

# *“Grounding” peacebuilding in Mindanao: good practices, lessons learned*

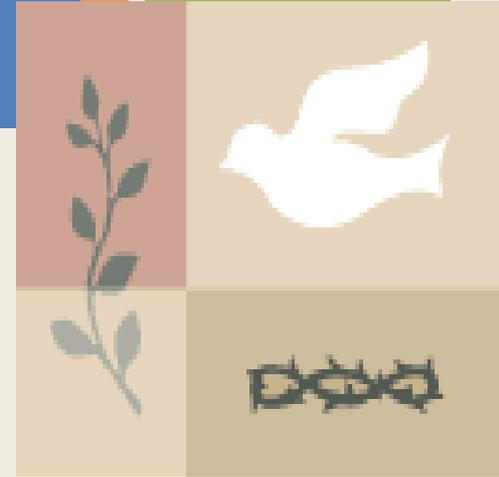


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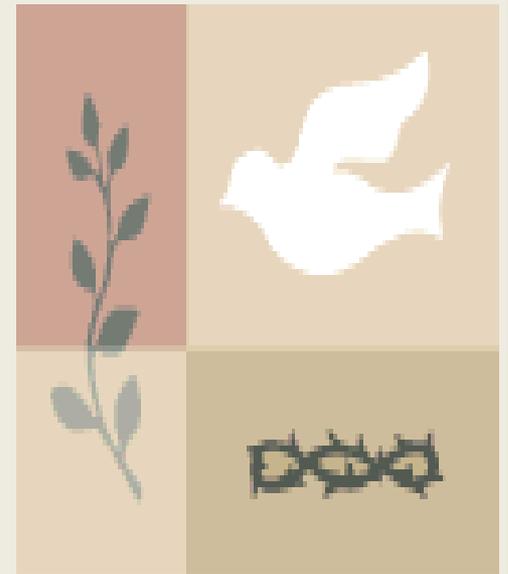
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1. Grounding peacebuilding: the primacy of people's participation in peace processes
2. Some models and practices toward waging peace on the ground
3. Some concluding remarks
4. Ways forward



## Outline of Presentation



“We shall endeavor to restore confidence in the peace process that is transparent and participatory, and renew our faith in our shared vision of a peaceful, secure, and prosperous future under one sovereign flag.”

- President Noynoy Aquino



“We continue to stress the peace and security framework which has been set forth by the President, fully recognizing that peace is not made just on the negotiating table but must be waged vigorously on the ground.”

- Sec. “Ging” Deles

# On “grounding” peacebuilding

- Peace processes and their cumulative dividends are too precious to be left to government or to those who contest it (armed groups and other non-state actors challenging the state) to handle or manage
- Primacy of wide peoples participation in any peace process: widening the windows of opportunity to create enabling environments for peace to thrive; protecting the welfare of the greater numbers of people despite the absence of enabling laws and policies for peace
- Challenges of building constituencies for peace - roadblocks and detours in peace processes; “peacebuilding from below vs. war making at the top”
- Creating capacities among different levels in society to demand for “peace-based governance” from the ground up



# Some models and good practices

- ✧ “organic, hybrid” mechanisms and approaches, usually evolving from years of experiencing internecine conflict and ways to resolve them, at the local level (barangay); using both formal (government institutions) and traditional platforms (Ulama Council, Sultans, key influential local leaders)
- ✧ NGO-led approaches and programs – usually in collaboration with “accompanying” international NGOs or funding agencies
- ✧ Academe-led initiatives – Culture of Peace modules and integration of peace education in core subject areas in basic education and in tertiary courses
- ✧ Peacebuilding strategies of multilateral donors with local communities as partners and implementers
- ✧ Government run, government initiated peace “zones” and peace initiatives, peace organizations (GRIPOs)

# On “organic, hybrid” approaches and mechanisms

- Usually grassroots initiated; independent, collective action usually tailored to local socio-cultural contexts (addressing both vertical and horizontal conflict issues and concerns)
- Borne out of collective fear of being displaced every time there is conflict
- It is evolving; does not stay at one level; is not focused only on keeping the peace in the community but in how to sustain it through collective action and policies
  - Examples: GINAPALAD TA KA Spaces for Peace (7 barangays in Pikit, North Cotabato); and other similar “peace spaces” (distinguished from “Peace Zones” Joint Ulama Council; Council of Elders (esp. in Iranun areas)



# NGO-led approaches accompanied by INGOs

- community-based NGOs and POs (peoples' organizations) address the need to promote peace and reconciliation in areas where there are horizontal conflicts like rido and land disputes
- heavy technical, capacity building and funding support from international NGOs
- partnership agreements between INGO and local NGO, with clear details on terms of reference, deliverables
- Examples: Peace Governance project of Catholic Relief Services in partnership with various local NGOs in North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Cotabato province; A3B project ( Approaches in Bridging, Bonding, Binding towards resolving land conflicts), also by CRS



# Key Peace Themes



From BEAM's Education for Peace Framework (2005) , in turn adopted from the NDU Culture of Peace Model.

