Community-Based Lifelong Education in the Philippines: A Proposed Model in Grassroots Participatory Democracy in Southeast Asia

Serafin A. Arviola Jr.

ABSTRACT: *Conflicts among family members, among different groups in the community, and among nations continue to escalate, threatening the survival of the human species. The Philippines is not an exception to these atrocious realities. In this case, Mindanao has experienced one of the most violent armed conflicts in the history of the Philippines. A series of armed confrontations between the government and various Muslim separatist groups have placed the civilian population at the mercy of conflicting parties. Various government programs and projects were initiated to address the problem of war and violence in Mindanao. The study is an attempt to evaluate an existing community-based peace-building program with the aimed to draw out insights on what kind of program suitable for culturally diverse communities that experiences protracted social conflict. The researcher recommends exploring other indicators not included in this study in order to draw out more insights on the dynamics of peace building at the grassroots level.*
KEY WORDS: *conflicts in the Philippines, government programs and projects, community-based lifelong education, and grassroots level.*

Introduction

The beginning of the twenty-first century is marked by a continued presence of conflicts at almost every level of human endeavor. Conflicts among family members, among different groups in the community, and among nations continue to escalate, threatening the survival of the human species. According to the Armed Conflict report as cited by John Paul Lederach (1997a), between 1989 and 1996 there were more than seventy wars happening in sixty different places around the world. As of

Prof. Serafin A. Arviola Jr. is an Assistant Professor of the Philippine Normal University (PNU). He is currently a Director of Center for Linkages and Extension Services of PNU and a Human Rights Fellow of International Center for Tolerance Education based in New York City. He could be reached at: sarviola2002@yahoo.com

January 1997, forty-four conflicts continue to devastate thirty-nine countries. Other disturbing figures indicate that half of the current wars have been causing severe human sufferings for almost a decade and one-quarter of them for more than two decades.

The Philippines is not an exception to these atrocious realities. Since the 1970's, continued lawlessness and violence in cities and countryside brought about by intensified and continued government assaults against the rebel groups: Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), New People's Army (NPA), and the terrorist group Abu Sayaff, have killed 120,000 people and displaced 1.5 million from their place of origin (Neufeldt *et al.*, 2000:3). Mindanao has experienced one of the most violent armed conflicts in the history of the Philippines. A series of armed confrontations between the government and various Muslim separatist groups like Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM), Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have placed the civilian population at the mercy of conflicting parties.

Various government programs and projects were initiated to address the problem of war and violence in Mindanao. These peace initiatives have failed miserably because of lack of political will on the part of the government, limited financial allocation, bureaucratic mismatch of local and national line agencies and leadership style of former rebels turned government managers (Abubakar, 1999).

Despite all these setbacks, in September 1996 former President Ramos signed the final Peace Accord with MNLF Chair Nur Misuari in Jakarta ending decades of armed conflict in Mindanao. The implementation of the peace agreement yielded some positive initial results. It opened windows of opportunities for NGOs, private organizations, and church groups to work for peace in support of the peace agreement (Deles, 2000). Communities caught in the armed conflict have declared their area as "Zone of Peace" in order to become an active participant in peace-building and eventually reap the gains of the peace process (Regehr, 1995). One of these communities is the Bual Zone of Peace in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat. It was officially recognized as a Zone of Peace last April 15, 2001 by virtue of a municipal ordinance.

The Context

Barangay Bual is situated 17 kilometers away from the town of Isulan. With a population of 3,508 individuals or roughly 1,600 families, it has an area of 14,948 hectares, making it the largest Barangay of the Municipality of Isulan, the capital town of the province of Sultan Kudarat. It can be reached by tricycle and "skylab" (motor cycle) with six to eight passengers one ride. Bual is located at the foot of Mount Daguma Range, which connects the province of Maguindanao, and Sultan Kudarat. The mountain provides sanctuaries for the rebel groups MILF and MNLF. Within Bual, a military camp of the 15th Infantry Battalion is located with a small detachment of paramilitary (Citizen's Armed Forces Geographical Unit or CAFGU) found sparsely in the area (Eliseo, 1999).

Bual means, "spring water", and the area are rich in both natural and human resources. It has a large tract of fertile agricultural lands suitable for corn and palay production. The present population comprises a majority of Muslim inhabitants (60%) who are mostly Maguindanaoan in origin, some Christian Ilonggo and Ilokano (38%) and Lumad (2%). Bual being a Muslim-inhabited area is surrounded by three adjacent barangays namely: Lagandang, New Pangasinan and Barangay Daguma, all of which are mostly populated by Christian inhabitants. During the violent years of Marcos dictatorship, this area became the battleground of military and Moro rebels, making life miserable for the people of these 4 Barangays (n.n., 1998; and Castaneda, 2000)).

