

# GENPEACE

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region-wide network of community-run  
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a culture of peace in  
conflict areas



Gender, Peace and Development in Southern Philippines

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**Gender, Peace and Development in Southern Philippines**



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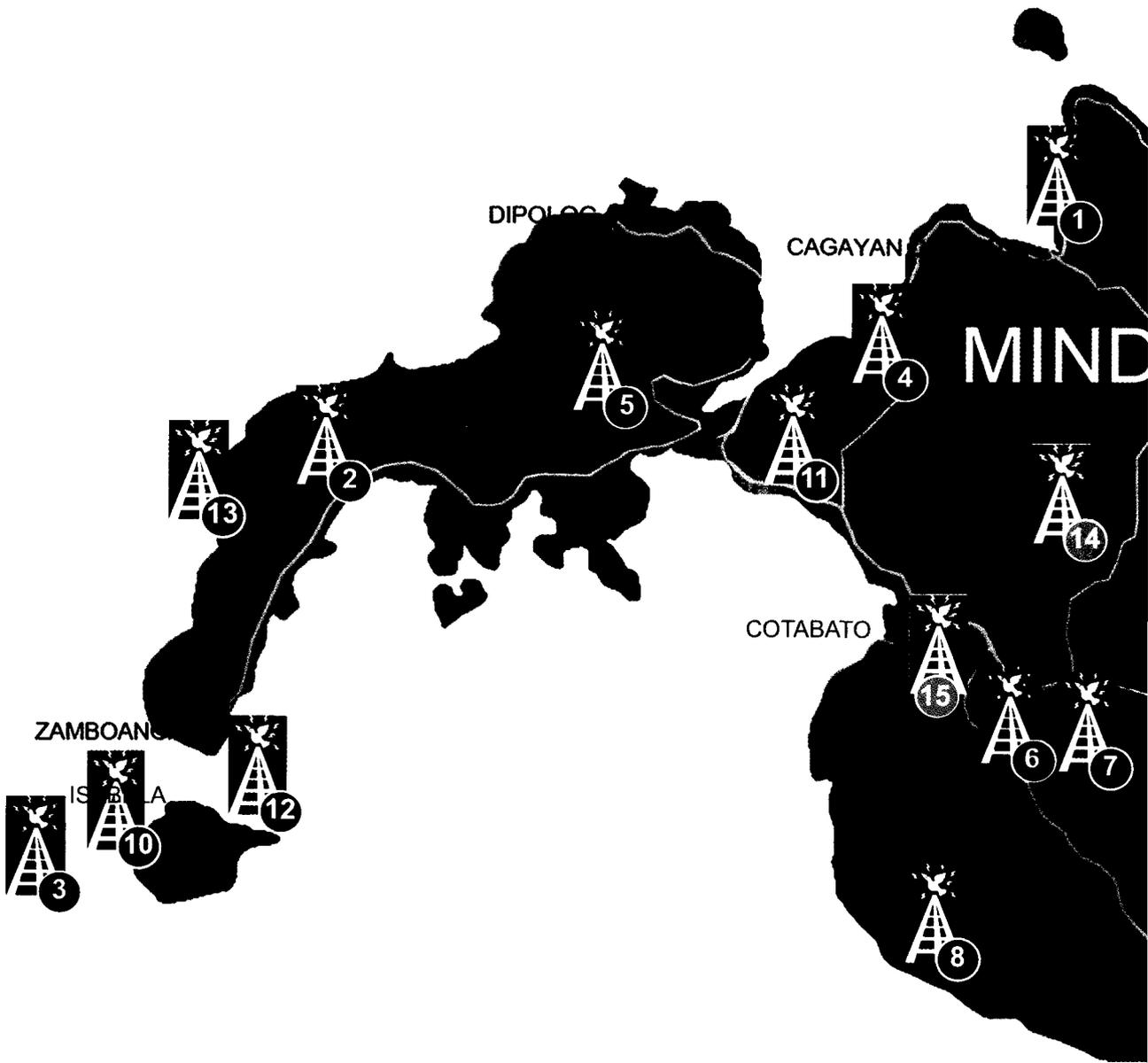
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**ON THE COVER:** Baimon S. Abdullah,  
volunteer broadcaster of DXUP-FM,  
Upi, Maguindanao, Philippines

**FOR THE PEACE WORKERS OF MINDANAO AND THEIR FAMILIES,  
WHO HAVE LONG BEEN YEARNING FOR PEACE**





## **COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS**



### **UNESCO - JAKARTA SITES**

- 1 Claveria, Misamis Oriental
- 2 Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay
- 3 Jolo, Sulu
- 4 Marawi City
- 5 Mahayag, Zamboanga del Sur
- 6 Sultan sa Barongis, Maguindanao



### **GOP-UNMDP 3 COMPONENT 7 SITES**

- 7 Buluan, Maguindanao
- 8 Lake Sebu, South Cotabato
- 9 Malita, Davao del Sur
- 10 Maluso, Basilan
- 11 Tangkal, Lanao del Norte
- 12 Simunul, Tawi-Tawi
- 13 Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte



### **CIDA - LGSP ARMM SITES**

- 14 Barira, Maguindanao
- 15 Upi, Maguindanao

## ABOUT THE BOOK

**This is the story** of how a literacy program for girls and women in war-torn Southern Philippines has grown into a unique, region-wide network of community-run radio stations that is helping build a culture of peace in conflict areas.

Mainly, it is the story of many people of divergent ethnic, political and religious backgrounds, whose courage and perseverance in building the foundations of peace—one day at a time, one community at a time—have led to an inspiring convergence of development efforts and real new hope for lasting peace.

The particular instrument for this convergence is a network of community FM radio stations, a component of a capability building literacy program in poor and conflict-affected areas of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao in Southern Philippines, called GenPeace.

GenPeace stands for the Gender, Peace and Development Project implemented by the Mindanao-based Non-Government Organization, Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities, Inc. - Women in Enterprise Development (NDFCAI-WED) with the technical assistance of Philippine Broadcasting Service (PBS) and financial support of UNESCO-Jakarta. It has been incorporated into the Government of the Philippines United Nations Multi-Donor Program (GOP-UNMDP-Phase III), and is also assisted by the Canadian International Development Agency-Local Government Support Programme (CIDA-LGSP).

In less than a decade, GenPeace has grown from a simple literacy and education outreach program to a major component in the overall capability building effort in the region.

And it is still expanding. Communities have accepted it as their own, and are transforming it into a potent tool for building community inter-cultural dialogue and collaboration, and for promoting a culture of peace.

These stories were culled from volunteer broadcasters, technicians, CMEC officials, listeners, local government officials, rebel leaders and local and international development workers working in the 15 areas in Mindanao where GenPeace community radio stations have been installed. They chronicle the experiences and challenges of launching the airwaves for peace.

The community-run stations broadcast useful and credible information, using the people's own languages or dialects, on community and local government affairs. Basic services like literacy education, reproductive health, gender issues, livelihood support, peace initiatives and other significant topics suited to their particular communities are also presented and discussed. Various sectors in the community are also given time and opportunity to express their views, allowing for a broad discussion that brings the community into the decision-making process.

Through their stories, we also begin to understand the force and spirit that are driving the project's success - the awesome volunteerism of the youth, the strong support of local government units, and most of all, the embrace and enthusiastic participation of communities long hungry for peace.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACCU</b>	– Asia-Pacific Cultural Center for UNESCO
<b>ACCESS</b>	– Accreditation and Equivalency Support Program for Out-of-School Children and Youth
<b>ADB</b>	– Asian Development Bank
<b>ALS</b>	– Alternative Learning System
<b>ARMM</b>	– Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
<b>BJSS</b>	– Barangay Justice Service System
<b>CAII</b>	– Creative Associates International, Inc.
<b>CIDA-LGSP</b>	– Canadian International Development Agency - Local Government Support Program
<b>CMC</b>	– Community Media Council
<b>CMEC</b>	– Community Media and Education Council
<b>CRS</b>	– Community Radio Station
<b>DepEd</b>	– Department of Education
<b>DSWD</b>	– Department of Social Welfare and Development
<b>EQALLS</b>	– Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills
<b>GenPeace</b>	– Gender, Peace, and Development
<b>GOP-UN MDP3</b>	– Government of the Philippines-United Nations Multi-Donor Program Phase 3

- JFPR** – Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction
- JICA** – Japan International Cooperation Agency
- LGU** – Local Government Unit
- LEAD** – Lifelong Education for Accreditation and Development
- NDFCAI-WED** – Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities, Inc.  
- *Women in Enterprise Development*
- MILF** – Moro Islamic Liberation Front
- MNLF** – Moro National Liberation Front
- PBS** – Philippine Broadcasting Services
- PDC** – Peace and Development Community
- PEACE-Mindanao** – Progressive Educational Support and  
Accelerated Community - based Entrepreneurship in Mindanao
- REACH** – Responsive Education and Accreditation Program  
for Children and Youth
- SZOPAD** – Special Zones of Peace and Development
- TESDA** – Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
- UNESCO** – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- USAID** – United States Agency for International Development



**In southern Mindanao island, many female volunteer broadcasters like Baimon Abdullah are spreading the word of peace and multi-cultural understanding**

## INTRODUCTION

# The volunteer broadcasters of GenPeace Radio

**DJ Cyber** begins his program on dxLB-FM with a jazzy, upbeat station jingle. It is an adaptation of old Filipino-Muslim folk song whose gongs and rhythm have been stepped up.

With his snappy cropped hair and baggy denims, he could be any funky youngster in a radio booth anywhere in the world. So with his co-anchors, chatty DJ Tecla and Lady Miyake, cute and fashionable with a chopstick stuck in her french-twisted hair.

But dxLB-FM is not your usual small town radio station. And Lake Buluan, which is what the “LB” in their station name stands for, is not quite your usual town.

Deep in the interior of Southern Philippines’ Mindanao Island, the station’s concrete blue and white two-room structure stands out in a dusty provincial highway dotted by numerous military check points—

telltale signs of the Muslim separatist rebellion that ravaged the area for over three decades. Here DJ Cyber and the girls play their music in between the day’s news, farming tips reproductive health advice, educational commentaries, local government announcements, and Koranic readings. Fans and listeners, including those from hinterland rebel-held areas, send them hundreds of mobile text messages a day, egging them to read personal greetings or play a favorite pop hit.

They are the hottest and most awaited voices over DXLB-FM, a two-year-old, community radio station set up with international donor support as part of a peace building process.