# A peace process is multi-layered

National Leadership:  
Political, Military,  
Religious, International  
Donors

Track 1

Regional, Local Leaders:  
LGUs, Ethnic/Religious  
Leaders,  
Academics, Intellectuals,  
NGOs

Track 2

Grassroots  
Local leaders, leaders of  
indigenous CBOs, local  
health officials,  
Community persons

Track 3

## Track 2: Middle out cross cutting efforts

### Vertical Integration

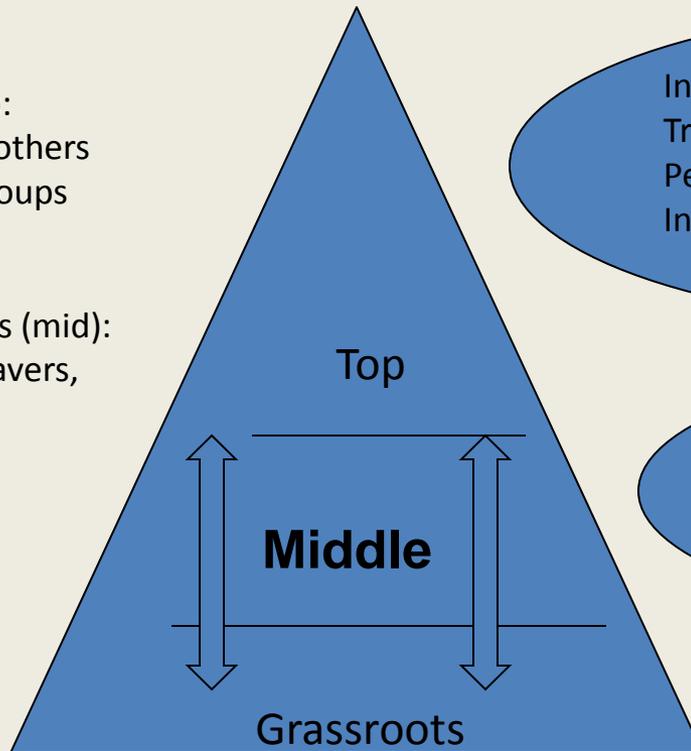
Peace Actors (top):

- OPAPP, Military, others
- Revolutionary groups
- Donors

Civil Society Platforms (mid):

Mindanao Peace Weavers,  
religious groups

Partners and  
community  
organizations  
(grassroots):



### Entry points

Inter-Religious Dialogue  
Training Peace Leaders and Animators,  
Peace Advocacy/Peace process  
Informal networks

Formation of civil society  
Platforms and initiation of  
New channels

Concrete  
peace advocacy  
Projects  
Peace governance in the  
barangays

Formal Connections through established platforms In  
formations

- \*Nurturing peace champions especially at the top level
- \*Social capital or network of peacebuilding groups/  
organizations with key people
- \*Creating social spaces to create avenues for top level  
actors

# Why grounded peacebuilding initiatives?

## *1. On factors leading to grassroots initiatives toward peacebuilding*

- The “all-out” war in 2000, attack on Buliok, 2003, botching of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain, 2008
- Levels of poverty in grassroots communities
- “permanent insecurity” in evacuation centers
- Protracted displacement
- “War fatigue”
- Consistent donor interest in conflict-affected areas



# ***On Driving and Restraining forces in conflict resolution and peacebuilding***

## **➤ *Driving:***

- Desire of community leaders to have pragmatic, but durable peace
- Consistent donor interest
- Long term benefits of peacebuilding

## **➤ *Restraining***

- Questions/suspicious on real intent of main donor (Catholic Relief Services)
- Persistence of male chauvinistic attitudes in dealing with gender issues in conflict resolution and peacebuilding
- Weak governance and absorptive capacities of partners, especially at the LGU level
- Too many problems, too short project duration, too meager funds, too meager incentives for capacitated NGO workers to stay in grassroots