Background of the Conflict in Bual

On December 16, 1996 violent acts perpetuated by a small group of "Christian Ilongo" wreak havoc on Muslim settlement in the quite community of Barangay Bual. More than 200 houses of Muslim residents, a mosque, and cooperative facility were reduced to ashes. An indiscriminate firing of weapons resulted to the killing of a child and wounding of the entire Muslim family added to the direct casualty of the incident. This violent episode forced 600 Muslim families to abandon their dwellings and immediately became internally displaced refugees for almost five months. The mass evacuation of Muslim residents in Bual generated a deep sense of fear and insecurity from both sides aggravated by the lack of concern from the military authorities to the plight of the victims (Montiel, 1995).

The main suspect in the burning incident was charged with criminal offenses waiting for the final verdict of the case in the Municipal Jail of Isulan while the other suspects are still at large. Most of the respondents interviewed were one in saying that the burning incident was caused by a land dispute between two families: the Perales family and the Galmak family. Although they came from distinct religious and tribal affiliation, the Perales being Christian Ilongos and the Galmak's being Muslim Maguindanaoans, their relationship is characterized by deep friendship, mutual understanding and generosity during the early years of engagement in Bual (Eliseo, 1999; and Castaneda, 2000). The relationship was strained because of the "intervention of the third party" which according to Muslim respondents was the military operating in the area during that time.

In a study conducted by Jazer Castaneda (2000), he cited from the police report of the Provincial Office of Sultan Kudarat the identity of this "third party" that magnified the conflict in Bual and these were the MILF, MNLF and the Armed Forces of the Philippines assigned in the area.

The conflict confirmed a long-standing prejudice of Muslim residents of Bual against the Christian that they were part of the groups called "Ilaga" (means rat) and "Tadtad" (means chopping by using a sharp bolo). Both groups were composed of Christians who organized themselves to protect their lives and properties from the abuse of Muslim rebels. Historically, Ilaga and Tadtad have also committed criminal

acts against the civilian Muslim population during the martial law years (Coronel-Ferrer, 1994; and BID-Peace Program Terminal Report, 2001).

The feeling of revenge was deeply felt by other Muslim respondents towards the Christians and anger towards their fellow Muslims in the mountain, the MILF and MNLF. They believed that these so-called "Muslim comrades" have rejected them during those days of attack by Christian residents of Bual against the Muslim community. The negative perception created by the conflict was deeply expressed during the FGDs with the youth group. They have argued that their sympathy towards the Moro separatist movement grew because of the injustices that they have experienced. The conflict have inflicted a collective consciousness among young Muslim residents the need of revenge and armed struggle (Kadtuntaya Foundation Brochures, 2000; and Catholic Relief Services Brochures, 2000).

Amidst the direct physical liability of the social conflict in Bual lies a deep harmful psychological and emotional effect among the Muslim victims. Negative perceptions were heightened between the two groups, unconfirmed prejudices were developed and an act of retaliation turned out to be reasonable because of the injustices afflicted to the victim. The first days of the Muslim residents in Bual who came back from the evacuation center was characterized by a high degree of caution against each other for fear that the incident might happen again.

Efforts towards Peace-Building in Bual

One of the first NGOs who responded to the problem of the Muslim residence in Bual is the Kadtuntaya Foundation Inc. It is a development oriented NGO in Cotabato City established in 1989 with outreach program and services on the areas of livelihood development, women literacy and health programs, relief and rehabilitation, community organizing and cooperative socio-economic programs. It is actively involved in communities affected by conflict between the rebel groups and the government in the provinces of Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat and North Cotabato (Francisco, 1996).

KFI envisions the grassroots communities of Mindanao where Christians, Muslims and Lumads are "politically empowered, economically sufficient, environmentally sustainable and gender conscious peacefully co-existing in equality, respect and prosperity" (*Kadtuntaya Foundation Brochures*, 2000). It implemented the relief and rehabilitation for the residence of Bual with the financial and technical support of CRS. KFI helped facilitate much needed government intervention during the initial months of crisis thus created the Bual Rehabilitation Task Force (BRTF). It was given with funds from the government amounting to 4 million pesos for house construction, repair of public facilities, and relief services.

The Catholic Relief Services (CRS) on the other hand, is an international relief and development NGO. It is an official service agency of United States Catholic Bishop's Conference established in 1943 located in 80 countries worldwide. CRS started its operation in the Philippines in 1945 to help provide war relief after the World War II. CRS/Philippines is active in providing its services in Visayas and

Mindanao with the aim of "assisting extreme poor, and also a facilitator of peace and reconciliation" in the communities torn by political, economic and cultural problems. It envisions a society "where justice, love and solidarity are the driving forces of social and economic development; where every tribe and faith is respected; and where diverse people work together in just and peaceful coexistence" (CRS, 2001).