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The three Filipino-Muslims or Moro DJ's of Buluan are too young to remember the sounds of mortar fire that engulfed the town during a ferocious 17-hour encounter between Moro separatist rebels and government troops in 1986. Perky Jean Picao (a.k.a. DJ Tecla), 24, an instructor at a nearby community college, heard that one of her grandfather's relatives was a famous military general. Abdullatip Nalg (a.k.a. DJ Cyber), 25, an English teacher, has an uncle with an ear cut off, the signature mutilation mark of anti-Muslim terror gangs that once roamed the central Mindanao plains. Melodie Alimao (a.k.a. Lady Miyake), 21, has no particular memories of her family's political background. She wants to finish college.

The young DJs are volunteers. They attack their jobs with zeal, despite the station's limited capabilities. 'Cyber' they are not (or not yet). Lacking internet access, a motorcycle courier from a national public radio station in Koronadal City, one-hour away, starts off before dawn everyday to deliver hard copy printouts of the day's news in time for the 7 o'clock sign-on.

As for his curious radio moniker, DJ Cyber says he heard the word on a TV show and liked the sound of it. He knows what the word connotes, and what it could mean for the future of his town. And he can feel it coming.

## THE SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM

Meanwhile, a three-hour ride west of Buluan, in the upland town of Upi, rhythmic strings and gongs of tribal music are played on dxUP-FM, another community radio station. In the verdant rolling terrain overlooking the Moro Gulf, ethnic Teduray youngsters take turns with Muslim and Christian broadcasters, reporting news and views. Like their counterparts in Buluan, the DJs intersperse the day's market prices and livelihood tips with jokes and pop tunes.

Among those on-board for the morning news and community affairs program at Upi's dxUP-FM is 23-year-old Baimon Abdullah, a dedicated Muslim volunteer who is also a full-time Instructional Manager at the town's out-of-school youth literacy program. She works two slots on the daily radio board: a news program and one devoted to education and values. When classes are out, she is more than willing to fill up five slots on board, or serve as a roving reporter. Her friend Nancy Lawan of the Teduray community reports for the early morning livelihood program, then is back in the evening for a program on tribal traditions—the only one in the country aired in her native Teduray dialect.

Despite the station's small and struggling status, Baimon, who has a degree in mathematics and is a graduate



student at the state polytechnic college in nearby Cotabato City, loves her job. She is excited that the station's management council allowed her a new Sunday show for "love notes and greetings," a real hit among youngsters of whatever ethnic or religious background.

For the radio work she gets only a token allowance of P10/hour (equivalent to less than US .18 cents). She is kept going, she says, by hundreds of mobile phone text messages and letters from town people sending news reports, comments, and most of all appreciative thanks for their efforts.

Upi and Buluan's volunteer youngsters of different political and ethnic background are forming the backbone of what is now a 15-station community-based peace radio network in the Philippines' second largest Island of Mindanao.

The spirit of volunteerism and the enthusiasm of the young broadcasters are in fact the driving force—and sustaining grace—of this unique literacy and radio outreach program called GenPeace.

## BUILDING INTER-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

GenPeace stands for the Gender, Peace and Development Project launched in Mindanao in 1999 by the Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities, Inc. - Women in Enterprise Development (NDFCAI-WED), which aims to build community capacities for development through literacy programs and skills training. In the context of Mindanao, it has become a potent tool for rebuilding community confidence, linking marginalized people with their local government, and promoting a culture of peace.

The unique concept has become so popular that there is increasing demand from teenagers to increase the time slots allotted to greetings and love notes. This is meeting resistance from other community leaders who support and manage the stations. But that minor conflict in itself is an encouraging indication of how far Mindanao has come since peace negotiations began.

It would have been hard to imagine Upi's happy bunch of tri-people community broadcasters in Maguindanao province 30 years ago.

It was in Upi, in the first quarter of 1970, where it is said the shooting war in Southern Philippines began.

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A notorious cult leader, going by the alias Commander Toothpick, led Teduray tribesmen on an attack on Upi, killing six people. Clashes between rival gangs had been mounting in what was then the wild, wild South, a boom town for post-independence Christian settlers from northern and central Philippines. Mindanao is the home of a long established Muslim minority in Southeast Asia's biggest Christian nation.

The Upi encounter is considered a milestone by journalists and historians not only because of its shocking ferocity but also because, for the first time, Manila noticed that the Upi attackers were dressed in military-style uniforms and seemed well trained in high-powered weaponry. It warned of the explosion to come. The history of the southern conflict is complex and deep-seated, but before the year was over, Commander Toothpick's private militia was battling equally organized civilian Muslim armies. The battles raged through many other towns of Maguindanao and neighboring Sultan Kudarat; civilians were massacred, villages were burned, mosques bombed.

In 1972, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) emerged and launched all-out secessionist war. Their vision was a separate Bangsa Moro state. The war reopened historic wounds between Moros and the Manila government, and dragged the country

through battlefields deep in the interiors of Muslim Mindanao, as well as to negotiating tables all over the Islamic world.

## THE PEACE PROCESS

After many failed peace attempts, the big break came in 1996 when the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) signed a peace agreement with the MNLF. The peace breakthrough, forged in Jakarta, was followed by a truce with a second rebel group, the central Mindanao-based Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 2005.

The main provisions of the 1996 GRP-MNLF Final Peace Agreement are: the designation of Special Zones of Peace and Development (SZOPAD) covering 14 provinces and nine chartered cities and the creation of a Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development, a transitional body tasked to oversee development assistance and also serve as the legal representation of the interests of the MNLF. Integration of MNLF soldiers into the Armed Forces and the National Police is another provision. One city and five provinces in Mindanao are now part of an Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), a choice reflected in their residents' votes during special plebiscites.

Zones of peace have been mutually agreed upon, allowing Mindanao's social development workers to penetrate more



## THE CONFLICT IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

The history of the conflict is long and muddled. The southern islands of Mindanao and Sulu hosted once-flourishing Islamic Sultanates that resisted 300 years of European colonization. Weary Muslim warriors were finally quelled by superior guns of the United States, which took over from Spain as colonial ruler of the Philippines at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Christian settlers began moving southward after Philippine independence in 1946 hoping to mobilize Mindanao's vast agriculture and mineral resources for the new nation. But the years of estrangement and ensuing uneven development between the native population and the new Christian-dominated boom towns scattered seeds of new unrest.



In the 1970's, young Muslims, backed by emergent radical Islam in the Middle East, launched a full scale secessionist war against the Manila government. Communist insurgents also found the poor hinterlands of Mindanao fertile ground for expansion from northern and central Philippine bases. Agitated ethnic tribal communities that resisted Muslim and Christian integration attempts, were drawn into the fray.

After decades of conflict, portions of Mindanao had become a murky pot of rebels of different persuasions, warlords, smugglers, criminal gangs and fanatical tribal cults—with its expected toll in terms of social and economic dislocation.

The Manila government, then under President Ferdinand Marcos, declared martial law in 1972 to fight off the threats from both a nationwide communist insurgency and southern separatist Muslim rebels. A 1976 Tripoli Agreement for Filipino-Muslim autonomy was shaky. Over a decade of military operations, with its heavy toll on both sides, had failed to deliver a conclusive blow to the rebellion. Protests against human rights violations and corruption mounted. The nation was ever vulnerable to financial shocks. The assassination of Filipino opposition leader Benigno Aquino in 1983 set off riots in the capital. Political and military unrest culminated in the 1986 “people power revolt” that overthrew the Marcos government and swept the slain leader's widow, Corazon Aquino, to power. New leadership restored democracy and re-opened peace negotiations. But the road to peace has been difficult.

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areas. The peace agreement also paved the way for a concerted United Nations Multi-Donor Programme which is funneling over US \$35 million into priority peace and rehabilitation areas. The first two phases of this program focused on integrating former rebel soldiers into the community mainstream. A third phase, which began in 2002, hopes to build more lasting foundations for peace through coordinated assistance programs aimed at building local capacities for peace

and development. About 140 communities have been identified as models for peace building efforts.

But it would be wrong to believe that all is well. The peace process is complicated and often disjointed. An attack in 1995 on southwestern Mindanao's Ipil town, for one, was claimed as the initial salvo of yet another rebel group in Mindanao, the shadowy Abu Sayyaf group which claims links with the

## **EIGHT COMPONENTS FOR LASTING PEACE**

The Government of the Philippines and the United Nations Multi-Donor Programme for Southern Philippines (Phase 3) have identified these components as part of the strategy for "Strengthening the Foundations of Lasting Peace and Development in Southern Philippines."

- 1) *Capacity-building and empowerment through Peace and Development Councils;*
- 2) *Building partnerships and strengthening institutional support mechanisms;*
- 3) *Special emergency response and relief;*
- 4) *Improved access to basic services;*
- 5) *Community enterprise and entrepreneurship development in non-farming sectors;*
- 6) *Sustainable livelihood (agriculture, forestry and fishery) development;*
-  7) *Confidence building through advocacy and promotion of a culture of peace; and*
- 8) *Programme management and coordination.*



worldwide terrorist Al Qaeda network.

Also, the conflict has left not only a big toll of lives lost and property destroyed, but also millions more crippled by poverty, illiteracy, lack of basic services, environmental degradation, crime and community fragmentation. Despite encouraging turnaround stories, Mindanao is still one of the poorest regions in the country.

#### MINDANAO'S TOLL

Six of the 10 poorest provinces in the Philippines are in Mindanao. Poverty incidence in Muslim-dominated Sulu is estimated at 63%, compared to the national average of 28.4%. Real per capita income across all provinces in the zones of peace (SZOPAD), is about one-third of that of the National Capital Region. Separating urban areas reveals that over three-quarters (75.1%) of the rural poor in the ARMM live below the poverty line.

Lack of basic services is reflected in a life expectancy in parts of the Muslim region (55.5 years for men and 59.3 for women) that is 10 years shorter than the Philippine average. Thirteen provinces of Mindanao rank at the very bottom of the United Nation's Human Development Index. Infant and maternal mortality rates at 63 per thousand and 320 per 100,000, are 30% and

80% higher than the national average. Lack of family planning information and services has led to an average household size in ARMM's Lanao province of 6.91, compared to 4.5 in Manila.

Education is one of the biggest casualties of the war. While the Philippine boasts one of the highest literacy rates in the developing world (over 92%), only 65.5% in the ARMM can read and write. Functional literacy is even lower. Among the 40-60 year olds, over half of the population cannot read, write or count.