# Strategies for interfacing with BLGUs, media, schools, donor agencies

- ❑ Courtesy calls, offer of help in formulating the Barangay Development Plan
- ❑ Providing information about the peace process to the local media; linkaging with media personalities at the regional level; offering grassroots peacebuilding lessons through GPLC run by CRS
- ❑ Offering CoP trainings for teachers, principals and other school administrators
- ❑ Forging and nurturing partnerships with both local and international donors
- ❑ Maintaining a substantial presence in the community

# On levels of access, presence, and influence of community-based organizations

- Access to public spaces
- Limited access to closed or exclusive public spaces
- Presence is felt by many community leaders and members
- Influence? - in grassroots peacebuilding – might be high; but how powerful community initiatives are in resolving big conflicts????  
(idea of small wars feeding into big ones)

# ***Effects of community peacebuilding***

- **LGUs and communities have established functional conflict resolution processes and delivery of basic services**
- **Peace networks bring grassroots concerns to higher level processes**
- **Key structures engage in changing public attitudes to become more supportive of dialogue and reconciliation**



# *Effects of community peacebuilding*

- ❖ On Personal Peace:
  - ❖ Becoming more tolerant of diversity; more patience and more understanding of each other (thru CoP in GPLC)
- ❖ On Relational Aspects:
  - ❖ “Harmonious relationships breed safety and security.”
- ❖ On Structural Aspects:
  - ❖ Transformed BLGU mechanisms to integrate peacebuilding lens
- ❖ On Cultural Aspects
  - ❖ More tolerance for cultural differences



# *Effects of community peacebuilding*

- ✓ The Barangay Lupong Tagapamayapa and tribal structures have been capacitated to resolve 309 conflicts in project's midterm period (compared to 157 in the baseline) in 22 barangays
  - ✓ Use of core groups, interfaith teams, barangay justice security systems, tribal councils
  - ✓ In Pagagawan, BLGU officials noted that the capacities of the LT in monitoring and resolving conflicts were still in need of improvement, especially in communication mechanisms



# *Effects of community peacebuilding*

- ❑ The Culture of Peace taught in the Grassroots Peace Learning center had built more trust or restored trust in places where this was broken due to conflict
- ❑ Local “kapehan” or barangay coffee talks served as venues for conflict prevention and regular dialogue
- ❑ The use of peacebuilding lens in crafting the Barangay Development Plans led to positive changes in governance, especially in increasing people participation, collaboration, and increasing initiatives toward more transparent financial management at the barangay levels.



# Conclusions

- ❖ **Increased people participation in peacebuilding and conflict resolution leads to higher levels of trust and collaboration with various sectors at the barangay level**
- ❖ **Capacities for local governance are enhanced when there are high levels of collaboration between BLGU and grassroots based organizations**
- ❖ **transformation needs to start at the personal levels before changes in the relational, structural and cultural levels take place. This is especially true in conflict resolution approaches at the barangay level.**
- ❖ **Peace constituency building must be done at all levels – schools need CoP trainings to provide a big part of the enabling environment for peace.**

# Conclusions, continued...

- ◆ **But, intractable factors in conflict remain a huge challenge**
  - ◆ **Rido, especially land conflicts**
  - ◆ **Political warlords**
  - ◆ **Illegal economies, especially the illegal drugs trade**
  - ◆ **Weak political structures and governance, especially at the barangay levels**
  - ◆ **Perceived high levels of corruption in many LGUs in the Central Mindanao area**

# Conclusions, continued...

- **Other challenges:**
  - **CSOs to supplant local governance functions and mandates**
  - **CSOs to be less active in demanding for good governance and accountability from BLGU officials**
  - **Lack of stringent monitoring and evaluation processes and procedures**
  - **Lack of bridge funds after one project ends**
  - **Some CSOs become the “same dragon they wished to destroy”**

# Ways forward

- **continuous capacity building among CSO officials, leaders, members**
- **Maintenance of a bridge fund for community-based organizations so they are able to continue after one project ends**
- **Continuous advocacy for maximum peoples participation in conflict resolution/peacebuilding and in local governance**
- **Regular summits for schools offering peace education or culture of peace to build strong peace education networks for future funds mobilization/resource generation**
- **Development of updated and interactive course modules on CoP, or general peace education**
- **Require at least 30 mins of peace education at all levels in basic and secondary education**