BID-PEACE Program Goal, Objectives and Services

The BID-Peace program is a community-based integrated approach to peace building designed to promote peace and restore mutual trust and respect between Muslims and Christians in Barangay Bual. It started out of the need to rehabilitate and to reconcile the communities torn apart by the violent burning incident, which caused deeply, rooted tensions and divisions. It envisions Barangay Bual as a "community of Muslim and Christians contributing to one another towards upholding respect, empowerment, equity, prosperity, peace and sustainability" (Alim, 1999). It was designed to sustain the gains achieved in the implementation of the relief and rehabilitation and further enhanced the capability of the people to implement the peace-building projects in the community. The BID-PEACE has the following program components:

First, *Organizational Building and Strengthening (OBS)*. It is the "core strategy" of the BID-Peace Program with the aim of enhancing the capability of the counterpart people's organization and other important structures in the community like the Barangay Council, church groups etc., in order to implement various components of the program.

Second, *Farm & Economic Enterprise Development (FEED)*. As a "sustaining strategy", it is tasked to ensure that the basic needs of the families and the community as a whole is provided through on-and-off-farm enterprise livelihood projects. It also task to increase internal mobilization of financial resources and involves three-sub projects: (a) Ecological Farming: its objective is to increase the capacity of the PO's farmers in food production through sustainable farming system by providing credit facility, animal dispersal and technological assistance; (b) Off-farm Enterprise: its objective is to provide livelihood skills for women in order for them to contribute in the economic well being of the family through livelihood seminars and credit facility assistance such as the FAMAFEN loans or Family Managed Enterprise loans; and (c) Cooperative Projects: its objective is to organize a viable multipurpose cooperative in the community that will manage the production, marketing and financing of the income generating projects of the members.

Third, *Community Social Services (CSS)*. As a "support strategy", it is task to provide health and pre-school services in the community. Capacity building training for Community Health Volunteers (CHV) is a major feature of this project in order for the community leaders to conduct health education classes to promote health and sanitation in the community. Pre-school for Moro children with a volunteer

teacher will be provided to design the curriculum that will foster positive human values and appreciate their culture and religion.

Fourth, *Peace building Projects (PBP)*. As a "must strategy", it is tasks to sustain the different initiatives to promote peace and cultural understanding in the community through culture of peace seminars, conflict resolution skills training for leaders of POs, joint community celebration of Peace and Reconciliation Day and symposium on religious festivals and traditions.

Research Goals and Data-Gathering Process

This is a case study, which assessed the effectiveness of Bual Integrated Development and Peace Program (BID-Peace) in improving the relationship of Muslim and Christian residents in the community. The study aims to explore how the program components served as a means in peace building and conflict transformation using selected success indicators adopted from the *Peace Paradigm of Development with Cultural Tolerance* as an added area of assessment.

The researcher employed participation, equity, appropriateness of technology, critical empowerment, ecological consciousness and cultural tolerance as indicators in assessing the effectiveness of the program in improving the relationship of Muslim and Christian residents in Bual. The descriptive qualitative method was used. Specifically the case study method using document analysis, key informant interviews, focused group discussions and participant observation.

Using purposive sampling procedures, project staff and community leaders were selected on the basis of their participation and knowledge in the program inherent in their position in the community and in the program. Other respondents include the women sectors, farmers sectors and the youth sectors, categorized as program beneficiaries and community residents. They were chosen using criteria collectively agreed by the researcher and the community leaders. A final list of 10 respondents per sector were deliberated upon and approved during the general assembly of the POs. Interview guides and focus group discussion guides were used. The researcher conducted the study while immersing himself in the activities of the Bual Zone of Peace from Feb 2002 to April 2002 continuously.

Assessment of the Bid-Peace Program

Barangay Bual is an example of one of the many culturally diverse communities in the Philippines that experienced division and animosity among its people brought about violent social conflict. The conflict in Bual not only resulted to the lost of lives and properties but also exacerbate negative emotional and psychological effects among the people that jeopardized the relationship of the people (Toh, 1996; and Abaya, 2001). Through the BID-PEACE Program, the Muslim and Christian residents of Bual started to rebuilt this broken relationship upholding "respect, empowerment, equity, prosperity, peace and sustainability". The major findings of

this study evaluating whether this vision was accomplished inline with the *Peace Paradigm and Cultural Tolerance* indicators include the following:

1. ON THE PROMOTION OF PARTICIPATION

The program encouraged greater participation among the different sectors of the community in terms of the active involvement of the religious leaders, women, farmers and the youth groups in the implementation of projects and activities. The respondents were one in saying that the conduct of Culture of Peace (COP) seminar, capability-building trainings, joint community solidarity projects, multisectoral consultations and interreligious dialogue were effective in motivating people to participate and providing the much needed social interaction among the residents despite of the conflict that they have experienced. Added to this, the respondents argued that their active participation could also be attributed to their commitment to transform the conflict in Bual towards their desired future where peace and development abounds in the community (Acosta, 2000).