Of the region's estimated youth (7-24 years old) population, close to 800,000 or about 18%, are out of school. Elementary school survival rate in most ARMM provinces is only 30%, compared to the national average of 67.5%. Lack of classrooms and teachers is shown by a classroom-pupil ratio that is higher than the country standard of 1:40. Among the five ARMM provinces, Maguindanao registered the highest class overcrowding with an average of 1:110 in school year 1998-99. Secondary school enrollment is 33% lower than average.

The conflict has displaced hundreds of thousands over the years. In areas where conflict was heaviest, destroyed infrastructure and neglected public services compound the problems brought about by forced migration. According to GenPeace

provincial profile investigations, there are many areas in Muslim Mindanao where most of the population still lack access to potable water, where electricity is still non-existent, and irrigation unheard of.

Women and children suffer most. The provinces of ARMM have the highest child mortality rates in the country. About 98 of every 1,000 children under five years old died in 1998.

#### THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

The challenge for development workers is to help rebuild not only physical

infrastructure but also the people's capacity for development. This means substantially enhancing literacy education, livelihood training and institutional support.

Above all, it entails empowering the people to access basic social services, pursue economic enterprise, mobilize for good governance and rebuild confidence and trust among themselves to lay stronger foundations for sustained peace.

GenPeace radio is part of this continuing effort.



**CMEC-Buluan during a meeting discussing policies and guidelines for the operation of their community radio. (Buluan, Maguindanao)**



**A literacy class in a Badjao Community Tubig Indangan, Simunul, Tawi-Tawi.**



## Chapter I

# GENDER, PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

### **What is GenPeace?**

Basically, GenPeace is a gender-sensitive, community-based literacy program with a community radio component. In Mindanao's tri-people context, and with the help of creative and committed peace volunteers, it has become a potent tool for community information and mobilization. It is helping to build new trust and confidence among multi-cultural stakeholders, bridge the communication gap between the communities and their leaders, and promote a culture of peace.

Of the eight components for "Strengthening the Foundations of Lasting Peace and Development in Southern Philippines" identified by the United Nations Multi-Donor Programme for the Philippines, it fulfills the 7th component: Confidence building through advocacy and promotion of a culture of peace.

### TWIN COMPONENTS

The project has two components. One, a community-driven, non-formal education and literacy program. The community determines what program design is best suited to their needs. Modules include functional literacy for level 0-3 learners, and continuing education

for functionally literate out-of-school youth and adults. All classes integrate peace education and are gender and culture-sensitive.

Second is the community radio station. The project provides radio equipment, capability building training workshops and other technical needs. The local government units provide counterpart funds, the site and maintenance support. A Community Media and Education Council, composed of representatives from various sectors is organized and trained to manage the radio component. It relies mainly on a volunteer broadcast staff.

#### HOW THE PROJECT EVOLVED.

The project evolved from local community outreach projects, particularly Women in Enterprise Development (WED), a literacy and entrepreneurship program for women. WED was a community extension arm of the College of Commerce of Notre Dame University, one of the oldest and biggest

Catholic educational institutions in Mindanao. The project was later mainstreamed into the Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities, Inc., of the Archdiocese of Cotabato as NDFCAI-WED in 1992.

Myrna Lim, then dean of the college, set out in 1987 to teach basic bookkeeping and small enterprise management to poor women in Cotabato, an old city in Mindanao that had been pummeled by mortar fire during the MNLF offensive in the 1970's. But not all the market vendors joined her enterprise training programs. Eventually she realized why.

"They could not read, write or count, and therefore could not keep books," recalls Mrs. Lim, executive director of NDFCAI-WED, the implementing NGO of GenPeace. She enlisted the help of her colleagues at the University's Teachers College to add functional literacy classes to their outreach work.

### **GENPEACE OBJECTIVES**

- 1). To promote gender-sensitive, community-based peace education in selected areas in Mindanao and build capacities for communities in developing and managing peace activities in their areas.
- 2). To promote the use of community radio as tool for enhancing community mobilization, collaborative actions, and the development effective communications among the people for peace promotion and community development.



**Chief of Engineering Division of Philippine Broadcasting Service (PBS) Radyo ng Bayan, Engr. Miguelito Pangilinan explaining topics during the Basic Radio Technicians Training.**

The college volunteers were taken aback by the magnitude of the problem. Illiteracy marginalized a significant group of women from their enterprise projects. In the areas now included in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, headquartered in Cotabato City, only 56% of rural women were considered functionally literate in 1994. Among women in the 50-59 age range, literacy was only 13.2%!

Only 31 per cent of the total household population, 5 years and older, had completed elementary education. Among them males comprised 54.2 while females were a lower 45.8 %.

The literacy program encountered another problem. Some elderly Muslim radio commentators discouraged residents from attending the literacy classes of "those Christian women." But Mrs. Lim and the NDFCAI-WED volunteer troops, most of whom are also Muslims, persevered. She remembers with elation the day a Moro ustadz, a religious scholar, called up the critical radio commentator to say that his attendance at the controversial literacy classes did not in anyway diminish his Muslim fervor. In fact, he said, learning to write his name enabled him to get a passport and undertake the cherished pilgrimage to Mecca. He eventually became a 'sheik' for

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Filipino-Muslim pilgrims to the Middle East.

In time, NDFCAI-WED's literacy facilitators were accepted in many areas—Christian, Muslim and indigenous tribal communities alike. Even some former Moro rebel commanders would invite their teams to come and teach in their areas.

"Why, some of those rebel leaders were my former students at the university," she adds. The project spread out to many areas all over Mindanao.

Eventually the NDFCAI-WED outreach program became better known for its literacy and non-formal education programs.

By 1995, it was chosen the "model literacy program implementor in the Philippines," by the Asia-Pacific Cultural Center for UNESCO (ACCU) named the Literacy Resource Center of the Philippines.

The local foundation was tapped in 1996 as the non-government organization (NGO) partner for World Education and UNESCO's Programme Expanding Local NGO Involvement in Functional Literacy for Girls and Women in Muslim Mindanao.

Starting with six NGOs, the program grew into a 36-member network throughout the conflict areas of Mindanao. Alternative

education modules for out-of-school youths were developed. The NDFCAI-WED provided capability-building workshops. Membership grew to reflect the tri-people character of the island. Christian as well as Muslim and tribal teachers joined hands. This was to be known as the Mindanao NGO Literacy and Education Network.

In 1997, the NDFCAI-WED was awarded the year's "UNESCO-King Sejong International Literacy Prize," sponsored by the Paris-based international body and the Government of the Republic of Korea.

In 1998, NDFCAI-WED was the national "Rafael M. Salas Awardee for Population and Development," in both the institutional and individual category.

In time, too, retells Mrs. Lim, "we realized a radio component would be useful to reach far-flung, isolated communities."

UNESCO-Jakarta, whose representatives were in Mindanao to monitor the Mindanao NGO Literacy and Education Network, introduced NDFCAI-WED to another one of their NGO partners that had experience in community radio work in the country's northern island of Luzon, the Tambuli community radio group.

With the help of UNESCO-Jakarta, the GenPeace project was conceptualized.



## CORE STRATEGY

- **A holistic, integrated community-focused approach.** GenPeace works in coordination with local governments and other community organizations to achieve a holistic integrated approach to community challenges. GenPeace fits into the community's overall peace and development program and vision.
- **Literacy as an empowerment tool.** GenPeace believes that literacy and education is a potent tool to empower poor and marginalized people to better access basic services, improve their livelihood, and better participate in community affairs and governance.
- **Involvement of local governments.** GenPeace believes that strong local government support is necessary to establish and sustain the projects. GenPeace projects work with the local government units. Part of the concept is the provision by the local government unit of a counterpart fund for the purchase of the radio equipment, the construction and maintenance of the transmitter tower and provision of location space for the radio station. The project also seeks the assistance of the local leadership to identify and recruit qualified members for management and staff of both literacy and radio components.
- **Community participation and ownership.** A Community Media and Education Council (CMEC) composed of multi-sectoral representatives is the vehicle for community management and ownership of the GenPeace radio station. The members are elected at large in a community assembly. The CMEC is the decision and policy making body of the GenPeace project. At the same time it serves as the liaison body with the Office of the Mayor and other local government officials. The community should take on the project as their own, and not look at it as 'an outsider's project.' The objective is to empower communities to participate in decision making, and collectively plan, mobilize their own resources and organize activities in partnership with their local governments.
- **Multi-layered partnerships.** Building partnerships at different levels with various stakeholder groups strengthen the program and make it more dynamic. GenPeace can facilitate interconnections on various levels—provincial, regional, sub-regional, national and even international collaboration. The project already links community broadcasters with national public radio experts. These partnerships provide access to new learning and cooperative alliances.
- **Incorporating peace and gender issues at all levels.** Peace and gender issues are incorporated in literacy classes and radio programs. This includes tackling issues on maternal and reproductive health, domestic violence and enterprise development for women, political participation and others. The participation of many women sectoral leaders and broadcasters is encouraged.
- **Free Information dissemination enhances a community's capability to mobilize and make informed choices.** GenPeace believes that free information dissemination will allow people to make informed choices for the betterment of their communities, including the pursuance of good governance.
- **Inter-cultural dialogue and collaboration are the anchors for peace and sustainable development.** GenPeace believes that communities have the capacity to transform conflict and threats into challenges; that harmony and growth can prevail despite ethnic, religious and political diversity in a community that respects human rights above all aspects.

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## **MULTI-LEVEL PARTNERS FOR PEACE**

### **NDFCAI-WED**

Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities, Inc.-Women in Enterprise Development (NDFCAI-WED) is the lead agency in the implementation of GenPeace projects in Mindanao.

Established in 1984 as the community extension arm of the College of Commerce of Notre Dame University in Cotabato City, NDFCAI-WED has evolved into one of the biggest Mindanao-based literacy, continuing education, training and enterprise development networks. It has primarily focused its institutional resources and advocacy work on UNESCO's Education for All (EFA) in line with the United Nations' Literacy Decade. It was chosen as the Philippine Literacy Resource Center of the Asia Pacific Cultural Center for UNESCO (ACCU).

NDFCAI-WED is a recipient of the prestigious United Nations Literacy Award, the "1997 UNESCO-King Sejong International Literacy Prize", sponsored by the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris and the Government of the Republic of Korea.

### **UNESCO-JAKARTA**

UNESCO-Jakarta, the subregional cluster of the United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization is the initiating partner of the GenPeace project in Mindanao. The cluster includes member states Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Timor Leste.

