



Actor and Mindanao Peace Champion Robin Padilla (3rd from left), UNDP Country Director Renaud Meyer (2nd from left) and Gov. Ibrahim Ibay lead the groundbreaking ceremonies of the children's health and daycare center in Brgy. Makir, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Shariff Kabunsuan Province. Padilla partners with the ACT for Peace Programme in promoting peacebuilding and peace advocacy efforts in Mindanao.

Robin Padilla supports peace initiatives in PDCs

DATU ODIN SINSUAT, SHARIFF KABUNSUAN — On a hot Monday afternoon, under the scorching heat of the sun, Fatima Makmod, 16, and her neighbors from Barangay Damablac in the town of Talayan, Maguindanao till the fields in Barangay Makir here.

Makmod, who has stopped going to school when war broke out four months ago between government troops and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), is just one of the 2,245 internally displaced persons (IDPs) now living in Barangay Makir.

Sagira Kanapia, a mother of five and also an IDP from Talayan says that they'll be planting string beans, eggplant and other vegetables on this 1-hectare lot donated by Makir Barangay Kagawad Norodin Abas.

Kanapia longs for home like the other IDPs now staying in Makir. "We

are okay here but food is scarce. Back home, we have an abundant supply of vegetables and root crops from our gardens. We want to go home but we will have to stay here until the war stops," she says.

As these women dig through the hard soil, they cannot help but glance occasionally at the throngs of people gathered a few meters away. They too cannot hide their excitement.

The village is wrapped in a festive atmosphere on this day—a contradiction from what it was like a

ROBIN/page 10

Christians, Muslims fortify bond, move on as one community

KOLAMBUGAN, LANA DEL NORTE—*"Kungmamikwit man diay mo, nagpahibalo unta mo* (If you opted to evacuate, you could have informed us)," Kairon Oday related to have told in jest those who evacuated during a community dialogue in Brgy. Muntay after the August 18 siege of the town proper.

Like other communities affected by the attacks on that fateful day, many families, mostly Christians, in Muntay fled, taking a 30-minute boat ride to Ozamiz City.

"Everybody was in panic. Gun shots were heard everywhere," said Muntay Brgy Capt. Julius Montecillo. Such state

of confusion resulted in the evacuation of at least 70% of the population. Those who evacuated are families living along the shorelines.

But the Muslim families, who are staying on the other side of the community, together with the barangay officials, remained.

"We believe that if we stay here, they (armed men) will not harm us," Abdulcamid Dimalapang, a Maranao leader who also serves as temporary barangay secretary, reasoned out.

On that morning, Dimalapang said, the Muslim families went out to the

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Peace education now on television

PASIG CITY – To bolster the mainstreaming of peace education in the basic learning curriculum, another three Salam peace video episodes were turned over to the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) and the Department of Education (DepEd) recently.

These three peace education modules were produced through a partnership between the Knowledge Channel Foundation Inc. (KCFI) and the GoP-UN ACT for Peace Programme with technical support from OPAPP, DepEd and the Mindanao Economic Development Council.

“Peace will most surely last and be durable and sustainable if it starts with the values of the young,” said Press Secretary Jesus Dureza who also serves as the ACT for Peace national programme director.

“The young will have a better chance of starting at the right stage. That’s why education is very important,” he added.

At least 10 episodes were earlier aired over Knowledge Channel through the assistance of the United State Agency for International Development, beaming to at least 1,800 schools across the country.

Like in the first 10 episodes of Salam (Arabic term that means peace), the three

educational episodes are based on the Peace Education Exemplars directed at Grade 5 and 6 pupils that were developed by OPAPP and DepEd through the support of the United Nations Children’s Fund in 2005.

The series revolves around the lives of four young professionals in the peacebuilding sector who reminisce about their childhood in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao and how and why they chose to build peace as a career path.

The new three episodes feature Bakwit (internally-displaced persons) that shows the condition of children in the evacuation centers; Karapatan, which highlights children’s rights (particularly access to health services); and Kanduri that essays a cultural celebration that can also be a venue for resolving conflicts. Kanduri is a festive celebration with prayers done for thanksgiving (ie. bountiful harvest, any milestones or important events in one’s life), asking for blessings or guidance.

The production and airing of Salam episodes during the Knowledge Channel’s Makabayan slot is in support to the implementation of Executive Order 570,

PEACE EDUCATION/page 9

BHS serves tri-people in Sarangani town



HEALTH SERVICES FOR ISLAND RESIDENTS. Sarangani Mayor Jerry Cawa (2nd from right) cuts the ribbon during the ceremonial turnover of the barangay health station in PDC Konel in Sarangani, Davao del Sur. Konel is among the 17 PDCs in Davao del Sur. Also in photo are (from left) Mindanao Economic and Development Council Chief Economic Development Specialist Charlie Escaño, ACT for Peace Area Technical Assistant for South Central Mindanao Jake Abdullah, and a barangay official.

Around 2,400 residents of PDC Konel in Sarangani town in Davao del Sur now have access to basic health services offered by its newly-constructed barangay health station (BHS). Konel is located on Balut Island, one of the two islands that comprise the Sarangani municipality.