There was also a high degree of observance to democratic process in decision-making and sharing of leadership responsibilities in the implementation of the program between Muslim and Christian residents either in the Barangay Council or in the SAMAKANA Multipurpose Cooperative. Representation across sector, religious affiliation and cultural origin was highly observed in the management of the BID-PEACE Program. The provision of capability-building trainings for the people prepared them to actively participate in the conduct of sectoral consultations, interreligious dialogues and joint community solidarity projects. The role of KFI as facilitator of the BID-PEACE Program was instrumental in encouraging the religious leaders, the farmers, the women and the youth sector to collectively act in improving the relationship of Muslim and Christian residents as manifested in the formulation and implementation of the Zone of Peace Declaration (Lee & Gastardo-Conaco, 1994).

The project staff and community leaders considered some problems that have affected the participation of the community residents in the program, e.g. the occurrence of natural and man-made calamities, inaccessibility of the some sectors such as the "Lumads" because of the bad road condition and unstable peace and order situation in the area where these sectors reside (Paez, 1997). But the program has addressed the problems by intensifying the advocacy campaign for peace promotion involving the influential religious leaders; provision of relief services and other basic social services for the victims affected by natural calamities; and continuous sectoral consultation and trainings for the people.

2. ON THE PROMOTION OF EQUITY

The respondents generally agreed that the program has made available enough basic services for the community such as the provision of relief and medical services in time of natural and man-made calamities; employment and livelihood opportunities

for farmers, women and the youth sector; financial assistance for house construction, public utilities and small-scale business enterprises; and the provision of capability-building seminars (Kadtuntaya Foundation Seminar Proceedings, 1999). All of the respondents especially the community residents perceived that the process of utilization of these basic services was fair and equitable because there was no favoritism; criteria were clarified before the distribution. The process discouraged "dole out" mentality by promoting counterpart mechanism among the direct beneficiaries of the project (Castro, 2001).

There were adequate resource mobilization activities undertaken by each sectoral committee maximizing local sourcing of funds particularly the SAMAKANA Multipurpose Cooperative. The respondents as a result of their involvement with the FEED-related projects and trainings have observed changes pertaining to the attainment of economic self-sufficiency in their families (Malag, 1999). These changes include increment of income income, reducing dependency from loans sharks and usurers and enhancement of values such as hard work, and perseverance.

The community residents particularly the farmers have expressed serious concern over the prevailing system of land ownership in the community. They perceived this problem as an eventual threat particularly in the process of empowering the people towards economic self-sufficiency and in general the promotion of peace and development in the community.

3. On the Promotion of Appropriate Technology

There were differences of perceptions among the respondents with regards to the appropriateness of the program to the needs of the community. Almost all of them agreed that the program provided appropriated services during the Relief and Medical Operations and the implementation of Pre-BID-Peace program. The methods, activities and projects used were responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people especially during crisis situation. During the implementation of BID-Peace program, respondents have mixed perceptions. The community leaders, the women and youth sector agreed that the knowledge and skills that they have acquired as a result of their participation in the capability-building trainings were relevant and useful to their day-to-day realities (Toh, 2000). While the farmers perceived that the application of sustainable farming technologies were not appropriate to their actual situation and current realities. They were not convinced that the use of organic farming technologies would help increase their production capacity (Dela Torre, 2001).

Generally, the services provided as well as the technologies introduced in every phase of BID-Peace implementation were appropriate because of the continuous consultation between the project staff and the community residents. Specifically, there was a high level of acceptance of the utilization of local resources in the community in terms of the use of local manpower in program implementation, the use of materials, products and equipments found in the community and the use of

indigenous knowledge on dispute settlement, cure of common diseases and ways of organizing things (Salazar-Clemenna, 2000). This made the program responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people.

The respondents cited problems that affected the responsiveness of the program to their needs and aspirations such as the escalation of armed confrontation in Mt. Daguma Range and the occurrence of natural calamities. Therefore changes have to be made in terms of work schedules and prioritization of activities. Another problem cited was the system of land ownership in the community that discouraged farmers to adopt sustainable farming technologies.

