstreaming process. The examples provided in this chapter are the Provincial Council of Elders, Committee on the Culture of Peace, Provincial Peace and Order Council, Basilan Peace Access and Resource Center and the Sulu Area Coordinating Center. These serve as an enabling factor to commence the change process.

With these factors working on the ground, the Act for Peace has supported initiatives of the PLGUs in trying to put the concepts and principles in action. This include support for planning processes employing IPG and PCIA concepts and even actual delivery of services in PDCs. The successes and favourable feedbacks from the participants and beneficiaries of these actions serve as satisfying factor that proves to the PLGU functionaries that the adoption of the peace governance paradigm really works.

WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN

The challenge of peacebuilding among LGUs is no more than interfacing Culture of Peace with the learning from the diverse minds of the leaders and the people. It is a process wherein peacebuilding comes natural to the heart of every bureaucrat aspiring to serve the people and build a better place to live than what they have found. The approaches should not only nurture what's in the hearts of the politicians and government officials but should create avenues of convergence of governance and peacebuilding paradigms.

The approach of integrating peace with development initiatives has redefined the traditional perspective of many in government. Many Moro bureaucrats are coming out to understand that peacebuilding is also an "obligation of everyone". And this must be

the journey to peace, to always remember to pause a bit, look back, and be guided by as we move forward. As the government officials who wrote their experiences in this chapter have indicated, the three PLGUs have started to strengthen their roles in the Moro quest for self-determination.

More works lie ahead in the journey but greater things would have to be gauged against the hopes and aspirations of the Moro people. It is not the magnitude of what one individual can do for peace that is the most important; it is how many others would pick up from the inspiration of some to do something for peace that would define if the journey will be a lot easier to negotiate.

chapter 5

REFLECTIVE
PEACEBUILDING
IN THE MORO QUEST
FOR
SELF-DETERMINATION

BY I. JULIO CESAR L. BENITEZ



All the stories told in this book are perspectives of MNLF combatants, field commanders and members who once were at the forefront of an armed revolution for self-determination. Now, with greater awakening, they are telling these stories to share to the world a non-violent form of transformation for self-determination.

Using established theoretical frameworks, this chapter tries to weave together the experiences shared by the various peace practitioner-writers. Like a Moro weaver of precious wrapped-around clothing called malong, the weaving illustrates a ground theory of how self-determination is achieved through peacebuilding.

Two major theoretical frames are used here. The first frame is the Dimensions of Change expounded by John Paul Lederach and his colleagues in peacebuilding, Reina Neufeldt and Hal Culbertson. The second frame is the Seven Doors Model for Voluntary Behavioral Change put forward by Les Robinson, a social change media consultant.

DIMENSIONS OF CHANGE ILLUSTRATED

The stories in this book tell of changes that peace practitioners endeavored to achieve in their respective milieu. These changes are articulated in two levels. The first is in the level of the "here and now". These are conflicts or

negative situations that they do not want to remain in. The second is in the level of "desired future conditions". These are alternative situations that peace practitioners envision to establish or evolve.

In the story told by Hja. Nurissa Bakil in Chapter One, the change that she reports, for example, is about the pagsumadya (unity) achieved by three neighboring barangays that were torn apart and displaced by the war of the 1970s. This is the change in the level of the "here and now". She also reports about the current effort of the community to change their area from being a military camp to a productive agricultural community with quality basic social services. This is the change level of "desired future condition".

The experiences narrated in this book illustrate the magnitude of the impact of past and present social conflicts in the lives of the people and the community that they live in. Various literatures, and peace practitioners like Lederach, classify these impacts into four dimensions: personal, relational, structural and cultural.

The personal dimension refers to the conflict-induced changes to the individual persons. It is observed that conflict changes individuals personally, emotionally and spiritually. Going back to Nurissa's story, the MNLF-GRP war in the 1970s made

individual residents hate and distrust the AFP and the national government and converted many of them to MNLF supporters and sympathizers, and in the process, accepting armed struggle as a means of change.

The relational dimension is how individuals relate to other individuals and groups, including the power dynamics between them. Conflict is said to affect communication patterns among individuals and groups, create stereotypes, polarizes standpoints and induces mistrust. In Nurissa's story, the war separated families and communities and generated a brand of social cohesion based on the need to protect communities against external aggression.

The structural dimension refers to how relationships are organized into social systems and structures. It determines who has access to power and protection. The structural dimension includes the family, organizations, communities, government and non-government agencies and the whole society. But the war in the 1970's illustrated how war disrupted the delivery of basic social services and changed their agricultural community into a war zone. Their community was declared a no-man's land and the local governance was subsumed under a military camp.