The health station features rooms for admission, family

PEACE LINKS is published by
the GoP-UN ACT for Peace
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planning, treatment and consultation as well as a comfort room and storage room.

The Programme provided P300,000 while the local government unit (LGU) of Sarangani initially provided P100,000. During the construction period though, the prices of materials increased and an additional P90,000 was needed to complete the project. This additional fund requirement was provided by the LGU of Sarangani.

The health station is among the priority projects identified by the community during a rapid appraisal conducted by barangay officials and the peace and development advocates.

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NEWSBRIEFS

ACT for Peace extends P.9M to Tupi PDCs

The ACT for Peace Programme recently provided support in poultry production to six Peace and Development Communities (PDC) in Tupi, South Cotabato Province, to boost economic activities in these communities. One PDC is running a feeds store which supplies the feeds requirements of the five communities that are directly into poultry production.

A total of P912,000 worth of assistance has been extended to Bunao Multi-Purpose Cooperative (BUFAMCO), Kalkam Tribal Farmers Cooperative (KTFC), Sitio Clod Blaan Multi-Purpose Cooperative (SCBMPC), Palian Community Workers Association (PACOWA), Polonuling Community Workers Association (POCOWA), and Atbangan Community Multi-Purpose Cooperative (ACMPC).

These peoples' organizations are growing 1,000 heads of chicken to be sold through the marketing linkage of the Tamayo Farms Products. Technicians from the Department of Agriculture and the BMEG Company are providing technical assistance during the entire project cycle. ☞

Basilan Peace Center to promote culture of peace

A peace and resource center has been established at the provincial capitol of Basilan with the support of the ACT for Peace Programme. The turnover ceremony last December 4, 2008 was attended by provincial officials and representatives of the Programme.

The peace center will serve as a repository of materials on peace and development. The center will support in the peace advocacy of Basilan province through the conduct of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) training, peace legislation, and other capacity building programs involving various sectors towards the promotion of a culture of peace and peace stability in the province.

Part of the project component is the conduct of the training on Culture of Peace Mainstreaming and Operation's Planning done on December 2-4, 2008 at the Department of Social Welfare and Development Compound in Isabela City. The three-day training activity resulted in the formulation of a one year operation's plan which will serve as a guide for the technical working group in the full operationalization of the peace center for 2009 and onwards. The plan will be submitted to the office of the Sangguniang Bayan for integration in the 2009 budget appropriation of the province. ☞

ARMM planners trained on PCIA

At least 16 planners in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) from the different Regional Planning and Development Board (REDPB) member agencies with the Regional Planning and Development Office (RPDO) were trained on Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) in Davao City last 3-6 December 2008. The REDPB served as secretariat.

In time for the formulation of the ARMM Regional Executive Legislative Agenda, the activity aimed to integrate culture of peace in the planning process at the regional level and using PCIA as an assessment process for the programs and projects in the ARMM.

At the end of the training, the participants formulated ways forward and identified strategies and approaches doable in their programming and plan for its operationalization.

A parallel effort to support this training of the planners from the Executive Branch will be the training on the Parliamentary Procedures for the Regional Legislative Assembly members come 1st quarter of 2009. It will also integrate culture of peace in the legislative processes. This aims to generate peace-based policy support to the region's programs and projects. ☞

Makeshift clinic serves IDPs in Datu Piang

The ACT for Peace Programme and the Datu Piang Local Government Unit with support from the Integrated Public Health Office, Rural Health Unit, and volunteer carpenters and health workers constructed a makeshift lying-in to serve the internally displaced persons who seek refuge in the municipality.

The establishment of the facility in October is in response to the daily average of 150 emergency health cases being recorded by the RHU. Of these 150 cases, 15 would normally require admittance.

The health station will serve at least

5,000 evacuees seeking shelter in Datu Piang, displaced by the renewed hostilities between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The facility is also one of the entries of the GoP-UN ACT for Peace Programme to the "Stand Up, Take Action" (SUTA), a global campaign to end poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Other entries include psychosocial sessions in evacuation centers in Maasim, Sarangani Province.

In the Philippines, the campaign focused on MDG 2 (Achieve universal primary education) and MDG 5 (Improve maternal health) and aimed to get 15 million Filipinos to participate.