4. On the Promotion of Critical Empowerment

In terms of critical empowerment of the people, the respondents generally agreed that seminars and trainings gave them relevant and useful skills in understanding the root causes of conflict besetting the community in the past and at present. Although the respondents have varied understanding on the concept of peace and violence, they were able to relate the conditions that facilitate and hinder the attainment of peace in the community towards the Zone of Peace Declaration. It was also observed that there are still challenges on the part of the project staff and community leaders to disseminate among the residents a holistic understanding of the culture of peace and its relationship to the importance of sustaining the Zone of Peace Declaration (Coronel-Ferrer, 1997).

Furthermore, the respondents have expressed that their ability to adhere to peaceful approaches in resolving conflict in the community can be attributed to the Peace-building components of the program. They have developed "political peace making behaviors" needed in the maintenance of the peaceful atmosphere in the community. This includes: (a) moral persuasion in averting armed confrontation in the peace zone; (b) collective enforcement of Peace Zone provisions; (c) strategic collaboration of community leaders in conflict settlement through the Barangay Peace and Order Council; (d) participative and shared decision-making in conflict settlement; and (e) commitment to building-relationship and its related values.

Problems cited by the respondents were the lack of skills needed to implement technical and difficult tasks resulting to the dependency of the community leaders to KFI staff in terms of program management and the lack of coordination among project staff in the implementation of programs caused by differences in the application of community organizing and peace-building framework in the community.

5. On the Promotion of Ecological Consciousness

The program promoted ecological consciousness in the community by encouragement of farmers to adopt organic farming, conduct of sanitation drive through Health Education Classes and Search for Modelong Tahanan for women, integration of environmental issues in the day care curriculum, annual tree-planting activities for the youth. The respondents during the interviews and FGDs conducted

marked a significant awareness on environmental issues in the community as a result of their involvement in the program. But the awareness did not translate to concrete actions in preserving and conserving the environment as manifested through their unsustainable consumption practices and harmful utilization of natural resources found in the community. Problems attributed to the promotion of ecological consciousness includes the indecisiveness of the Barangay council in the enforcement of regulations pertaining to the preservation and conservation of natural resources to complement the BID-Peace program, lack of cooperation among the residents to follow rules on cleanliness, proper waste disposal and proper use of chemical-based fertilizers (Jantzi, 1991; and Dela Torre, 2001).

6. On the Promotion of Cultural Tolerance

The program contributed in the promotion of cultural tolerance between Muslim and Christian residents by assuring representation in the organizational structure of SAMAKANA and in the sectoral committee composition; provision of joint community celebrations and symposium on religious festivities; and joint implementation of activities and project. The respondents cited these strategies as helpful in increasing greater understanding of other people's culture, belief sand practices, reduction of prejudice, mislabeling and stereotypes and enhancement of the values of openness, acceptance and recognition of identity of other people in the community (Rardon, 1997; and Sta. Maria, 1998). The community agreed that their involvement in the BID-Peace program renewed their personal rapport with one another and strengthened their friendship and solidarity towards the attainment of the common goal set in the Peace Zone Declaration.

Initially, the project staff experienced difficulty in encouraging elders in the community to participate in the program for fear of conversion to the Catholic faith. But through constant dialogue and sincerity of the project staff, the elders were convinced and came to understand the program goals and objectives.

Conclusion

From the findings of this research one can draw out certain conclusions as to the effectiveness of the BID-PEACE Program in rebuilding a culturally diverse community torn apart by protracted social conflict. Community-based peace building program constitutes a dynamic process of rebuilding relationship and finding creative ways of how social interaction be initiated and sustained among the people adversely affected by the conflict. It is not only limited to the reduction of violence and conflict settlement efforts but requires individual and social transformation towards a desired future.

The implementation of the BID-PEACE Program did not only stop the cycle of violence in Bual between Muslim and Christian residents but also empowered them in rebuilding their own community through the "coordinating community structures for peace enforcement" (Sta. Maria, 2000) such as the formation of the

Zone of Peace Declaration, the establishment of People's Organization and the effective operation of Barangay Peace and Order Council (BPOC) in resolving conflicts peacefully. These "community structures" were made possible because of the capability-building trainings provided by the program that resulted to the proactive participation of all sectors of the community in peace building endeavors such as multisectoral consultations, joint community solidarity projects, interreligious dialogues and organizational activities. In John Paul Lederach's (1997b) term, these community structures propelled by trained individuals formed the "infrastructure for peace-building" in societies beset by violence and war.