Finally, the cultural dimension deals with the norms and collective worldview of a given community that guide patterns of behavior amongst them and groups of people relative to the institutions and the social order that they are situated in. Nurissa observes that during the war her community was pushed to adopt armed struggle as a means of change and perceived the AFP as their enemy and agents of violence against their people.

As she illustrates, the impact of violent social conflicts cuts across the four dimensions. This resonates in the other stories featured in this book. It is not by consequence then that the development efforts of the peacebuilding practitioners on the ground would also fall within these same dimensions.

The peacebuilding efforts in PDC Bato Habah resulted to desired changes, even if some of them were not planned

matrix 1

Dimensions of the Change of the 1970s MNLF-GRP War In PDC Bato Habah, Maimbung, Sulu

Personal

- Hatred and distrust for the AFP and national government;
- Acceptance of armed struggle as means for change

Relational

- Separation of families and communities
- Social cohesion is based on protection of communities against external aggression

Structural

- Emergence of War Zones and Military Camp
- Displacement of communities and Emergence of No-man's Land

Cultural

- Adoption of armed struggle as means for change
- Community perception of AFP as the enemy and agents of violence

ahead, Nurissa observes. In the personal dimension, the changes are mostly in terms of predispositions and actual individual behaviors. Residents are now more open to collaborate with the AFP in doing community development. In addition, they have articulated their acceptance to the Culture of Peace as a paradigm to achieve social change. In the relational dimension, residents of the three barangays that compose the PDC are now united and their cohesiveness is based on the common effort to improve the standard of living and delivery of basic social services in the community. In the structural dimension, the community had been declared as a PDC and had put up corresponding programs in peacebuilding. Visibly, the local government units have started adopting participatory mechanisms for governance. Finally, in the cultural dimension, Hja. Nurissa says that the residents as a community have demonstrated the adoption of the Culture of Peace and consequently have started to view the AFP as capable of respecting human rights and the cultural identity of the people in the locality.

Matrices 1 and 2 below are data culled from Hja. Nurissa's experiences in PDC Bato Habah. They are studies in contrast. Matrix 1 shows the impact of conflict, while Matrix 2 reports the results of the peacebuilding activities in said PDC.

matrix 2

Dimensions of the Change of the Act for Peace Peacebuilding Program
In PDC Bato Habah, Maimbung, Sulu (As of December 2008)

Personal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Openness and working with the AFP for community development ■ Acceptance of Culture of Peace as paradigm to achieve change 	Relational <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pagsumadya (unity) ■ Social cohesion is based on efforts to improve delivery of basic social services in the community
Structural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establishment of Peace and Development Community ■ Establishment of participatory local governance 	Cultural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adoption of the Culture of Peace as a group ■ Perception of the AFP as capable of respecting human rights

THE SEVEN DOORS MODEL APPLIED

How did the transformation reported by the various writers of this book occur? In answering this question, there are several change models that may help illustrate the processes that occur between past and the present realities. The one that does this best is the Seven Doors Model of Voluntary Behavioral Change.

The Seven Doors Model was developed by Les Robinson to design and evaluate behavior change programs. It explores how personal voluntary change happens. The model had been subjected to empirical researches and applications of cognitive theories of change.

Robinson explains that behavioral change occurs as a result of combination of four factors, as follows: 1) predisposing factors, 2) enabling factors, 3) triggering factors, and 4) satisfying factors.

Predisposing factors refer to outlook of an individuals that drives him or her to desire for something that change has to offer. This outlook includes personal values, social norms and hopes that comprise the “hopeful self” of persons. The Seven Door Model suggests that among the reasons why individuals adopt change is because they are unhappy, frustrated or dissatisfied with their lives and situation.

Robinson explains that the individual's predisposition works in the realm of the imagination. Hence, desire for change happens when individuals are able to visualize the change they want through desirable visions and role models. The vision and role models demonstrate how an action or a program would fit into people's hopes of what a good life/farm/business could look like. He calls this ‘crystallizing a vision’.

Enabling factors are things that help change happen. While by themselves they are unlikely to make the change happen, without them change is unlikely to be sustained. The Seven Doors Model identifies three kinds of enabling factors: rationalization, confidence and convenience (or accessibility).