UNESCO was founded on November 16, 1945. Its stated mission is to promote Education, Social and Natural Science, Culture and Communication as means "to build peace in the minds of men." Today, UNESCO functions as a laboratory of ideas and a standard-setter to forge universal agreements on emerging ethical issues. The Organization also serves as a clearinghouse -for the dissemination and sharing of information and knowledge, while helping Member States to build their human and institutional capacities in diverse fields.

In 1998-99, UNESCO-Jakarta developed and funded three pilot projects of GenPeace with NDFCAI-WED as lead implementor, and Neighbours Population and Development Services, Inc. (NPDSI) and Sarang Bangun Foundation, Inc. (SBFI) as partner NGOs. These pilot sites were in the towns of Sultan sa Barongis, Jolo and Ipil, all poor, conflict-affected areas in Mindanao. The UNESCO-DANIDA Tambuli Community Radio Project group assisted in the initial installation of the GenPeace radio stations. UNESCO-Jakarta has funded



three more project sites in the towns of Claveria, Mahayag and the city of Marawi.

UNESCO-Jakarta was also instrumental in mainstreaming the project as a component of the Government of the Philippines-United Nations Multi-Donor Programme.

UNESCO is working to create the conditions for genuine dialogue based upon respect for shared values and the dignity of each civilization and culture. It is actively pursuing the Millennium Development Goals which aim to: halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty in developing countries by 2015; achieve universal primary education in all countries by 2015; eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005; and help countries implement a national strategy for sustainable development by 2005 to reverse current trends in the loss of environmental resources by 2015.

#### GOP-UN MULTI-DONOR PROGRAMME

The Government of the Philippines-United Nations Multi-Donor Programme is a concerted international aid initiative in support of the peace process in Southern Philippines. It started out with the aim of assisting in the realization of the Peace Agreement of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National

Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1996.

The first two phases of the program involved improving living conditions and opportunities for income generation of former MNLF members to enable them to participate more fully in the mainstream. Phase 3 builds on the trust and confidence established between and amongst former combatants, their communities and institutions of government and civil society. It aims to strengthen community-based management of productive capacities in communities that have demonstrated commitment to peace-building. At least 140 of these communities (Peace and Development Communities or PDCs) will be designated as models.

The program thrust is “Strengthening the Foundations of Lasting Peace and Development in Southern Philippines.” This will be done through institution building, peace advocacy, and developing the community’s capacity for self-governance thereby empowering communities to access basic social services, sustain economic enterprise, and implement livelihood projects (both agriculture-based and off-farm). All these are to be done while swiftly delivering relief and rehabilitation projects to areas where sporadic violent conflict erupts.

MDP3 includes GenPeace as a fulfillment of one of the eight identified components of peace: “Confidence building

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through advocacy and promotion of a culture of peace.” This program includes seven GenPeace projects in the towns of Buluan, Lake Sebu, Malita, Maluso, Tangkal, Simunul and Siocon. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) initially managed the program. It was later transferred to the Mindanao Economic Development Council.

#### CIDA-LGSP

The Local Government Support Program (LGSP) is a capacity development program funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) geared towards promoting efficient, responsible, transparent and accountable governance in targeted regions in Western Visayas and Mindanao.

CIDA-LGSP, in cooperation with the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) has integrated two GenPeace projects into their local government program in the towns of Upi and Barira, both in Maguindanao Province in central Mindanao.

CIDA supports the Philippine government's policies on devolution of governance. The Philippines-Canada LGSP started on October 11, 1991 with the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the governments of the Philippines and Canada.

In cooperation with local resource partners, LGSP has implemented initiatives to enhance capacities of local government units and civil society organizations in the fields of local government management, service delivery, resource generation and mobilization, and participatory governance.

#### PHILIPPINE BROADCASTING SERVICES

The Philippine Broadcasting Services (PBS) is the technical assistance partner of GenPeace's community radio component.

A Memorandum of Agreement specifies the national public radio's commitment to provide technical assistance in the installation, operation and maintenance of the community radio stations; to assist in securing the license to operate and the frequencies from the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), and to pursue and sustain training programs to ensure participatory communication management and broadcasting with voluntarism as its doctrine.

PBS is the official radio broadcast arm of the Philippine Government. It is directly under the President's Office of Press Secretary. Its main function is to provide information and radio communication support for various development programs and



**Young broadcasters-volunteers of Mahayag Municipality, participated in Broadcasters Training.**

activities of the government.

It has 32 nationwide radio stations, with an average of 17 operating hours from 5 am to 10 pm daily, including Sundays and holidays. The main bulk of PBS-BBS transmissions are news and public affairs programs.

Today, all the 15 GenPeace radio stations are officially affiliated with PBS-Radyo ng Bayan.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS

Local government units, led by the town mayors, are the GenPeace implementing partners in their respective areas.

The local government provides a counterpart fund for the project and assists in the recruitment and organization of project personnel.

The town officials also see to it that the project objectives and guidelines are pursued.

Local government units may expand the GenPeace project on their own.

#### COMMUNITY MEDIA AND EDUCATION COUNCILS

Leaders of various non-government sectoral organizations, organized as the Community Media and Education Council (CMEC), are partners in the management of GenPeace projects in their respective sites.

The CMEC formulates the policy guidelines for the Community radio station and the literacy program. They serve as the liaison between the GenPeace project and the local government unit.



**Literacy students are young and old and come from Christian, Muslim and Indigenous tribal communities.**





**Pampay Usman, a zealous literacy learner, was the guest speaker at the formal launching of the UN Literacy Decade in New York in 2003. In Sultan Kudarat municipality in Maguindanao, many other women and out-of-school children and youths (OSCY) now attend GenPeace community-based learning classes.**

## CHAPTER II

# THE LITERACY COMPONENT: LESSONS FROM BABO PAMPAY

**Pampay Usman** never dreamed she would, at age 60, travel to New York and speak before an international gathering of statesmen.

Pampay lives in a poor coastal village in Southern Philippines. Until 1995, she could neither read nor write. Like many Moro women in strife-torn Sultan Kudarat town in Maguindanao, ARMM, she never went to school.

It seemed nothing short of a miracle therefore that in February 2003, she stood next to UN agency officials and dignitaries as distinguished diplomats and international agency directors stood up to give her a standing ovation.

She was invited to speak at the formal launching of the UN Literacy Decade in New York. Pampay was one of the outstanding graduates of an adult literacy course conducted under the GenPeace project. In project sites, NDFCAI-WED, the lead agency of the GenPeace project, trains community-based facilitators to handle the non-formal literacy classes.

Pampay delivered her speech in English and later in her mother tongue. She told them what life was like when she was illiterate:

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*Before, I really didn't know how to write my name; I could not read or even count money.*

*I used to stay at home taking care of my two children and managing a small sari-sari store. I could not write the names of my neighbors to whom I gave credit from my store. I just tried to remember their faces and the goods they had bought from me on credit.*

*I could not manage to go to the market alone, because I often got lost. I also could not read the price of grocery items.*

*And I could not attend school meetings of my children because I was ashamed that I didn't know how to write my name. I was afraid that people would know I was illiterate. Before, my life was so sad.*

*Until one day, I got interested in joining the adult literacy class in our neighborhood. In one month, I learned how to write my name, my home address, and I was able to read public signs. I was also able to read the prices of commodities.*

*Today, I am very happy because I was able to vote during the elections without being assisted by anyone. I can now choose, and vote for, the right candidate. I am now a leader in our neighborhood. All of this happened because of the literacy class.*

*Graduating from the neighborhood literacy class, I continued my schooling because I realized how important education is in my life.*

*I can testify that many beautiful things happened in my life since I joined the adult literacy class.*

*First of all, I can no longer be tricked by those people who avail of credit in my sari-sari store. As a result, my small store is now bigger and earns a profit.*

*I can now go to the market on my own. I also help my neighbors and collect donations for those who get sick or die.*

*All of this happened because of the literacy class, in which I gained trust and confidence in myself.*

*And the greatest evidence of what it has done for me is that, I am here in front of you*



*standing and delivering a speech.*

*First, I thank almighty ALLAH because He has given me a chance to join the literacy class.*

*Second, I thank my mentor Maam Mariam Ali who taught me to become a literate woman.*

*And above all, I thank the Women in Enterprise Development project that gave the project to our neighborhood.*

*The project has served thousands and thousands of women like me in Mindanao.*

*I am thankful to those people who supported the project.*

*It is because of your great support that I am here in front of you - empowered like many others in the Philippines.*

*Thank you very much to all of you.*

Pampay is back in the village of Katuli in Sultan Kudarat. The villagers call her *Babo Pampay*, which means “aunt” in the Maguindanao dialect. It is used as a form of respect.

With a loan from the Foundation, she improved her little store. She easily paid off her loan. During her free time, she helps organize women in her locality and encourages them to enroll in adult literacy classes.

“Never say you are too old for anything,” Pampay says.

“I am very proud of what I am now,” Babo Pambay says in radio interviews.

From model student, she has become

one of the best teachers for GenPeace literacy classes. Her story travels far and wide and is told over and over again by community-based adult literacy facilitators.

Today, thousands enroll in non-formal community literacy classes for children, adults and out-of-school youth. A literacy program is the first basic component of the GenPeace project.

Without this component, many poor villagers will not be able to benefit from the burst of information and enterprise development tips that are aired regularly over GenPeace community radio, the second component of the project.

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## THE SUFFRAGETTES OF LAKE SEBU

Filipino women were among the first in the world to win the right to vote in 1937.

But almost 70 years after that landmark suffrage law, in the mountain town of Lake Sebu in Southern Philippines, many marginalized and illiterate women of the T'boli tribe were not even aware of it. Literacy facilitators Anda Seth and Ninita Maguan were shocked.

"Many T'boli women did not know they already had rights to choose their leaders through elections... that this is part of the democratic process," discovered Anda, 39, and Ninita, 34, who embarked on a get-out-and-vote campaign in 2004.

"They are afraid to attend village meetings and mingle with groups because they are ashamed that people will find out that they can neither read nor write," adds Anda.

The T'bolis, one of 18 major ethno-linguistic groups in Mindanao, claim Lake Sebu in the province of South Cotabato as their ancestral home and comprise about 75% of the town's 53,000 people. Their quaint culture and highly developed jewelry and weaving make this town of scenic upland lakes a tourist destination. However, both Moro rebels and communist insurgents set up bases in their thick virgin forests, a major Philippine watershed. The United Nations Multi-Donor Program identified Lake Sebu as a peace and development priority area.