Findings of this study highlighted a kind of peace building program that promote a change process among individuals and institutions aimed at building a just and humane social order where the basic human needs became the center of both peace and development agenda. This process of change involves the multidimensional aspects of addressing physical and structural violence in the community by the people themselves inspired by a vision of a peaceful community (Clay, 1998; and Abrams, 2000). A kind of transformation involving personal, interpersonal, structural and cultural aspects of community life providing a space for mature relationships characterized by respect, compassion, equality, sustainability and pluralism.

Community-based peace building programs shall include participation of all sectors affected by the conflict in the leadership and decision-making processes in the community; fair and equitable distribution of material and non-material resources in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency of the people and the community; responsiveness of the program to the needs and aspirations of the people through the utilization of local resources found in the community; critical empowerment as manifested people's capacity to understand the root causes of conflict in the community and resolving it independently using peaceful non-violent approaches; concern for the environment as manifested in the sustainable consumption and utilization practices of the people and continuous enactment of laws to preserve and conserve the natural resources; and awareness of interdependence and solidarity as manifested in the conscious efforts of understanding other people's beliefs, culture and values and also the reduction of prejudice, mislabeling and stereotypes among different social groupings in the community (Azar, 1991; UN Resolution A/53/243; and Adam, 2000;).

It appears that the result of the assessment on the effectiveness of the BID-PEACE Program in improving the relationship of Muslim and Christian residents of Bual using the *PEACE Paradigm and Cultural Tolerance* as indicators falls with in the existing framework of peace-building. It is apparent in the "Integrated Framework for Peace building" of Lederach that peace building involves active and collective participation of critically empowered individuals and institutions across sectors, religious affiliations and cultural origin (Lederach, 1997b). The results appear to support GZO-PI Model of Conflict Transformation that healing past wounds in deeply divided societies can be achieved if the root causes of the conflict are addressed especially related to justice and equitable distribution of resources with particular biased for the marginalized sectors.

Hizkias Assefa's assertions on his "Peace and Reconciliation Paradigm" about the necessity of allowing the indigenous knowledge and local resources to be use to effectively implement development programs in order to assure sustainability of peace efforts and appropriateness of technology (Assefa, 1993). On the other hand, Fe Baronia's hypothesis that political peace-making behaviors of the people in a given social conflicting setting are products of common vision of peace, consensus on vital issues and mutually enriching social relationships (Baronia, 1998).

Therefore, the promotion of participation, equity, appropriate technology, critical empowerment, ecological consciousness and cultural tolerance towards the improvement of people's relationship of culturally distinct communities which experienced division caused by protracted social conflict are seen as an effective strategy in community-based peace-building programs.

Recommendations

The researcher having considered the major findings of this study recommends the following strategic policy direction in the next phase of program expansion in order to sustain the success of the five-year BID-Peace implementation and maximized use of limited resources. The provision of capability-building training on Disaster Management for the people of Bual and other expansion areas in order to equip people with appropriate knowledge, skill and attitudes in addressing emerging natural and man-made calamities in the context of Mindanao experience (Conference Report, 2001). This is needed specifically so as not to jeopardized scheduled programs and activities but also become part of learning exercise of empowerment, community solidarity and growth.

The expansion of peace-building activities in Bual in the adjacent barangay and the "Lumad" sector in order to solicit support for the Zone of Peace Declaration to further develop critical mass of individuals or peace constituency committed towards peace promotion. The expansion will also strengthen the peace initiatives in Bual geographically but also across sectors, religious and cultural origin.

The inclusion of programs addressing issues on land ownership together with the provision of additional family-based alternative resources generating activities in the community as one of the major program intervention towards the attainment of equity and economic-self sufficiency of the people. This includes the capacity of the people to undertake ancestral domain claims and other issues related to agrarian reform with government agencies and other NGOs (Executive Order 125, 1995; and Lederach, 1995).

Institutionalization of ecological consciousness in program implementation by involving not only women sector but also the project staff, community leaders, the youth, the religious sectors and the farmers. Inclusion of provision on environmental protection and conservation in the Zone of Peace Declaration and capability building seminars on community-based proper waste disposal, recycling and sustainable development principles are needed in order to address the problem of increasing environmental degradation, health and sanitation in the community.

12

Leveling-off of community organizing framework vis-à-vis peace-building framework for the project staff and community leaders in order to evolve a common framework appropriate to the community experience, needs and aspirations. This could be done through continuous capability building trainings for project staff, SAMAKANA officers, other influential community leaders, including the youth sector to update their knowledge and skills in peace-building, conflict resolution and program management. Exploration of other areas of collaboration with Protestant groups in the community since their doctrines forbids them in participating with interreligious dialogues.