Robinson defines rationalization as arbitrary beliefs that help a person

justify his or her action or inaction. He said that typical justifications for inaction include: it's too hard, it's too expensive, I've got no time, it won't make a difference anyway. Typical justifications for action, on the other hand, include: it really works, it's easy to do, it'll save money. The Model suggests that change happens because individuals or groups are able to rationalize it.

Confidence as an enabling factor refers to self-efficacy of an individual or group. It is the belief that one has the skills, perseverance and support to successfully adopt and maintain the change. Personal change can be tremendously intimidating, Robinson explains. Hence, people, as individual or as a group, need to believe they are capable of initiating a change and having the skills to follow them through to completion for them to voluntarily adopt change.

Fortunately, as experiences of development facilitators in Mindanao point out, community residents have inherent capacities for peace. Hence, overcoming the “lack of confidence” or self-doubt can simply be a matter of creating safe opportunities for people to try on the peacebuilding strategies and make them realize that they can actually do it. Experiencing initial success in community peace work increases their confidence in their abilities.

Finally, the third kind of enabling factor is convenience or accessibility. This refers to the elements of change

action that make the act easy to do, simple to understand, easily accessible and inexpensive. The easier and the more accessible the required change action is, the higher the chance that it will be adopted by the individual or the group.

This far, the discussions have shown that change happens as a social phenomenon. It does not occur in isolation of the individual self. This brings us to the third factor of voluntary behavioral change, which is the triggering factor.

The triggering factors are those aspects that activate the individual or group's desire into actual actions. These are the components that make the person or the group to give the change action a try. Triggering factors are of two kinds: social influencers and change spaces.

Social influencers are key members of the community related in one way or another to the individual or group trying to work out the change. Through their opinions and discussion, they pry the individual or the group out of their comfort zones and persuade them to make that change happen. In many Muslim communities, social influencers are Muslim religious leaders, elders, barangay leaders, learned individuals and even former MNLF commanders.

Change spaces, Robinson explains, refer to times and places where potential change adopters can give their full attention to a hopeful future and the steps needed

to achieve it. Examples include: facilitated workshops, participatory development planning, hands-on demonstration events, community meetings and trainings, peace zones, and community cultural events.

The last of the four factors for voluntary behavioral change are the satisfying factors. These are feelings generated when a person notices quantitative and qualitative progress towards their hopes and dreams.

For satisfaction to happen, the proposed change behavior must have immediate benefits to the individual or the group. It has to be satisfying in terms of the change actors. It must reduce the actual dissatisfactions that led to the initial involvement of the actors in peacebuilding program.

The model for voluntary behavioral change underpins the stories shared in this book. Back to Hja. Nurissa's story as a case in point, the following question would help thresh out this point. How did the changes in her community happen? In more particular terms, how did the residents of PDC Bato Habah adopt the culture of peace paradigm for peacebuilding and community development?

Subjecting her observations to the Seven Doors Model, as indicated in Matrix 3, it appears that the set of peacebuilding interventions in PDC Bato Habah synergized the factors.

Three predisposing factors come into play in the case of PDC

Bato Habah. The people's traumatic experiences in the GRP-MNLF armed conflict made residents predisposed to peaceful alternatives. It is common to hear residents say that they are already tired of getting caught in armed encounters and forced evacuations. With this predisposition, it became easier for residents to come together and participate in the community planning process that was earlier introduced by the Act for Peace. Through the community planning process the residents were able to visualize their desired future condition and agree on common mission and development goals. With collective predisposition to shape their own future, they set strategies and programs to work on. Through this way, development strategies and programs were identified by the people themselves, ensuring that these were in accord with the norms and local culture. The presence, attitude and action of a homegrown community organizer and woman leader in the person of Hja. Nurissa, provided resident with a role model on how to cooperate with one another, engage with the barangay government and relate with other agencies, including the AFP. These three predisposing factors were more than enough to make the community residents want to adopt peaceful paths to community development.

By program design, the Act for Peace implements community projects meant to build community

capacities for conflict transformation and peacebuilding. These projects generally serve as enabling factors for the adoption of the culture of peace. Community dialogues and learning sessions help build consensus around pursuing peace and development work in the community. The community skills trainings increase the residents' self-efficacy in implementing projects and in relating to government agencies and the AFP. The facilitated non-threatening and popular learning and planning methodologies enable the community organizers and leaders to replicate the learning sessions by themselves. Establishment of support physical infrastructures, like the health station and water system make development work a lot easier and doable for the residents.