The Programme's participation to this campaign aims to send a louder message to leaders and to the rest of the world to intensify efforts in achieving the MDGs, particularly improving maternal health, reducing child mortality, and combating of diseases such as malaria. ☞

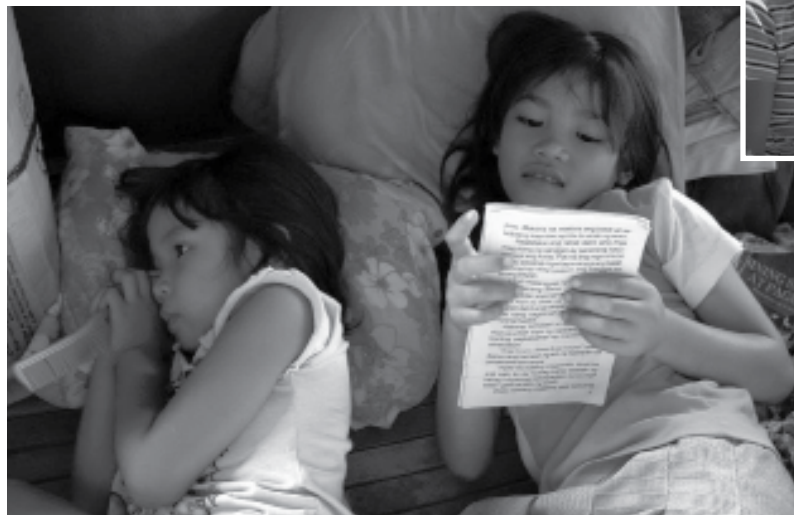
“The health station will serve at least 5,000 evacuees seeking shelter in Datu Piang...”



LtC. Julieta Ando (writing), then AFP 6ID spokesperson, prepares their group report during the Regional PCIA training.

the ACT for Peace Program

Peace and Development Advocates help in the distribution of relief goods to families who were displaced due to armed conflict in PDC Nalapaan (*right*) in Pikit and PDC Pagangan (*below*) in Aleosan, all in North Cotabato.



North Cotabato Gov. Jesus Saccalan (*second from right*) and ACT for Peace Programme Manager Diosita Andot assist in the distribution of relief goods to internally displaced persons in PDC Dualing, Aleosan in North Cotabato Province.

These children take time to study while at a gymnasium in Tulunan, North Cotabato where they were temporarily staying in August when armed groups were sighted near their community.

me IN ACTION



PROJECT MONITORING. (From right) ACT for Peace Programme Technical Monitoring Staff Chinot Adao, Mindanao Economic Development Authority Chief Economic Development Specialist Charlie Escaño, and ACT for Peace Programme Area Technical Assistant for South Central Mindanao Jake Abdullah inspect the installation of a potable water system in PDC Mabila in Sarangani, Davao del Sur Province.



People from nearby barangays who take refuge in PDC Delabayan in Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte wait for their turn to get their assistance package.

Residents from PDC Dungos, PDC Popoyon and Brgy. Tambak who temporarily took shelter at a gymnasium in Tulunan proper in North Cotabato line up to get their assistance package.



Volunteers and key leaders of the SOCKSARGEN Peace Network pose for a group photo during the 'Stand Up, Take Action' activity in Maasim, Sarangani Province. ACT for Peace staff also discussed the Millennium Development Goals during the gathering.

The Long Quest for Peace & Development: A Challenge for the Western Mindanao Federation of Peace & Development Advocate Alliances


In 1996, when the peace agreement between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Philippine government was finalized, it raised hopes and offered inspiration to the people of Mindanao to promote and sustain peace in the region.

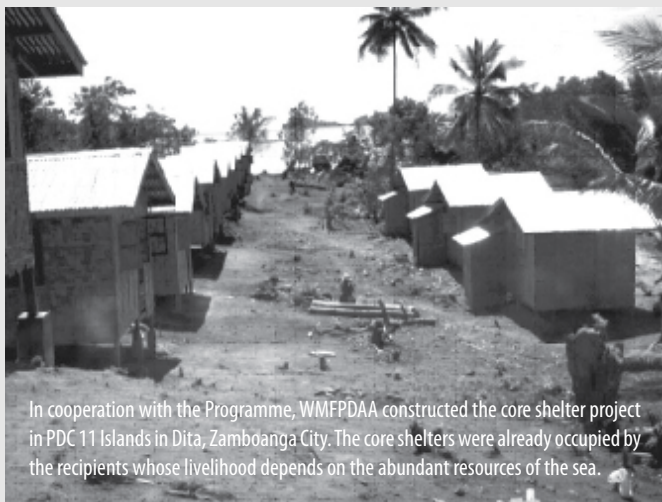
With an agreement at hand, various development interventions followed in known MNLF territories initiated by the Philippine government and several international donor agencies particularly through the United Nations Multi-Donor Programme (UNMDP).

With these interventions, different community organizations, local peace and development alliance were organized to pursue peace and development in their respective localities. One of these groups is the Western Mindanao Federation of Peace and Development Advocates Alliance (WMFPDAA) that came into being to address issues on peace and development at the community level.

To date, the federation, an active partner of the ACT for Peace Programme, is composed of local alliances from Ipil and Payao in Zamboanga Sibugay, MUNCALA and Siocon in Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Lanao del Norte and Zamboanga City.

The federation managed to implement several projects designed to address basic social services and livelihood development in 54 PDCs located in 24 municipalities and cities. Among these are facilitation of community-based skills training on peace education and coastal resource management, propagation of Islamic Leadership and Governance (ILG) in various fora and symposia, and setting up of infrastructure and livelihood projects in Western Mindanao.