Strengthening of Education Committee of SAMAKANA in terms of its tri-people composition and capacity of the committee members to conduct seminars and trainings other the project staff. This is to maximize learning gained in the seminars and training provided by KFI and other NGOs for the community leaders of Bual and at the same time promote the capacities of the people of Bual with other local, national and international Peace related organizations.

Establishment of strong linkages and networking of SAMAKANA with other established peace zones in the country in order to encourage sharing of technologies and mutual enrichments among grassroots communities involved in peace-building. Developed capabilities of SAMAKANA officers in dealing with national and local government agencies, international NGOs, private institutions and donor agencies to promote the unique peace-building initiatives evolved in Bual and avail of resources and opportunities provided by these organizations.

The study is an attempt to evaluate an existing community-based peace-building program with the aimed to draw out insights on what kind of program suitable for culturally diverse communities that experiences protracted social conflict. The researcher recommends exploring other indicators not included in this study in order to draw out more insights on the dynamics of peace building at the grassroots level. Example of these indicators include, right-based indicator such as civil, political and socio-economic rights, gender-based indicators etc.

Although cultural tolerance was added as one of the indicators of this evaluation, the researcher feels it is inadequate to measure qualitatively the depth of cultural-based experiences that the community underwent during the implementations of the BID-Peace Program. It is suggested to expand more the other culturally rooted indicators other than tolerance which includes spirituality, ideology etc (Toh & Virginia, 1987; and Galtung, 1995). The researcher also recommends to explore other areas of study pertaining to the peace zone formation, implementation and evaluation which includes, indigenous conflict resolution practices, development and validation of standardized assessment tool for community-based peace-building program, comparative assessment of established peace zone in terms of its engagement with state and non-state actors.

References

Abaya, Ma. Concepcion. (2001). *Bukas Palad of the Focolare Movement: In the Light of the Peace Paradigm.* Cotabato City: Notre Dame University.

Abrams, Irwins. (2000). *The Words of Peace: The Nobel Peace Prize Laureates of the Twentieth Century - Selection from their Acceptance Speeches.* New York: Harvard Press.

Abubakar, Carmen. (1999). "SPCPD and Economic Development in SZOPAD: High Expectations, Low Output" in *Kasarinlan: Philippine Quarterly of Third World Studies,* Vol.14, No. 3 & 4. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.

Acosta, Ely. (2000). *The Tulunan Peace Zones: A Critical Analysis of People's Initiatives to Peace and Development.* Cotabato City: Notre Dame University.

Adams, David. (2000). "From the International Year to Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence" in *International Journal of Curriculum and Instructions.* Vol.2, No.1 [December] Issue.

Alim, Guiamel. (1999). *Bual Integrated Development and Peace Program: Project Proposal.* Cotabato City: Kadtuntaya Foundation Inc.

Assefa, Hizkias. (1993). "Peace and Reconciliation as a Paradigm" in *Nairobi Peace Initiative Monograph Series, No.1.* Kenya: Nairobi Peace Initiative.

Azar, Edward. (1991). *The Analysis and Management of Protracted Conflict: The Psychodynamics of International Relationships.* New York: Unofficial Diplomacy.

Baronia, Fe. (1998). *Development and Validation of Peace Consciousness Scale for High School Teachers of Bondoc Peninsula.* Manila City: Philippine Normal University.

BID-Peace Program Terminal Report. (2001). *Kadtuntaya Foundation Inc.* Cotabato City: December.

Castaneda, Jazer. (2000). *Solidarity of the Tripeople in the Province of Sultan Kudarat: A Case Study.* Cotabato City: Notre Dame University.

Castro, Loreta. (2001). "Towards a Holistic Understanding of the Concept of Peace". *Paper* presented in the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Conference of Peace Educators, Cebu City, April.

Catholic Relief Services Brochures. (2000).

CTR [Catholic Relief Services]. (2001). *Field Monitoring Report of Emmanuel Amancio.* Davao City: September.

Clay, Kritine. (1998). *Partnership: Lessons from the Peace and Development Learning Community.* New York: Institute for Multi Track Diplomacy.

Conference Report. (2001). *Mindanao Congress of Peace Educators.* Cotabato City: Notre Dame University.

Coronel-Ferrer, Miriam. (1994). "Peace-Building and Mediation in the Philippines" in *Peace, Conflict Resolution and Human Rights: Occasional Paper Series 94-3.* Quezon City: Center for Integrative and Development Studies.

Coronel-Ferrer, Miriam. (1997). *Peace Matters: A Philippine Peace Compendium.* Quezon City:UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies.

"Culture of Peace News Network". Available at http://www.cpnn.org/ [accessed: 5/7/2008].