During the project's first year, 2002-2003, at least 1,158 learners from at least six of the remotest and most depressed villages in Lake Sebu were served by the GenPeace project through Peace Literacy Education. This included 688 T'bolis, mostly adult women, who completed the Basic Adult Education and 470 more who finished the 3-month Advanced Adult Education.

Anda and Ninita also host the *Literacy Class on Air* program over dxUS-FM, a 100-watt GenPeace transmitter station in the southernmost mountain town of Lake Sebu that can reach 14 of the town's 19 villages.

From 2 to 4 o'clock in the afternoon, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, they discuss homemaking and livelihood tips based on the modules provided for by the NDFCAI-WED, the lead agency for GenPeace in Mindanao. An extension of their adult literacy classes, the Lake Sebu broadcasts dish out instructions for food processing, dressmaking, and other practical skills.

In both the face-to-face literacy classes and radio programs, Anda and Ninita talk about T'boli women's rights and the preservation and promotion of indigenous culture. They also discuss the right to suffrage.



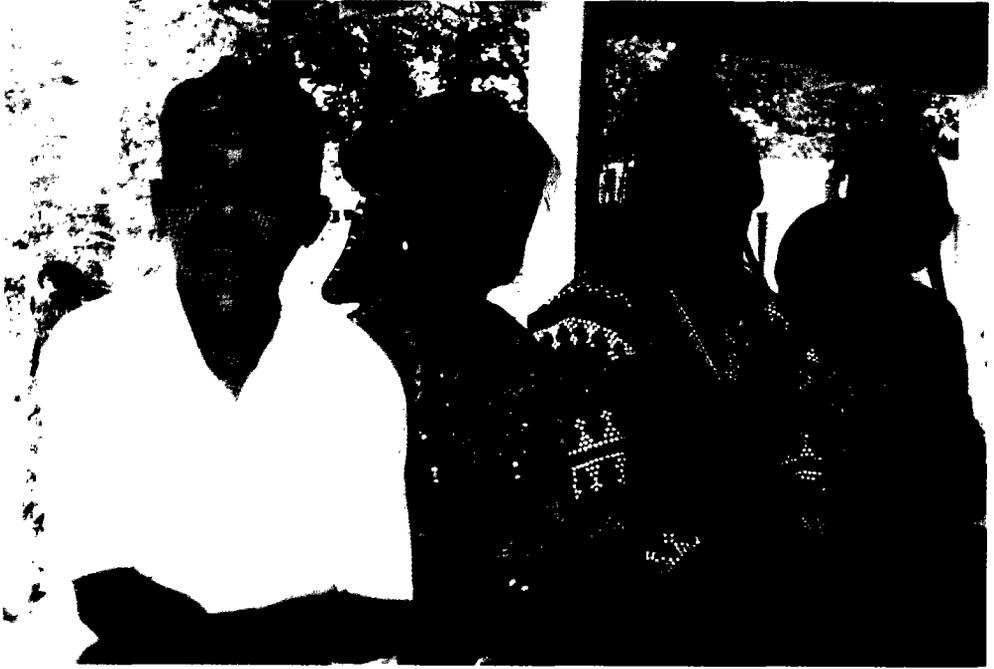
**A T'boli learner in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, in a literacy and skills enhancement program.**

"I am no longer afraid," says Linda Tanukan, 40, one of thousands of learners of the UNESCO-backed GenPeace Literacy program. She completed her three-month course two years back and now runs a small store.

It is a sign of success that many of the GenPeace learners came to polling booths in 2002 and elected their literacy class facilitator Laling Muyco as village councilor of T'Konel.

Anda and Ninita are also happy to report that during the 2004 national and local elections, most of the learners were able to cast their vote without being assisted by relatives or polling center assistants.

If they were alive today, the suffragettes of the Society for the Advancement of Women, who marched the streets of Manila for 30 years to get the vote, would be pleased to welcome them into the League.



**Culminating activities of literacy training programs often turn into tribal festivities**





**A literacy class being conducted in a remote barangay. Shown is the community-based facilitator as she conducts classes.**



**Monitoring teams visit their learning centers no matter what the road condition. The project is rooted on the principle "Reaching the unreachable."**

## CHAPTER III

# LAUNCHING AIRWAVES FOR PEACE

**Starting with small radio** transmitters in three conflict-affected towns in Southern Philippines, GenPeace airwaves have expanded to 15 radio stations throughout Mindanao.

Each GenPeace station has developed a unique personality of its own, reflecting the cultural characteristics and specific problems of its area.

In Ipil town, on southwestern Mindanao's Zamboanga peninsula, dxLR-FM is called **Lumad Radio**, reflecting the station's focus on the Subanon tribes in forested, upland villages. Lumad is a generic term for various ethnic tribal people, most of whom practice ancient polytheistic religions. In Marawi City in central Mindanao, dxSR-FM is known as **Salam Radio**, reflecting the

predominantly Islamic culture in the area. Barira in Maguindanao province is another Muslim town but it has called its dxIB-FM station **Iranun Barira** to stress the area's ethnic origins as well.

Some of the communities have named their station after a historical figure or landmark. On the island-town of Simunul, part of Tawi-Tawi province in southwesternmost Sulu archipelago, dxSM-FM stands for **Sheik Makdum**, the revered father of Islam in the Philippines. The oldest mosque in the country, said to have been

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built by the 14<sup>th</sup> century Arab sheik, and his stone grave on this picturesque tiny island, are popular pilgrimage sites for present-day Filipino Muslims.

Buluan, one of the oldest towns in Maguindanao province in central Mindanao, named dxLB-FM after historic **Lake Buluan**, once a rich and busy port during the 17<sup>th</sup> century days when the famed Sultan Kudarat ruled over the entire Cotabato and Pulangi River Valley. During his 50-year reign, the sultan was never conquered by Spanish colonialists and he extended the Cotabato empire east to the coast of Davao and across the southern seas to parts of Sulawesi.

A number of communities stress their identity through the use of their vernacular terms. **Udel Sebu** for dxUS-FM in the town of Lake Sebu in South Cotabato province, means “Voice of Sebu” in the ethnic T’boli dialect. **Tingog Malita** or dxTM-FM in southeastern Davao del Sur province, means “voice” or “sound” of Malita in the predominant Visayan dialect.

Community pride is reflected in **Radio Siocon** or dxRS-FM in Siocon town in southeastern Zamboanga del Norte province; **Tangkal Radio** or dxTR-FM in Tangkal town, Lanao del Norte province; Maluso Radio in Basilan province, and **Sultan sa Barongis** or dxSB-FM in Sultan sa Barongis town in Maguindanao province.

They also embody community aspirations. **Peace Radio** is the name of dxPR-FM in Jolo, the old capital of the Sulu Sultanate, which has been bombed and razed to the ground many times over the past centuries. It was where Tausug Muslims took their last valiant stand against American forces at the turn of the century, fighting to the last man, woman and child at fort Bud Bagsak; and where, in 1970, young Muslim youth launched the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) rebellion.

Then there is **Uswag Mahayag** or dxUM-FM, in southeastern Zamboanga del Sur province, whose launch in March 2006 makes it the newest member of the GenPeace network. *Uswag* means “to move forward.”

#### CHOOSING READY COMMUNITIES

With the help of UNESCO-Jakarta, radio stations were launched in three pilot sites in 1999: Sultan sa Barongis, Jolo and Ipil. The transmitters were 10-30 watts, which means a broadcast radius of only 10-30 kilometers. Initially, too, GenPeace worked with local foundation counterparts.

Sultan sa Barongis, for example, was an obvious choice. Once considered “no man’s land” because of constant flooding and rebel activity, the municipality has one of the lowest literacy rates in Mindanao.



Part-marshland, part upland, 95% of its predominantly Muslim population lives in sub-standard housing. Only 2% has access to potable water. Child mortality is high.

At least six of its 23 barangays have been affected by skirmishes between government troops and the rebel Moro Islamic Liberation Front. In 1999, the farming and fishing town had the additional responsibility of absorbing over 3,600 displaced families from nearby hinterland areas.

In addition to a clear need for social development assistance, however, GenPeace also considers a community's readiness and capability to run the project. This requires involvement of organized sectoral groups and local government support.

The NDFCAI-WED, which already had an Asian Development Bank-supported literacy project in the area, became the community-based NGO partners of GenPeace in Sultan sa Barongis.

In Jolo, the years of armed conflict left many areas impoverished. The small pilot station in the Busbus community was set up with the help of the local NGO, Sarang Bangun Foundation and a village or barangay captain.

In Ipil, an attack in 1995 by over 200

armed men that razed the town center and left about 40 people dead highlighted the emergence in Mindanao of yet another rebel group—the shadowy Abu Sayyaf that claims links with the worldwide Al Qaeda network. Here, shock over the attack had mobilized a concerted government and non-government response. The sectoral organizations in Ipil were ready to take on the project. Through the local NGO Neighbors Development Foundation, priority was given to reaching four poor upland villages where the Subanon ethnic tribe eke out a living from slash-and-burn farming and forest products.

The 15 stations now cover one city and 11 of Mindanao's 25 provinces. Eight of the stations are within the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) which was created in 1990.

Those outside the ARMM are usually tri-people areas ( Christians, Muslims and ethnic tribes) which were nonetheless affected by the war, and where poverty and illiteracy are also major problems.

#### ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL PUBLIC BROADCASTING FRAMEWORK

Initially, the GenPeace pilot projects worked with local non-government organization partners. An assessment of the pilot phase, however, showed a clear need

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## THE WOMEN OF SALAM RADIO

Voices of Moro women are seldom heard and rarely given any attention. But this will soon change, thanks to some feisty women in the Philippines' Islamic City of Marawi, the women of Salam Radio.

Women comprise about 60% of the broadcasters of dxSR-FM or *Salam* Radio, which means "Peace" in the central Mindanao heartland of Muslim Mindanao. They are accomplished professional women of the ethnic Maranao community and their radio programs tackle topics long reserved for old men: Islamic teachings.

On the program *Women in Islam*, Dr. Mokiin Salic Malna, a former MNLF woman fighter, talks about Maranao women's historic role in the community as peace mediators, even in settling conflicts like '*rido*' or clan feuds. She holds a doctorate in education and is head of the Mindanao Commission on Women for the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)

Salic-Malna also chairs the Community Media and Education Council (CMEC) that governs Salam Radio.