Trigger factors are seen working in PDC Bato Habah. The local community organizers, trained MNLF and BLGU leaders and elders serve as social influencers that motivate members of the community to cooperate in the peace work.

Alongside the social influencers, spaces are created where all the change actions interface and synergize into actual behavioral changes and actions. The regular meetings give the community residents space to thresh out community problems and challenges. Community organizations provide mechanism where individual efforts are consolidated into effective action.

The previous declaration of the

three barangays as a PDC itself has created the open space where the accepted norm was peacebuilding. With this declaration, even the AFP was given the opportunity to interact with the residents. Civic action of the AFP in the community provided space for friendly interaction between the residents and the government troops.

Finally, for the culture of peace to be truly adopted by the people, this development paradigm has to work and the people satisfied by the results. In PDC Bato Habah, the satisfaction of the residents came when the health station, which they have planned and worked for, became functional and was able to address health services needs of the community. In addition to this, their dialogue with the AFP in the area also resulted to an improved decorum of the uniformed men and decreased incidence of human rights violations in the locality.

The story of Hja. Nurissa and the other authors in this book prove that change do occur, and is occurring, through peaceful means. The Seven Doors Model, as illustrated in her story, explains how this happens. This explanation strengthens the theory of conflict transformation all the more. They prove that bringing violent conflicts to a plane of non-violence can be done.

These transformations are yet disparate and seemingly unplanned, with only the hopes and dreams of the community residents as its driving

force. Do these changes have meaning to the Moro people's quest for self-determination?

CULTURE OF PEACE TOWARDS MORO SELF-DETERMINATION

Recent studies have observed that nowhere in the history of Mindanao has interest in peacebuilding reached a mass proportion than after the breakthrough signing of the GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement in September 2, 1996. Peace movements have emerged along with the sprouting of non-governmental organizations addressing "peace" concerns. Brother Karl M. Gaspar, coordinator of the Redemptorist Itinerant Mission Team and his fellow Mindanawon associates Elpidio Lapad and Ailynne J. Maravillas agree with this observation and offer an explanation. They said:

"The semblance of a civil society concerned with peacebuilding in a situation of armed hostilities in Mindanao is a recent phenomenon. When the war broke out in the 1970s, a few voices expressing peace concerns came from media and the churches. The voices, however, were isolated and short-lived, given the declaration of martial rule resulting in media censorship and a ban on rallies and demonstrations."

This book is yet another documentation of the peacebuilding phenomenon that Gaspar and his associates are describing. Here, however, the documentation gets

Dimensions of the Change of the Act for Peace Peacebuilding Program Indicating Underlying Factors
for Behavioral Changes in PDC Bato Habab, Maimbung, Sulu (As of December 2008)

PEACEBUILDING STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS	PERCEIVED CHANGE	UNDERLYING FACTORS OF BEHAVIORAL CHANGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community Organizing and Formation of People's Organizations ■ Technical Assistance in Community Education and Governance ■ Community Dialogues and Learning Sessions ■ Community Skills Trainings ■ Participatory Barangay Development Planning ■ Barangay Health Center ■ Level 2 Water System Project ■ Networking and Linkage 	<p>PERSONAL CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Openness and working with the AFP for community development ▶ Acceptance of Culture of Peace as paradigm to achieve change <p>RELATIONAL CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Pagsumadya (unity) ▶ Social cohesion is based on efforts to improve delivery of basic social services in the community <p>STRUCTURAL CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Establishment of Peace and Development Community ▶ Establishment of participatory local governance <p>CULTURAL CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Adoption of the Culture of Peace as a group ▶ Perception of the AFP as capable of respecting human rights 	<p>PREDISPOSING FACTORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Past traumatic experiences in war made residents predisposed for peaceful alternatives ● Barangay Vision, Mission, Goals and Development Plan crystallized the community's dreams and hopes for the immediate future. ● Active community organizer served as role model for participation in governance and relationship building with LGUs and the AFP <p>ENABLING FACTORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community dialogues and learning sessions helped build consensus around pursuing peace and development work in the community ● The community skills training increased the residents self-efficacy in pursuing community development work and in relating to government agencies and the AFP ● Facilitated non-threatening and popular learning and planning methodologies enabled the community organizer and leaders to replicate the learning sessions by themselves ● Physical infrastructures: Health Station & Water System ● GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement <p>TRIGGERING FACTORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The local community organizers, trained MNLF and BLGU leaders and elders served as social influencers that motivated people to cooperate in the community peace work; ● The regular meeting gave the community residents space to thresh out community problems and challenges ● Community organizations provided mechanism where individual efforts were consolidated into effective action ● Civic action of the AFP in the community provided space for friendly interaction between the residents and the government troops. <p>SATISFYING FACTORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Health Station met the community need for medical attention ● Community action for the protection of human rights boost the morale of the residents ● Accessible potable water supply would meet needs of the households

down to the grassroots level, not only among the civil society groups. It also documents efforts of the academe as well as the mainstream government units. More importantly, this documentation of peacebuilding initiatives across important sectors of the society is viewed within the frames of Moro self-determination.