To respond to current realities, the WMFPDAA continue to strengthen the existing organizational and institutional arrangement among the seven local alliances and community based organizations; enhance and improve technical capability of the peace and development advocates in peace related activities such as disaster management, peace and security planning and conflict transformation; enhance peace advocacy in different peace and development communities (PDCs) by maximizing available community processes and structures; and establish functional and dynamic alliances in different provinces composed of CSOs, religious group and other stakeholders of peace and development as mechanisms for development interventions in the ground. 



In cooperation with the Programme, WMFPDAA constructed the core shelter project in PDC 11 Islands in Dita, Zamboanga City. The core shelters were already occupied by the recipients whose livelihood depends on the abundant resources of the sea.

Dialogue, inter-PDC alliance mitigate impact of conflict

The current conflict between the Government and certain groups of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) saw 20 Peace and Development Communities (PDCs) directly affected by conflict while 24 other PDCs were hosting internally displaced persons from nearby communities.

Among the initiatives and responses undertaken by the PDCs are tapping inter-PDC alliances to institute IDP monitoring, camp management and reporting systems; conducting community dialogues; and involving the MNLF in mitigating tension on the ground and in some instances rescuing IDPs.

In Shariff Kabunsuan and Maguindanao, the PDCs hosting IDPs formed an alliance where an IDP management committee was formed. The committee was composed of barangay LGUs, barangay health workers, representatives from different sectors in the community and the IDPs themselves.

Among the functions of the alliance is to systematize disaster and calamity response, strengthen the barangay disaster coordinating council, conduct relief operations and address human rights violation.

Prior to the displacement, the inter-PDC alliance was formed primarily to provide a venue to discuss common community issues, look into the sustainability of projects in the communities and building strong relations with the barangay LGU, and during urgent situation, to ensure the allocation and release of 5 percent calamity fund coming from the BLGU's internal revenue allotment.

Conduct of a series of dialogues is also the way to go for PDCs affected or those highly vulnerable communities. Hadja Giobay Diocolano, executive director of Kadtang Foundation for Peace and Development Advocates, Inc., believes that the reason that only one PDC of the 25 PDCs in Maguindanao and Shariff Kabunsuan was directly affected by conflict could be because of the strong dialogue mechanisms in the community and people's vigilance that helped preserve peace in these communities.

In PDC Tenan, Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay, community dialogues were immediately conducted following the aborted signing of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain between the Government and the MILF through the Tenan Tri-people Association.

Tenan Brgy. Chair Rashid Bual said the adverse effects of the aborted signing of the MOA-AD can be felt in other parts of Mindanao.

Bual, an MNLF member now serving as peace and development advocate, said that "we can't just sit here alone and allow the uncertain peace situation in Mindanao to wipe away our efforts and initiatives to develop our community."

"But we are tired of war and we are for peace that's why the MNLF signed the peace agreement in 1996," he added.

Sixty percent of the 358 households in the village are Moro families. The Christian population is 37 percent while the indigenous people comprise the remaining 3 percent.

For Fred Jacinto, a Christian and parish church worker who serves as the chairperson of the Tenan Tri-people Association, living in a pre-dominantly Moro community gives him the

DIALOGUE/page 11

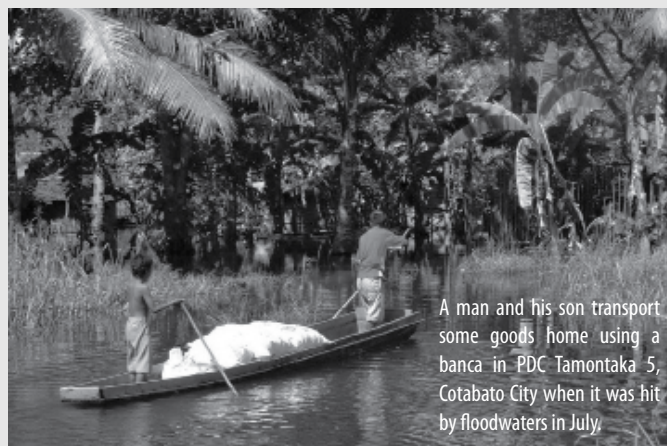
**LIST OF AFFECTED AND
HOSTING PDCs**
(as of 31 December 2008)

PROVINCE/MUNICIPALITY	PDC
Directly Affected (18 PDCs)	
NORTH COTABATO	
Aleoson	Dualing Pagangan
Pikit	Nalapaan
Pigcawayan	Cabpangi
Tulunon	Dungos Popoyon
SARANGANI	
Maasim	Nomoh Kanalo Daliao
Kiamba	Katubao Datu Dani Tambilil
LANAO DEL NORTE	
Kauswagan	Inudaran
Munai	Pendulunan
MAGUINDANAO	
Datu Saudi	Kitapok
LANAO DEL SUR	
Calanogas	Panggawalopa
Wao	Magamong
SULTAN KUDARAT	
Sen. Ninoy Aquino	Midtungok
Hosting IDPs from other barangays (24 PDCs)	
LANAO DEL NORTE	
Magsaysay	Lumbac
Kauswagan	Delabayan
Matungao	Imburnal
Bacolod	West Delabayan Pagayawan
Tangkal	Big Banisilon Small Banisilon
Kolambugan	Muntay
Iligan City	Mandulog
MAGUINDANAO	
Datu Anggal	Mapayag
Datu Unsay	Maitumaig
Mamasapano	Manungkaling
SHARIFF KABUNSUAN	
Datu Odin Sinsuat	Bago-inged Taviran Makir Tambak Margues
SARANGANI	
Maasim	Lumatil
NORTH COTABATO	
Midsayap	Sambulan
Pigcawayan	Matillac
Alamada	Pigcawaran
LANAO DEL SUR	
Ditsaan Ramain	Pagalongan
Sultan Gumander	Balangas
Marawi City	Sugod