"Before, women had no participation. But today, women's voices matter most," said Salic-Malna, firmly setting the policy tone of dxSR-FM, a GenPeace project backed by the United Nations Multi-Donor Programme for the Philippines.

Binolawan Baunto, who also holds a PhD in Education is another strong-willed volunteer broadcaster in Marawi City.

"Some Maranao women are still afraid to fight for their rights but we're changing this perspective using the radio," she states.

for bigger transmitters, more sophisticated equipment, additional technical support and a clear legal framework for broadcast operations. To expand the radio stations, expensive licenses were required. In the Philippines, the acquisition of each and every frequency requires congressional approval.

GenPeace project director Myrna Lim made the rounds of approving agencies—the National Telecommunications Commission, Congress of the Philippines, the Securities and Exchange Commission and the broadcasting bureaus—and came back with a daunting bill of over a million pesos for each station and a



“We let women understand that their roles do not just end in homes, but even outside,” adds Dr. Baunto, who hosts the education program on the air.

The women of Salam Radio also aim to promote the native culture of the Maranaos, known as “the people of the Lake,” who were converted to Islam centuries ago. Other ethnic groups that were influenced by Islam’s entry into the Philippines are the Tausugs of the Sulu Archipelago, and the Maguindanaoans of the Central Mindanao valley.

Among the Philippines’ Muslim groups, the Maranaos wear the most brilliantly colored malongs. From their rich folklore and traditions comes the Filipino-Muslim cultural symbol, the *Sarimanok*, a mystical, colorfully plumed bird which adorns clothing, accessories, furniture, structures and homes in the southern Muslim region.

“All aspects of Moro culture, including our poetry and songs, are highlighted and preserved,” explains Salik-Malna. She drums up critical discussions on Maranao cultural practices, like the *maratabat* (Maranao pride) which is sometimes cited as the basis of clan wars.

The women of Salam Radio go beyond the confines of their broadcast studio. As leading advocates of Moro women’s rights, they go out to visit depressed villages and conduct focus-group discussions among women.

Declares Salic-Malna:

“Women have rights and we expect the men to respect them!” Period.

Any comments from the men? They are given their hours to speak too, on Salam Radio.

long list of technical requirements.

However, the national officials she met were impressed and moved by the GenPeace concept. They expanded her network connections and eventually ushered her into the office of the national public broadcasting

network, with the full backing of the Office of the President’s Public Information Agency and Bureau of Broadcast Services. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the national public radio agency resolved the legal and technical requirements of the project. Under the MOA, GenPeace was

placed under the wing of the national radio arm, Radyo ng Bayan, allowing the project to set up community radio stations, with transmitters from 10 to 500-watts.

The national radio network also solved their technical and training problems, by shouldering all the technical requirements of GenPeace radio stations. Government engineers and technicians made site assessments, installed the station equipment, and agreed to help train community technicians and broadcasters.

#### MOBILIZING INTERNATIONAL FUNDING SUPPORT

Many international agencies have been lending a helping hand in Mindanao.

The 1996 peace agreement between the Government and the MNLF paved the way for a more concerted multi-donor rehabilitation package for the Philippines under the United Nations.

“The rehabilitation requirements in Mindanao, particularly infrastructure rebuilding and delivery of basic services, were so immense that our small literacy and media project seemed low in priority,” thought Mrs. Lim. But again, with the help of UNESCO Jakarta, GenPeace advocates made their rounds.

## **REBELS WITH A NEW CAUSE**

Nasser Manalinding was barely in his teens when he first slung a carbine rifle on his shoulder. Under cover of darkness, he and his relatives and neighbors fled to the hills as para-military troopers began surrounding their small village along the eastern coast of Mindanao, a prelude to dreaded search-and-destroy operations in a suspected Muslim rebel area.

Those troopers, recruited from Christian and tribal cultists, went by the name First Imelda Marcos Brigade.

“We were told that they were out to kill every Muslim they would meet along the way,” he recalls.

The villagers scurried up the backyard mountain paths of Malita town. There, in a forested haven, they were met by fully armed uniformed men, some of whom he recognized as distant relatives and former neighbors. They had become trained combatants of the Moro National Liberation Front, fighting for a separate Bangsa Moro homeland in Mindanao. From that day on,

The first two phases of the UN multi-donor program were focused on re-absorbing the rebels back into the mainstream. But the third phase, begun in 2002, adopted the GenPeace project and the unique radio concept as one of its components. The



young Nasser marched with the men of the MNLF Davao State Revolutionary Command.

The rebels were strong enough in 1985 to set up a semi-permanent base in an upland village, which they named Camp Bilal, after the Arabic term for “call to prayer.” One of the leaders of the camp was a townmate, Ustadz Abdul Barry Danial, once a child soldier like Nasser. At the camp, Nasser was a radio operator until 1996, when a peace accord between the Manila government and the MNLF declared the area a Special Zone of Peace and Development.

Today, 38-year-old Nasser is back in Malita town. He is the radio technician at community radio dxTM-FM, a GenPeace project.

“He’s the best we’ve got...a really first-rate technician. We wouldn’t know what to do without him,” chorus broadcasters.

With Nasser at dxTM-FM is former MNLF Camp Bilal leader Ustadz Danial, who anchors the program Islamic Daawah (Islamic teachings) aired 11-12 noon, Monday to Saturday over GenPeace-backed Tingog sa Malita.

radio component was in fact expanded as a confidence building and peace education tool.

Seven GenPeace projects were set up under the UN multi-donor program. Two more

were backed by the Canadian International Development Agency’s Local Government Support Program (CIDA-LGSP) and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. UNESCO Jakarta allotted additional funds to establish radio stations in three more sites.

### INVOLVING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS

Revised guidelines of the GenPeace project identify the local government unit as its main partner. The guidelines require a counterpart fund from the local government unit.

“Without the mayor’s support, particularly in small hinterland areas, it’s difficult to even get the project off the ground,” says executive director Lim. And in many areas, too, the local government unit is the only organized body that has the capability to sustain such a project.

The task of launching the GenPeace project in a community begins with negotiations with the town mayor. GenPeace proponents start by formally writing the local government unit offering the project’s twin components: literacy classes and community radio.

The Memorandum of Agreement between GenPeace and local government officials specifies the following responsibilities of the local government:

- Provision of the counterpart fund, (usually amounting to about Php100,000 (about US\$1900-2000) for the transmitter and other radio equipment
- The provision and installation of a transmitter site and office space for the

station.

- The continued maintenance of the transmitter to sustain the project.

The MOA also asks the mayor to assist in the recruitment of qualified community-

## **WARRIOR OF THE SEAS**

Leo Manisan, one of the volunteer broadcasters of dxTM-FM, remembers well his boyhood in Malita town along the southeastern coast of Mindanao. Wading on the shores of the Davao Gulf, he would spot big sea turtles, and even the now-endangered ‘*dugong*’, or sea cow.

His father, a fisherman, would bring home for dinner local favorites like the grey spotted lapu-lapu (grouper), banagan (spiny Pacific lobster) and other seafood which in big cities only the rich can afford.

Influenced by his childhood environment, Leo, a Tausug Muslim, pursued a Bachelor of Science degree in Fisheries at the nearby Southern Philippines Agri-Business Marine and Aquatic School (SPAMAS).

Back in Malita, Leo was disturbed to see his father’s fishing catch dwindle. Sometimes, the old man had to cruise dangerously deep portions of the gulf just to catch enough fish for the family’s dinner.

“We rarely taste our favorite fish dishes anymore,” he laments. And he now knew why: dynamite fishing, construction of too many fish pens, reduction of mangrove forests and destruction of coral reefs.

Leo volunteered to host a program which highlights protection of the sea environment. The program *Balod sa Kabuntagon* (Waves in the morning), aired daily since 2004, tackles issues and problems of fishermen. If garbage is being dumped along the coasts of Malita, you can be sure Leo will be denouncing it on his program, calling out the names of specific village leaders and local government officials who should do something about it.

Leo, who has become a leading activist for the preservation of the sea environment, is now also at the forefront of other environmental concerns.

“Caring for our environment is a peace issue. If our environment is destroyed, there can be no peace!” he says on the air.”



based literacy facilitators and in the formation of a multi-sectoral council that will run the radio station.

GenPeace, for its part, provides some funding, links the station to the national public broadcasting network, facilitates the capability training workshops for literacy facilitators and broadcasters, and monitors the project.

The supportive role of the town mayor is now often cited as one of the main ingredients of a successful GenPeace project.

Project officer Eric Matias says the mayors' response and support have often been way beyond what the MOA requires. There are GenPeace stations that have brand new independent buildings. Enthusiastic mayors are their champions, lobbying to get GenPeace a permanent allotment in the local government budget to sustain and improve their operations.

All the mayors involved in GenPeace, appreciate the potential of community radio to help bridge government and the people, and begin to narrow whatever estrangement may have resulted from years of civil strife. Many of them have plans to expand their support for GenPeace radio, erect bigger radio station buildings, provide vehicles, internet connections and more operations

funds.

### ORGANIZING A MULTI-SECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

The linchpin of the GenPeace project is the Community Media and Education Council (CMEC), the project's multi-sectoral governing and policy-making body.

The CMEC embodies the essence of the community-run concept of GenPeace. The CMEC should represent a cross section of the community and involve leaders from various sectors: Farmers, fishermen, women, youth, ethnic groups, religious groups, labor, educational institutions, the transport sector, business, local government and even opposition political factions.

An active, well-represented and democratic CMEC is the key to sustaining the project through expected electoral changes in local government leadership.

The mayor initiates the first general assembly and the election of officers of the CMEC.

GenPeace provides only broad general guidelines based on its general objectives: gender-sensitive, community-focused programming, mainstreaming of literacy and education capability building programs, and the promotion of peace. It is the CMEC

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that provides the implementing policy and operation guidelines to customize the project to the specific needs of their community. They need to tackle such issues as:

- How long shall the broadcast hours be?
- What kind of programs shall be aired?
- Should there be political programs?
- What kind of religious programs should there be?
- Should advertisements from cigarettes and wine be accommodated?
- Should a new program be accommodated?
- Should an old program be cancelled?
- How much time should be allocated to cultural shows?
- What should be the staffing pattern?
- Where should the radio station be located?
- What kind of livelihood programs should be featured?

The CMEC is the station's liaison with the local government. It also concerns itself with the problems of fund raising.

#### TRAINING INSTRUCTORS, TECHNICIANS AND BROADCASTERS

GenPeace helps organize capability training workshops for literacy facilitators, project managers, technicians and broadcasters.