While self-determination is a guaranteed right of the people under international covenants, of which the Philippine Government is a signatory, its application on the ground is muddled with political and economic obstacles. This situation has spurred many violent conflicts in the region that rendered self-determination as akin to violence. Amid this backdrop, the preceding four chapters narrate a different view. They tell of how self-determination is claimed and practiced through the paradigm of culture of peace by individuals, communities, organizations and agencies in the ARMM.

In Chapter I, community leaders and organizers report that in several communities in the region, many of them are PDCs, self-determination is already being practiced in various and significant ways. One, capabilities of residents is being built through popular education and alternative learning systems. Two, residents themselves chart the development course of their community through facilitated participatory development planning. Three, they implement and manage community service delivery projects

through organized Project Management Teams. Four, they enhance local leadership in governance through the mobilization of Muslim religious leaders and council of elders. Five, they continue building social cohesion through celebrations of religious calendar events and family traditions. Six, community actions are consolidated through organizations. Seven, economic development is being pursued through self-help mechanism and cooperative entrepreneurship. Eight, they are building open communities with linkages to government and non-government agencies and the AFP.

All these can be viewed as emerging ground theory of what Moro self-determination is from the perspective of people in the grassroots

These efforts of communities at self-determination are gaining support from civil society groups. In Chapter II, unconventional structures for peacebuilding and Moro self-determination are emerging at the provincial and regional sphere of civil society. Organizations of peace and development advocate leagues (PDAL) are strengthening themselves and providing alternative structure for governance at the provincial and regional level in the ARMM. While resources of the PDALs are very limited, they are already able to provide leadership to grassroots peace champions. They have regular peace parliaments where issues from the grassroots are tackled. They have an

on-line information campaign. They practice inter-province dialogue and collaboration. These efforts at the realm of the civil society brings the struggle for self-determination to a new arena anchored on the culture of peace. Through creative strategies, they continue to challenge structures and policies that impinge on the rights of the Moro people.

Support from the academic community for the peace-based practice of self-determination is slowly taking grounds, as well. In Chapter III, intellectuals from the Mindanao State University report how efforts to infuse Culture of Peace in the education curriculum is already being carried out. Teaching modules are being enhanced with learner-centered methodologies and perspective for peace. The teaching of history is given a culture-sensitive take. Madaris education is given due recognition and support. Alongside this, the state-ran university had strengthen the peace institutes in their campuses all over the region in order to undertake research and extension work on peace. Indeed, the culture of peace paradigm enabled the academe to claim their role in the Moro quest for self-determination. If this role is played well, the academe will give rise to hundreds of peace champions and the culture of peace shall have become a natural part of the region's social fabric.

Finally, challenging as it may be, the mainstream governance structures in the ARMM is rediscovering their

mandate for the operationalization of the right to self-determination and the building of peace. In Chapter IV, peace champions in the bureaucracy report the revitalization of existing mechanism for peacebuilding and the creation of new ones in select provincial governments. These mechanism include provincial peace and order councils, centers for peace promotion, councils of elders and working committees.

Key to the operationalization of these mechanisms is the orientation on Integrated Peace Governance and the transfer of skills in Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment. With the inroads of the culture of peace in some local government units, hope for structural reforms and support for grassroots initiatives for peace and self-determination may yet emerge.

In summary, the experiences of the authors of this book point out that culture of peace is a potent paradigm that various segments of the Moro society can use to pursue self-determination and peace itself.

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

There are two important lessons in conflict transformation brought forth in this book.

First is that peace has to be claimed, not merely as an altered state to the humdrums of today's conflicts but, as a workable paradigm of development and conflict-

transformation. At the community level peace paradigm is used in development planning, in electing leaders, in project management and in relationship-building. Among civil society groups, peace is unifying as well as mobilizing factor. In the academe, peace is a world view and a discipline that is being infused in the sciences and arts. In select provincial government units, peace is the basis for establishing mechanisms for conflict-resolution as well as pursuing development programs. If anything, the stories in this book have said that peace is both an end and a means.