FAST FACTS

WHAT IS A PDC?

- It stands for Peace and Development Community.
- It may consist of a barangay or a cluster of households marked by a convergence of peacebuilding and development activities.
- It is a marginalized, conflict-affected or conflict-vulnerable community which becomes actively engaged in a process of transformation with the help of various development partners.



A man and his son transport some goods home using a banca in PDC Tamontaka 5, Cotabato City when it was hit by floodwaters in July.

WHO ARE THE PDAs?

- It stands for Peace and Development Advocates.
- They are mostly former combatants of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and are now doing voluntary work in community organizing, resource mobilization and bridging the PDCs to concerned government agencies and other donor agencies.
- In every province, there is a Peace and Development Advocates League, an alliance of PDAs.

NUMBERS

P10.4 M Total cost of humanitarian assistance provided by the Programme to IDPs as of 31 December 2008

13,031 Total number of IDP families served by the Programme

256 PDCs in Mindanao and Palawan that the Programme is assisting

19 Total number of provinces where PDCs are located

57 Total number of barangay health stations constructed with the assistance of the Programme

72 Total number of operational Botika ng Barangay

42 Total number of Schools of Peace



The ACT for Peace Programme provided support in poultry production to 6 PDCs in Tupi, South Cotabato Province to boost economic activities in these communities.

Christians, Muslims fortify bond...

From page 1

main highway on the northern end going to Maigo municipality. On the other end, going to Tubod, the provincial capital, the barangay officials who are mostly Christians were on guard.

Muntay is among the barangays located along the national highway that connects the coastal towns of Lanao del Norte.

But neither groups had firearms.

"If we were armed, we would surely be caught in the crossfire. It would be hard to determine whether we are members of the CVO (Civilian Volunteers Organization) or soldiers or rebels or plain civilians," Dimalapang said. "So, we decided not to take up arms."

True enough, at around 9 AM, as series of violence hit nearby communities of the town and Kauswagan municipality, a group of armed men believed to be from the rebel group arrived at a bridge in Sitio Kulasian, just a kilometer away from the barangay hall.

"They saw us, we saw them. And for a long while we just stared at each other from afar. They did not make any move and we stood pat. Then, they left," Dimalapang narrated in a pensive tone, reliving their experiences on that day.

At around the same time at the southern tip of the same stretch of the road, around 20 armed men believed to belong to a vigilante group also turned up. According to Montecillo, the group received a text message saying the whole barangay was taken hostage by the other armed group and they came to check.

Montecillo talked to the group, asking them to leave their community, which they heeded.

The local leaders might have prevented an imminent confrontation between fully-armed groups but the commotion and confusion that descended in the community

left the residents at loss. Many could not understand what happened to them on that day. Others were distraught and hurt for what befell them.

The day ended with 43 deaths—five of whom were soldiers and a police officer. Forty one were injured and 36 houses burned in both Kolambugan and Kauswagan towns, according to the report of the National Disaster Coordinating Council.

Though no direct atrocities took place in Muntay, the ordeal the residents had gone through started to create a dent on the harmonious relationship between those who evacuated and those who stayed behind. Three days after the incident, all who left came back. But an invisible gap tried to divide the Christians and Muslims in the community.

Sensing the palpable tension, the local officials called for a community dialogue, conducting it during a barangay session held not at the barangay hall but at the area where the Muslim families lived, which locals called as "SPCPD" (Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development).

It was named as such as the Maranao families who live now in the area came to Muntay following the identification of the barangay as the 'center for peace and development' for Lanao del Norte by the Ranao State Revolutionary Committee of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) after the final peace agreement was signed between the Government and the MNLF. SPCPD served as the transitional implementing mechanism of the peace pact.

The social integration of these Maranao families, who came from the interior



Food and non-food items are distributed to internally displaced persons who stay in PDC Muntay, Kolambugan in Lanao del Norte.

“The dialogue was called to discuss ways in sustaining and even strengthening the harmonious co-existence of both Christians and Muslims in Muntay...”

towns of the province to settle in this predominantly Christian village in 2000, was an arduous journey by itself. After a series of dialogues between the Muslim families and Christian residents as well as several planning sessions, the barangay declared itself as a Peace and Development Community (PDC) in 2001.