One requirement of GenPeace is that the project facilitators and staff must be community-based. The local officials usually initiate the search. The project implementors check qualifications of staff candidates. Those qualified are endorsed for live-in training seminars.

Literacy instruction workshops are organized by the NDFCAI-WED. Over the years various modules have been developed for non-formal settings.

Technical training and broadcasting workshops are led by the experts from national public radio.

There are three basic workshops:

- CMEC Orientation and radio management training
- Basic radio broadcasters training
- Basic radio technicians training

#### MOBILIZING VOLUNTEERS

GenPeace radio relies on volunteers. The capacity of poor towns for broadcast operations is limited, and public radio guidelines prohibit commercial advertising.



## FARMING ON AIR

Abdul Rajid Kalipapa is the agriculture technologist of the Department of Agriculture extension office in Buluan town in central Mindanao.

The town is poor. He says over 70% of the farmers in Buluan have no access to modern farming techniques that could help improve their lives. Most of these farmers live in remote areas that are not only difficult to reach, but are also known to be held by anti-government rebels.

Abdul Rajid works overtime on Saturdays and Sundays, 6-7 p.m. as a volunteer broadcaster for dxLB-FM, Buluan's community radio station. Its 300-watt transmitter covers areas beyond the borders of Buluan town.

His program "*Kapangawid sa Kawang-Kawang*" (Farming on Air) explains the latest in farm management—from selection of seeds to planting and harvest techniques.

The Agriculture officer gets no compensation for his weekend work and, like everybody else, he had to undergo intensive training for broadcasters.

But he is very happy with his weekend program and feels that, maybe, he is finally getting his messages across.

His best thought is that he is being heard by the younger generation of farmers. "During our official on-site agriculture training seminars, only the elder farmers attend. But through my radio program, even their children and other village youth can hear my farming tips."

He hopes that someday, the town of Buluan will harvest the fruits of his labors and see the introduction and development of modern farming in this old, historic town.

The Farming on Air show is followed, from 8-9 p.m., by Hajji Sonny Firdous Silongan's program "Business in Islam."

Hadji Sonny, who owns a small general store, discusses marketing techniques and stresses good business values.

"Cheating is prohibited in Islam," he warns his listeners. His advocacy is supported by the Buluan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Both Abdul Rajid and Hadji Sonny speak in the local Maguindanaon dialect.

Young DJs of Buluan take over the airwaves in the morning and afternoon hours, playing their pop tunes. In the evenings, traditional Maguindanao music rules the air over Lake Buluan. It is music that's not broadcast anywhere else.

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## INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S VOICES

One of the unique characteristics of GenPeace radio is the voice it gives to the *lumads* or indigenous people of Mindanao.

Over dxUP-FM in Upi town, the Teduray community takes over the evening hours with a program entitled "Traditions."

"It's the only one of its kind," says broadcast volunteer Nancy Lawan, who hosts the program aired Monday to Friday in her native Teduray dialect. She invites her village leaders to the program to talk about the tribe's ancient beliefs and culture, which have survived centuries of attempts by Muslim datus, Spanish colonialists, American rulers, and post-independence Christian settlers to integrate and dominate them.

She also discusses common issues facing Teduray women, like poverty, domestic violence, arranged marriages and discrimination in the job market.

On another community station, dxLR-FM, which covers four upland villages in Ipil town, Subanon tribal village leaders dominate the microphones and use the radio to press for lumad representation in the provincial governing board—a cause they finally won in 2005. Over dxRS-FM in Siocon town on the Zamboanga peninsula, the same tribal community gets an hour-long program to press for respect for their ancestral domain and protection from encroaching mining companies.

Over dxUS-FM in Lake Sebu, education hours urge T'boli people to take advantage of the literacy classes. Indigenous peoples' rights and the promotion of their cultural heritage are also high on the agenda.

There are over 67 major ethnic tribal communities in the Philippines and over 100 ethnic-linguistic groupings scattered over 7,000 islands. Over 18 tribal communities are present in Mindanao, including one described as the 'stone age' Tasadays, further up the mountains from Lake Sebu in South Cotabato province.

Lumad communities are the most depressed in the country. Their ranks have been depleted by poverty, neglect and disease. Both Muslim separatists and communist insurgents have penetrated and used their mountain villages as rebel lairs. The tribal folk have been recruited by all sides—rebels as well as para-military government forces. Their own scattered struggle for recognition has been dwarfed by the struggle of the larger Moro minority in Mindanao.

GenPeace recognizes the tri-people character of the conflict in Southern Philippines and is giving the lumads back their voice.



“Many expected dxUP to die a natural death because everybody was working merely on a voluntary basis. I am surprised that two years later, the broadcasters are still here, said Upi Mayor Ramon Piang.

“Their spirit is unwavering,” he adds, in a more serious tone.

Some local governments try to allot token allowances for the broadcasters to cover transportation expenses. In Lake Sebu, some community organizations donate rice.

Why do the volunteers stay on? Their common replies: ‘Because we feel needed; because we want to serve; because helping other people is very satisfying...’

Everyday, hundreds of calls and mobile text messages come in from villages asking them to help them with a problem or to play a favorite song, and almost always, expressing appreciation for their radio work.

“We are here because of them (the people), echoes dxUP station manager Mario Debolgado. His counterpart in Lake Sebu, station manager Jessie Veloso agrees: “Without people’s support, this station will no longer exist.”

## LAUNCHING GENPEACE AIRWAVES

The radio station’s launching on its first day of broadcast is a big occasion in the community. All the local government officials with guests from the province and the region are invited.

The broadcasters are nervous and the programs often start with a formal note. But getting the hang of it comes easy, especially for young people.

## PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

As community stations under the umbrella of national public radio, GenPeace stations are not allowed to accept commercial advertising.

Local government budget support is often limited, so the CMECs need to find creative ways to raise funds from community supporters.

Community donations are accepted although it is up to the CMEC to approve or disapprove such donations if, in their view, it will affect the credibility of the station. In many cases, donations have come in from many small businesses and private individuals who appreciate the radio service.

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## PEACEMAKERS

Mayor Ramon Piang Sr. of Upi town, in the rubber-growing highlands of Maguindanao province, calls his weekly radio program aired over dxUP-FM “Pareng Mon.” The word “pareng” is a Filipino contraction of *compadre*, which implies a ritual kinship between fathers and godfathers (wedding or baptismal sponsors) of their sons or daughters. “Mon” is his nickname.

Compadres are bound by traditional norms of reciprocity. In the Philippines, the *compadre* system is pervasive and powerful. It spreads informal social nets across political and economic spheres.

In Upi, a town with a history of conflict among its Muslim, Christian and Indigenous Teduray people, Mayor Piang is apparently using the term *compadre* as a peace signal, and as a way of introducing the closer relationship he hopes to establish between the people and their local government.

In his radio hour, the mayor ( a.k.a. Pareng Mon), a native Teduray, expounds on his programs and invites community listeners to phone in their queries and comments.

“I am ready to face and answer all your questions,” he says over the air.

The mayor, who walked barefoot to school as a young boy, is one of the champions of GenPeace. Over 700 learners graduated from Upi’s recent literacy program for out-of-school children and youth. He has also invested over half a million pesos to expand and improve the community radio station.

“People learn and understand our projects through the radio. Without it, it would be difficult for us to reach those people in the remotest villages,” he adds.

One station, however, did not encourage donations from a big mining company that had stirred up controversy in an area.

packages on the air. Residents donate one peso (about 2 cents) when they come to the station to pick up mail.

In Buluan, the radio attracts letters to community members, coursed through the station. The DJs announce the letters and

dxLR-FM in Ipil, one of the first and smallest stations, gets donations from village councils or barangay units. Religious



Aside from his informal radio persona, Mayor Piang is also known as the pioneer of a unique tri-people council for mediation and arbitration in the once troubled town of over 51,000 people. Composed of two elders each from the Muslim, Christian and Teduray community, the council uses indigenous methods of conflict resolution in the community such as traditional peace pact ceremonies.

For his efforts the Upi mayor, a former teacher, was named 2006 top recipient of the prestigious Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc. (Rafi) Triennial Awardees for Exemplary Individual.

Mayor Piang was cited for instituting changes in the political structure, improving public service delivery, and for establishing his innovative cross or within-tribe conflict resolution program.

Awardees like Mayor Piang, said published citations, “live in communities characterized by a culturally diverse population and resources scarcer than the average Philippine community. Yet, these apparent limitations provide an opportunity to think out-of-the-box and pursue truly alternative paths to conflict-resolution and development.”

Earlier, Mayor Piang was included among the Ten Outstanding Municipal Mayors in the country in 2003. In 2004, his town was bestowed an international “Kaagapay Seal of Excellence in Local Governance.”

Upi, now declared a zone of peace, is the base of many international-donor projects, among them programs of the Canadian International Development Agency’s Local Government Support Program, which includes GenPeace.

groups, members of the academe, other non-government organizations, the electric cooperative and small business establishments in the area also pitch in.

Ipil mayor Rey Andre Olegario, who provided P80,000 for GenPeace counter-

part funding, noted with satisfaction that since 2002, none among the staff of Lumad Radio has come to him for financial help.

“I was just informed they’re doing it on their own, and I think that’s great!”

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## **OPERATING IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS**

Radio Siocon in southwestern Mindanao was barely a year old in 2003 when about a hundred armed Moro rebels swooped down on the town in a daring dawn raid, attacking the national government's army headquarters and the town hall with rocket-propelled grenades.

The public market burst into flames. Fierce street battles raged for more than 12 hours before the rebels retreated with 15 civilian hostages in tow. Twenty-seven people lay dead and scores more were wounded.

Shortly after the battle started, DxRS-FM station manager Nivard de Guzman waited for some of the smoke to clear and, as rebels and soldiers chased each other down the street, he nervously made his way to the station, on the second floor of the town hall.

"I was trembling as I turned on the power. I didn't know how to start, what to say," he recalls. He tried to say something 'comforting' to the families of those he saw lying dead on the streets.

Soon, Siocon Mayor Cesar Soriano, head of the predominantly Christian town in Zamboanga del Norte province and a former broadcaster in a big Manila network, arrived. He urged the people to stay clam and reported that the situation was under control.

One of the casualties was a close relative of Abdin Nasser Jamilon, a Tausug Islamic teacher and host of the station's weekly "Tribal Hour." He too managed to reach the station, and urged the people to put away thoughts of revenge. "If we fight back, there will be no end to the killings," said the respected Moro Ustadz.