Dela Torre, Lourdes. (2001). *An Evaluation of the Community-based Forest Management Project using the P.E.A.C.E. Paradigm.* Cotabato City: Notre Dame University.

Deles, Teresita Quintos. (2000). "Civil Society as Peacemaker" in *The Media and Peace Reporting: Perspectives on Media and Peace Reportage.* Pasig City: OPAPP & Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR).

Eliseo, Bernie. (1999). "Barangay Bual: In Transition Towards Peace and Reconcilation". *Unpublished Community Profile*. Cotabato City: KFI.

Executive Order 125. (1995). *Defining the Approach and Administrative Structure for Government's Comprehensive Peace Efforts.* Manila: OPAPP.

Francisco, Oscar. (1996). *Non-Government Organizations: New Issues and Challenges*. Intersect: February Issue.

14

Galtung, Johan. (1995). "Essays on Peace" in M. Salla [ed.]. *Violence, Peace and Peace Research.* Queens Land University Press.

Jantzi, Vernon. (1991). "Helping Developing Nations: Socio-Political Paradigms of Development" in Charles P. De Santo [ed.]. *Christian Perspectives on Social Problems.* London: New Hampire Press.

Kadtuntaya Foundation Brochures. (2000).

Kadtuntaya Foundation Seminar Proceedings. (1999). *Towards Building a Culture of Peace.* Sultan Kudarat: Bual Elementary School, July 27-29.

Lederach, John Paul. (1995). *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures.* New York: Syracuse University Press.

Lederach, John Paul. (1997a). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies.* Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Press Peace.

Lederach, John Paul. (1997b). *Peace-Building in Divided Societies: Tools for Strategic and Responsive Evaluation.* Guatemala: Organization of American State's PROPAZ.

Lee, Z. & Gastardo-Conaco. (1994). "Peace Zones in the Philippines" in *Peace and Conflict Resolution and Human Rights Reseach Report,* No.2. Quezon City: UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies.

Malag, Melindi. (1999). *Health Resource Development Program as a Strategy in Promoting Peace and Development: An Institutional Case Study.* Cotabato City: Notre Dame University.

Montiel, Cristina Jayme. (1995). *Cry Out for Peace: Philippine Politics and Society.* Quezon City: Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs.

Municipal Profile of Isulan. (2001). Isulan: Sultan Kudarat.

Neufeltdt, R. *et al.* (2000). *Explicit and Implicit Peacebuilding: Catholic Relief Services in Mindanao, Philippines and Bosnia-Herzegovina.* New York: Catholic Relief Services.

N.n. (1998). "Building a Culture of Peace in Barangay Bual Terminal Report" in *Kadtuntaya Foundation.* Cotabato City: June.

Paez, Patricia Ann. (1997). "State-Civil Society Relations in Policy Making (Focus on The Legislative)" in Marlon Wui & Glenda Lopez [eds.]. *State Civil Society Relations in Policy Making.* Quezon City: UP Third World Studies Center.

Reardon, Betty. (1997). *Tolerance: The Threshold of Peace.* Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

Regehr, Ernie. (1995). "Rebuilding Peace in War-torn and War-threatened Societies: The Challenge of Peace-Building" in *The Ploughshares Monitor*, Vol.XVI, No.4 [December].

Salazar-Clemenna, Rose Marie. (2000). "Counselling for Peace" in De Guzman A. [ed.]. *Building Peace: Essays on Peace Psychology.* Manila: De La Sale University Press.

Sta. Maria, Felice. (1998). "Filipino Attitudes towards Tolerance" in *Peace and Tolerance in the History of the Philippines.* Manila: UNESCO.

Sta. Maria, Madelene. (2000). "Managing Social Conflict: The Philippine Peace Zone Experience" in *Philippine Journal of Psychology,* Vol.33, No.2.

Toh, Swe-Hin. (1996). *A Strategy to Fight Poverty: Philippines.* The World Bank Country Operation Division, Country Department 1, East Asia & Pacific Region.

Toh, Swe-Hin. (2000). "Flowing from the Roots: An Educational Journey Towards a Culture of Peace". *Paper* presented during the award ceremony of UNESCO Prize for Peace Education, France, December 11; and it was published at *the International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, Vol.2, No.1.

Toh, Swe-Hin & Floresca-Cawagas Virginia. (1987). *Peace Education: A Framework for the Philippines.* Quezon City: Phoenix Publishing House, Inc.

UN Resolution A/53/243. (1999). *Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.* New York: United Nations, Adopted on September, 53rd session.

Map of South East Asia, 15ᵗʰ - 16ᵗʰ Century

The beginning of the twenty-first century is marked by a continued presence of conflicts at almost every level of human endeavor. The Philippines is not an exception to these atrocious realities.