PDCs are conflict-affected or conflict-vulnerable areas whose transformation processes into self-sustaining and peaceful communities have been supported by the United Nations Multi-Donor Programme and now by its successor program, the GoP-UN Action for Conflict Transformation (ACT) for Peace Programme.

The dialogue was called to discuss ways in sustaining and even strengthening the harmonious co-existence of both Christians and Muslims in Muntay especially during trying times, Montecillo said.

During the dialogue, “all of us,

Christians and Muslims, poured our hearts out to break the tension between us,” Oday said.

“We clarified it among ourselves and agreed that this conflict is between the military and some groups of the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front). We are not part of this,” Dimalapang added.

After two hours of intense discussion, the community reached an agreement that Christians and Muslims should not turn its back against the other and came up with concrete steps on how to maintain peace in the barangay despite the tension that grips the province.

Hand-written in a white pad in Visayan and signed by barangay officials and sectoral representatives, the community

banned any form of weapon in the barangay and agreed to share information that may affect the residents.

“If we hear ill plots to be done by a group from Muslim tribes, we’ll inform the barangay officials and we will negotiate with that group to not do it. In the same manner, if such plans are to be done by Christian groups, the barangay officials will inform us and dissuade them from doing anything,” said Dimalapang whose family is among the 56 Muslim families who are now living among the 262 Christian families in Muntay.

If and when armed hostilities will affect the community, both groups decided that the Christian families will go to the houses of Muslim families if the perpetrators are

Christians while the Muslim families will stay at the homes of Christian families if the persons responsible are Muslims.

But Dimalapang, Montecillo and Oday hoped it would not reach that point.

“We, Muslims and Christians, just want to live in peace here in our community,” Montecillo said. Muntay is now even hosting other internally-displaced persons from Tangkal and Munai towns.

“We can all peacefully co-exist,” Montecillo added.

The people of Muntay are now doing their best to recover from the trauma caused by violence and move on as one community, banking on the strength of bond between and among them. ❧

Peace education...

From page 2

“Institutionalizing Peace Education in Basic Education and Teacher Education” that was signed in September 2006.

During the turnover ceremony, the implementing guidelines of EO 570 were also signed by OPAPP Sec. Hermogenes Esperon, Jr., DepEd Sec. Jesli Lapus, and Commissioner Nona Ricafort of the Commission on Higher Education.

“For as long as the state of education

in areas of conflict is not good enough, I’m not optimistic of the peace process. Education, being an instrument of peace, is a key indicator of peace,” Sec. Lapus said.

Sec. Esperon said that when people get old enough, things might not change or the change might not be easy. “We’ll try a better approach to building peace by approaching it through the minds of the children,” he added.

The new peace video modules will be shown on the Knowledge Channel for three years while the ACT for Peace Programme as well as the latter’s implementing agency,

the Mindanao Economic Development Council, will assist in disseminating the video modules in other venues like workshops, forums and other peace advocacy activities in Mindanao.

Rina Lopez-Bautisa, KCFI president, said the Salam episodes are developed “to have students develop attitudes and skills conducive to peace at the individual, interpersonal, national and global levels.”

“Second is to understand the process that leads to harmony or conflict and be aware of the various approaches to constructive conflict resolution,” she added. ❧

BHS...

From page 2

To ensure the quality of the construction,

Mayor Jerry Cawa created a project management committee to supervise and monitor the project. The committee, which is composed of the municipal engineer, municipal planning and development

officer, municipal social welfare and development officer and the municipal health officer, worked closely with the barangay officials to ensure efficient and effective project implementation.

The local government unit assigned a midwife to the barangay to enhance the delivery of health services with the assistance of the Barangay Health Workers (BHWs).

Konel declared itself as a peace and development community (PDC) in September 2006 through a barangay resolution. It is home to 2,407 B’laans, Muslims and Christians who coexist with each other for years. In the 1970s, some families were briefly displaced due to the conflict between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front. ❧



Dr. Roel Gagape checks on the condition of children and pregnant women at the temporary shelter in PDC Nomoh, Maasim, Sarangani Province last October 18, 2008.

Robin Padilla...

From page 1

few months ago. All eagerly awaits the arrival of their “Idol”—actor Robin Padilla.

When reporters asked Makmod what she’d tell the actor when she comes face to face with him, she replies with a shy smile: “I’ll thank him because I finally saw him.” Kanapia butts in: “I’ll ask for a new house (their house was burned down during one of the encounters) and a carabao.” And the women broke into laughter.

When the movie star finally arrives, people from all directions came rushing towards him—eager to get a closer glimpse of the man who has won the hearts of Mindanaoans for his genuine concern for the people of this conflict-affected region and his commitment to contribute to the attainment of a lasting peace in this island.

Robin Padilla is GoP-UN (Government of the Philippines – United Nations) Action for Transformation (ACT) for Peace Programme’s Mindanao Peace Champion and is in town to promote peacebuilding and peace advocacy efforts being done in the area.