Second, Moro self-determination is not an anathema to peace; and peace is not a smokescreen in the quest for Moro self-determination. They are complementary to one another. Through the peace paradigm, residents are able to chart the direction of development in their communities and forge greater unity among themselves and their neighbors. Members of the civil society groups and PDALs, on the other hand, are able to exercise leadership through the culture of peace and mobilize resources to build self-determined communities. The academicians rationalize the vision and mission of their academic institution with peace framework in the service of Moro self-determination. The internal champions in several provincial government units strengthen and enhance their governing functions with peace perspective and peacebuilding mechanisms. These experiences attest

that the culture of peace paradigm can facilitate the attainment of Moro self-determination; and the practice of self-determination can bring about peace.

Now many stories have been told, words have been woven into tapestry of peace and self-determination. The imagery, by all means, is not complete and the voices are just perplexing sounds in the wilderness. The practice of self-determination through the application of the culture of peace paradigm is just beginning.

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ACRONYMS

ABC	<i>Association of Barangay Captains</i>
ACC	<i>Area Coordination Center</i>
AMO	<i>Area Management Office</i>
AMORE	<i>Alliance of Mindanao Off-grid Renewable Energy</i>
ARMM	<i>Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao</i>
BJE	<i>Bangsamoro Juridical Entity</i>
BLGU	<i>Barangay Local Government Unit</i>
CAFGU	<i>Civilian Armed Force Geographical Unit</i>
CHED-FAPE	<i>Commission on Higher Education-Fund for Assistance to Private Education</i>
CO	<i>Community Organizing</i>
CO-CD	<i>Community Organizing-Community Development</i>
COP	<i>Culture of Peace</i>
CSO	<i>Civil Society Organizations</i>
CVO	<i>Civilian Volunteers Organization</i>
DA	<i>Department of Agriculture</i>
DAR	<i>Department of Agrarian Reform</i>
EQUALS	<i>Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills</i>
EU	<i>European Union</i>
FAO-OSRO	<i>Food and Agriculture Organization-Office for Special Relief Operations</i>
GA	<i>General Assembly</i>
GEM	<i>Growth with Equity in Mindanao</i>
GOP-MNLF	<i>Government of the Republic of the Philippines-Moro Islamic Liberation Front</i>
GRP	<i>Government of the Republic of the Philippines</i>
IDP	<i>Internally-depressed persons</i>
IPDM	<i>Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao</i>
IPG	<i>Integrated Peace Governance</i>
IPHO	<i>Integrated Provincial Health Office</i>

KFPDAI	<i>Kadtabanga Foundation for Peace and Development Advocates, Incorporated</i>
KLC	<i>Knowledge and Learning Center</i>
LGSPA	<i>Local Governance Support Program in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao</i>
LGU	<i>Local Government Unit</i>
LSAPDI	<i>Lupah Sug Advocates for Peace and Development, Inc.</i>
MILF	<i>Moro Islamic Liberation Front</i>
MNLF	<i>Moro National Liberation Front</i>
MOA-AD	<i>Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain</i>
MPC	<i>Multi-purpose cooperative</i>
MSU	<i>Mindanao State University-Marawi city</i>
MSU-MAG	<i>Mindanao State University-Maguindanao</i>
NAPC	<i>National Anti-Poverty Commission</i>
NGO	<i>Non-Government Organization</i>
PCIA	<i>Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment</i>
PDA	<i>Peace and Development Advocate</i>
PDAL	<i>Peace and Development Advocates' League</i>
PDC	<i>Peace and Development Community</i>
PGDEC	<i>Peace and Gender Development Center</i>
PO	<i>People's Organizations</i>
QRS	<i>Quick Response Services</i>
SEC	<i>Securities and Exchange Commission</i>
SERD-CAAM	<i>Socio-Economic Reconstruction and Development for Conflict Affected Areas of Mindanao</i>
SKPEA	<i>Shariff Kabunsuan Provincial Employees' Association</i>
SONA	<i>The President's annual State of the Nation Address at the Batasan Hills. Quezon City</i>
UNDP	<i>United Nations Development Program.</i>
UNMDP	<i>United Nations Multi-donor Development Program</i>
UP	<i>University of the Philippines</i>
USAID	<i>United States Agency for International Development</i>
VMG	<i>vision, mission and goals</i>
WASH	<i>equitable access to potable water supply, sanitation, and hygiene services</i>

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