‘BIG’ at PDCs

Padilla was ushered to the garden being cultivated by Makmod, Kanapia, and the



Janet Minanga (2nd from left), ATA for ARMM, and Sumail Usman (2nd from right), a Samahan ng mga Maralitang Mamamayan ng Makir member brief UNDP Country Director Renaud Meyer, and actor and Mindanao Peace Champion Robin Padilla on their visit to Brgy. Makir, in Datu Odin Sinsuat. Brgy. Makir is one of the 77 Peace and Development Communities of the ACT for Peace in ARMM. Meyer, Padilla and local officials witnessed the groundbreaking of a children’s health and daycare center in Makir.

other IDPs to launch ACT for Peace’s Bio-intensive Gardening (BIG), a food security program as well as a psychosocial activity for the IDPs while staying at the evacuation center.

“Our vision is for them to be able to go back home. And when they do, they also bring home with them what they have learned under the BIG Program. And most of all, we are helping them bring back their self-confidence which will enable them to rise above their current situation,” says

ACT for Peace Programme Manager Diosita Andot.

The BIG Program is just one of ACT for Peace’s strategies to aid in the transformation of Peace and Development Communities (PDCs) such as Barangay Makir. A PDC is a “conflict-affected or c o n f l i c t -

vulnerable community that is undergoing a transformation process towards sustainable peace and development through the help of various development partners.”

The ACT for Peace Programme is currently supporting the transformation of 256 PDCs in Mindanao and Palawan. Seventy-seven are located in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Health and Day Care Center

Padilla, along with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Country Director Renaud Meyer, also launched the children’s health and day care center in the village.

The Php 622,000 facility is funded by the ACT for Peace Programme and implemented with the Samahan ng mga Maralitang Mamamayan ng Makir, the barangay local government of Makir, Kadtabanga Foundation for Peace and Development Advocates, and the Provincial Government of Shariff Kabunsuan.

Read Along

On the second day, Padilla visited the Broce Central Elementary School of Peace in Tamontaka, also in the town of Datu Odin Sinsuat for the Philippine Daily Inquirer’s Read Along, a project aimed at spreading



Grade 6 pupils of the Broce Central Elementary School of Peace in Datu Odin Sinsuat dramatizes the children’s story entitled “Ang Bagong Golis” read by action star and Mindanao Peace Champion Robin Padilla and written by Bea Sapal, an IDP from Pikit, North Cotabato. Broce became a School of Peace in 2006, the first in the ARMM.

the passion for reading to children.

As Padilla arrives at the school, he was greeted with the same warmth and excitement by the pupils and teachers of Broce as the villagers of Makir the day before.

After the short welcome program held at the school grounds, the actor was led to the venue of the storytelling session where Notre Dame Broadcasting Network broadcaster Grace Tanghal was already reading to some 30 Grade 6 pupils of Broce.

As Padilla enters the room, the ongoing storytelling session was briefly halted. Heads turn towards the actor—the young listeners caught in awe at his presence. As the kids settle back, Tanghal proceeded with the storytelling—she too captivated the children with her natural flair for telling stories.

Tanghal read the story “My Muslim Friend” written by Mary Ann Ordenario-Floresta. It is the story of two girls—an Ilocana and a Muslim—whose friendship endured differences in religion, beliefs and culture. Floresta is an author and publisher of several children’s books.

When Padilla finally stood up to start reading “Ang Bagong Golis” (The New Arena), the kids broke into applause. As he reads through the story, he enthralled them with his reading style—storytelling infused with dramatics. It even became “participatory” as he picks out three pupils to act out what was being read.

“Ang Bagong Golis” is a story about Maguindanao and Ilocano children playing various types of tops using different rules. In the end, the children learned to play by the same rules, the most important of which is not to break each other’s top. It is a story of friendship, understanding and respect—a story which the children in this school can easily relate to. It was written by Bea Sapal, an IDP from Pikit in North Cotabato. “Ang Bagong Golis” is a product of the big book project of the Kids of Peace Foundation.

At the end of the session, Padilla reiterated to his

young audience the importance of the story. He tells them in Filipino: “The game the children played in the story is also like religion. Remember that Muslims and Christians may have different religions but we are all Filipinos, believing in one God. You should also remember that Muslims and Christians were never enemies. We are all brothers and sisters, and friends who respect each other.”

School of Peace

The Broce Central Elementary School of Peace was the first to be declared in the ARMM. Currently, there are 31 Schools of Peace (SoP) in Mindanao and Palawan.

A SoP is an educational institution that is committed in promoting basic quality education that is grounded upon the universal values of a culture of peace.

Robin Padilla

Padilla, a Balik Islam advocate was given the name Abdul Aziz in the mid-90s. He set up the Liwanag ng Kapayapaan, a preparatory school in Quezon City that gives free education to poor Muslim and Christian pupils. (*The visit was made last December 2 & 3, 2008*). ☞

Dialogue...

From page 6

opportunity to appreciate other people’s belief and practices.

In PDC Mapayag, Datu Anggal Midtimbang in Maguindanao, MNLF Commander Makol Musa transported IDPs caught in the middle of an encounter between the Government troops and the MILF rebels. The 400 evacuees were from Brgy. Nunangan in Datu Anggal and barangays Barrio Muslim and Damablak in Talayan.

“We drove four Elf trucks and transported the evacuees all throughout the night until morning to the evacuation centers,” Musa said. A number of these IDPs are staying at the PDC.

“I have talked with the IDPs and learned that when they see the “PDC” sign from the highway, they felt that they are safe. Ligtas kami dyan,” he said. The experience is really moving. For Musa, this is a highlight and an achievement of the PDC, an indicator of its strength and ability to provide assistance to others. ☞

IN FOCUS

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NEW PDC. Usec. Virgilio Leyretana (4th from left), chair of the Mindanao Economic Development Council, Doh Tong Brgy Chair Makdum Hamja (3rd from left) and Simunul Mayor Benzar Tambut (4th from right) join other barangay officials and the community in a ceremony declaring Doh Tong as a new Peace and Development Community (PDC) in Simunul, Tawi-Tawi. PDC Doh Tong is the 12th PDC in the province and the 77th in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. ACT for Peace is currently supporting the transformation of 256 PDCs in Southern Philippines.

FAQs on the Early Recovery Program

What is the Early Recovery Program?

- ♦ It is a multidimensional process of recovery that begins in the post-disaster response or humanitarian relief setting, immediately following a natural disaster or armed conflict.
- ♦ It is a strategy employed by the Action for Transformation (ACT) for Peace Programme to generate self-sustaining and locally-owned resilient processes for post-crisis recovery.
- ♦ It encompasses the restoration of basic services, livelihoods, shelter, governance, security and rule of law, environment and social dimensions, including the reintegration of displaced populations.

What are the objectives of the Early Recovery Program?

- ♦ To ensure that their inputs become assets for long-term development and thereby foster the self-reliance of affected populations and help rebuild livelihoods;
- ♦ To support spontaneous recovery initiatives by affected communities and change the risk and conflict dynamics; and
- ♦ To establish the foundations of longer-term recovery

What are the objectives of the Early Recovery Program?

1. Livelihood & Income Recovery
2. Social Services
3. Displacement, Return & Reintegration
4. Transitional Shelter
5. Land & Property
6. Coordination
7. Infrastructure
8. Security
9. Governance
10. Rule of law
11. Natural Disaster Response
12. Cross-cutting issues such as gender, human rights violations, disaster risk reduction, conflict prevention, etc.

What is ACT for Peace Programme's suggested local Early Recovery Priorities?

1. Transitional Shelter

- ♦ Provision of technical and small-scale construction material;
- ♦ In parallel, preparations for medium-term shelter recovery will begin with the pre-positioning of materials for the main shelter rehabilitation phase.

2. Employment, Livelihoods and Agriculture

- ♦ cash-for-work programs;
- ♦ intensive employment rehabilitation;
- ♦ developing local economies and restoration of financial services; rebuilding of agriculture and rural livelihoods

3. Governance

- ♦ restoration of local capacity, ensuring transparency and accountability, greater involvement of elected officials, and mobilization of community participation;
- ♦ support to institutional and legislative systems, disaster preparedness planning, and community-level risk reduction

4. Environment

- ♦ proper disposal of solid, medical and human waste, as well as debris and hazardous materials;

- ♦ prevention of water contamination and protection of critical habitats during recovery and reconstruction

5. Education

- ♦ creation of safe learning and teaching places;
- ♦ ensuring the provision of education materials, and temporary schools for physically-challenged or injured children;
- ♦ provision of teacher support, management training, life skills training, and distance learning;
- ♦ prevention of child labor

6. Protection

- ♦ protection instituted for the most vulnerable
- ♦ strengthening government's capacity to investigate and redress human rights violations
- ♦ empowering those who are affected in order for them to actively participate in decision making processes

7. Food and Nutrition

- ♦ setting up of a food distribution system to ensure women, children and the physically-challenged get equitable access to food;
- ♦ food-for-work;
- ♦ food security (bio-intensive gardens, FAITH, planting of vegetables in pots and used tin cans);
- ♦ food supplementation for malnourished children

8. Health

- ♦ revitalize health care delivery, disease surveillance, mental health care, rehabilitation services, and the district health management system;
- ♦ carry out detailed needs assessment;
- ♦ establishment of field clinics and mobile hospitals

9. Water and Sanitation

- ♦ provision of basic water supply and sanitation to dense population settings, while planning to gradually expand and cover rural and small community settings;
- ♦ rehabilitate damaged water facilities that can be repaired;
- ♦ support hygiene promotion activities through training and the provision of essential hygiene kits



Fatima Makmod, 15, of Brgy. Damablak in the town of Talayan helps in preparing the land for planting. She and other IDPs now living in PDC Makir, Datu Odin Sinsuat in Shariff Kabunsuan Province are taking part in the Bio-intensive Gardening (BIG) Program of the GoP-UN Action for Conflict Transformation (ACT) for Peace Programme. BIG is a food security program of ACT for Peace as well as a psychosocial activity for the IDPs, numbering to 567 families (as of 5 December 2008) or 2,245 individuals, while at the evacuation center.