The raid was claimed by the MILF a rebel faction that had broken away from the original MNLF. The Maguindanao-based faction did not participate in the 1996 peace accord and was negotiating separately with the government.

Radio Siocon was also one of the first to report a sea encounter that occurred just off the town's shores, between government troops and yet another rebel faction, the Abu Sayyaf group.

Government claimed the battle resulted in the killing of one of the extremist group's notorious leaders Abu Sabaya, who was linked to the raid on the town of Ipil in 1995 and the abduction of foreign tourists in 2000. No negotiations have transpired between the government and the Abu Sayyaf. Its leaders claim they trained in Afghanistan. Their bases are said to be south of Siocon, in the hills of Basilan province.



Meanwhile, government forces are also busy dealing with simmering conflict in yet another area of Siocon—the mining sites in the Subanon tribal areas.

Radio Siocon broadcasters rushed to the upland towns in March 2004, as Subanon natives backed by environmentalists massed on the roads in the upland village of Pisawak to bar the entry of machinery into a controversial mining site operated by the government and a private Canadian mining firm. Members of the Subanon community claim the area as their ancestral preserve.

Mayor Soriano himself and the powerful Catholic bishop of Zamboanga peninsula lent their support to the Subanon cause, showing up for the month-long picket against mining operations in Siocon's forested Mt. Canatuan.

The army had been sent to clear the roads. Ten protesters were arrested and jailed for “illegal obstruction.” Government authorities say they fear that communist insurgents active in predominantly Christian and tribal areas in nearby Zamboanga del Sur province, may take advantage of the unrest.

This is the situation that Radio Siocon, a tri-people community, and a number of other GenPeace stations find themselves in.

Operating amidst conflict has not dampened the spirits of the GenPeace radio volunteers. On the contrary, says station manager de Guzman, their list of volunteers is getting longer.

The radio experience is helping build new unity and understanding in the culturally diverse community. The town leadership holds dialogues with the community over the air. Muslims, which comprise almost a third of Siocon, have their allotted hours. Mocsin Hasin, a Subanon, says his tribe has a program on dxRS-FM to reach out to the ethnic community, which comprise about 8% of the town's 50,000 people.

It is remarkable that in spite of the uncertainties, the town is slowly getting back on its feet. Roads and health centers are being built. Literacy classes are producing new graduates eager to set up small businesses.

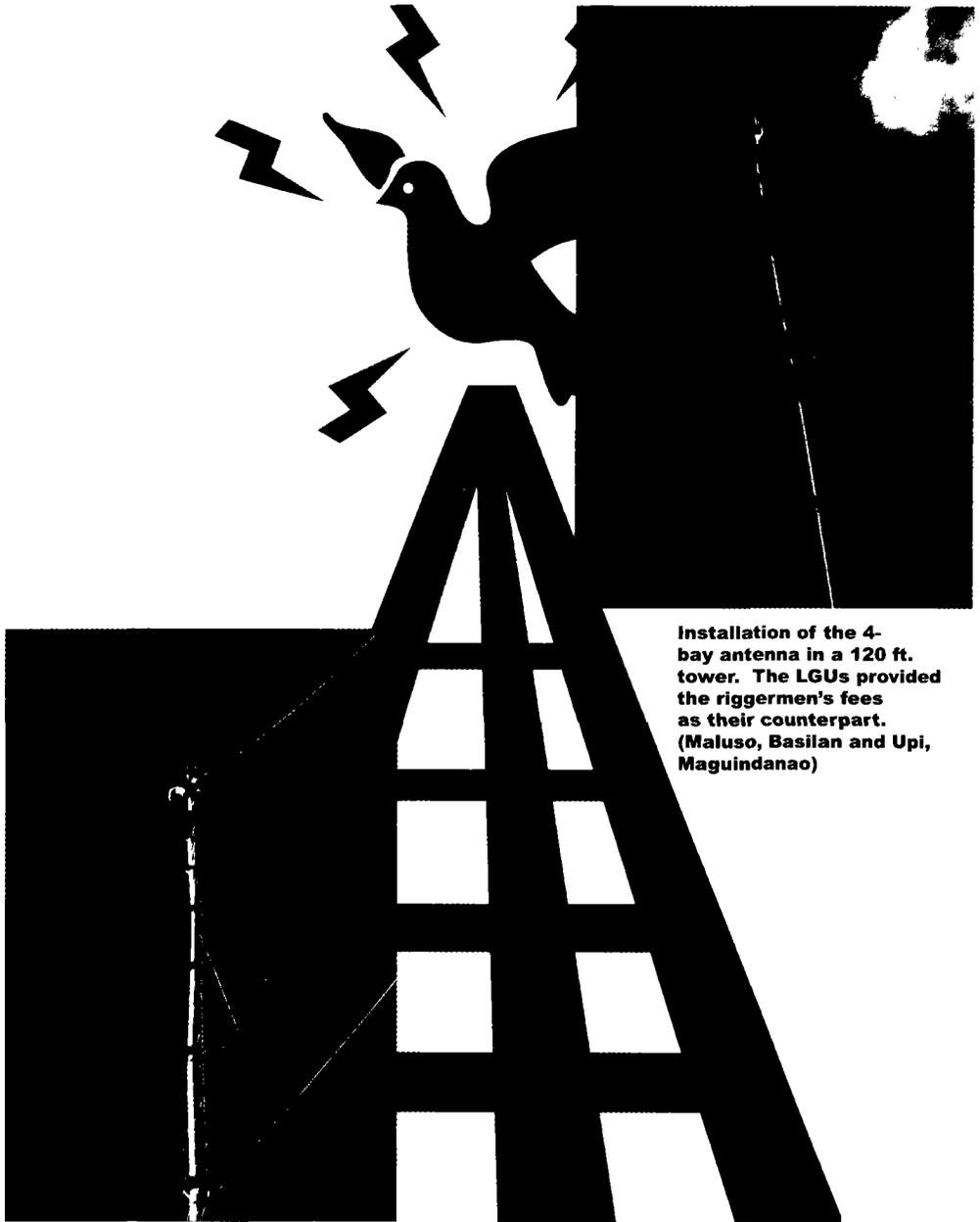
The 1996 peace agreement with the MNLF had provided a break which encouraged the mobilization of international funds for Mindanao. Many new development projects are underway.

It is clear to the broadcasters of Radio Siocon, however, that this is just a small start. The long road to sustaining the peace lies ahead.



**The launching of Maluso Radio brought local government officials, NDFCAI-WED and broadcasters together for a community event.**





**Installation of the 4-bay antenna in a 120 ft. tower. The LGUs provided the riggers' fees as their counterpart. (Maluso, Basilan and Upi, Maguindanao)**

## CHAPTER IV

# GENPEACE FOR ALL: LESSONS AND CHALLENGES

**By Myrna Lim**  
**Executive Director, NDFCAI-WED**

**GenPeace** has been an exhilarating journey so far. The response of communities and local governments has been tremendous. In fact, today, we are besieged by requests from many other communities requesting that GenPeace projects be initiated in their areas.

Already, there are strong suggestions to expand the concept of GenPeace to include communities that may not be directly affected by armed conflict, but who are daily battling the forces of poverty and ignorance.

GenPeace is a continuing education program for all of us, and we know many new challenges lie ahead.

In the past eight years, GenPeace literacy and peace radio has grown and expanded almost all the 15 project

sites, through the enthusiastic efforts of communities, local governments, volunteers and our national and international assistance partners. They have spread the word of GenPeace, proudly holding up their achievements.

The achievements belong to the communities alone. They own the stations.

Community leaders and young volunteers have made GenPeace radio a part of their lives.

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The acceptability of the GenPeace project was never a problem. This can be attributed to the concept itself. Literacy and community radio are clear felt needs in Mindanao, particularly in areas that have been severely crippled by decades of strife.

The project advocates also owe a lot to the institutional credibility of Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities Inc. - WED. Notre Dame, a Christian educational institution with campuses scattered all over Southern Mindanao, has long established outreach programs in many predominantly Muslim areas. Over the years, Notre Dame gained the trust of Muslims and ethnic tribal communities as a straight forward educational and culturally-sensitive community partner. The Notre Dame name preceded GenPeace. This was an important factor. It opened doors for us, even in areas where the foundation had never been.

The project's relation to the peace effort and its inclusion in the United Nations Multi-donor program for the Philippines, thanks to the support of UNESCO-Jakarta, also opened more partnerships on various levels for GenPeace. The Canadian International Development Agency has also joined the effort. After the 1996 peace accord, armed with strong national and international partnerships, we coordinated with both military and rebel commanders to penetrate the hinterland areas.

The first pilot projects were launched in 1999. The 15<sup>th</sup> site was launched last March, 2006 in the town of Mahayag, Zamboanga del Sur province. GenPeace is going strong, and expanding.

Yes, there have been many problems. In the beginning, a small technical hitch would set broadcast operations back for weeks, sometimes months. In the upland towns, where roads are treacherous, we are often at a loss on how or where to get equipment serviced. Radio Tangkal, in one of the poorest hinterland areas, still has problems. But we are thankful and encouraged by the support of national public radio partners PBS in Manila, who have sent their best engineering and technical people to help us sort out the hitches. The national federation of broadcasters has welcomed our community broadcasters into their protective fold.

One of the first small pilot sites, Sultan sa Barongis in Maguindanao province, is at this moment off the air. The problem there is not that the project has been abandoned. On the contrary, the community wants to upgrade it to a more powerful one. So there is no doubt that they will eventually find the ways and means to rejoin the network.

The continuing conflict in some areas makes service and operations more difficult but especially more vital. We are inspired

by the experience of Radio Siocon, dxRS-FM in the Zamboanga peninsula, where broadcasters inched their way to the station during a 2003 rebel attack to broadcast an alert to the public and calm the tension with advisories from leaders. GenPeace has never lacked dedicated and committed peace advocates and volunteers.

There is also the problem of perception. In areas that have been severely polarized by the war or kept under the gun of political warlords, GenPeace radio stations are sometimes accused of being dictated upon or used by the political powers to service their personal ambitions. We remind our broadcast volunteers, many of them young and independent-minded, that this is a problem that can only be resolved by time; by painstakingly building a track record for peace and neutrality.

A lot of the local government leaders in the GenPeace sites are aware of this image problem and some have taken extra pains to stress the independence of the station. The radio is intended to bridge the gap between local governments and the people and it is the duty of local officials to go on air and report what they are doing, especially during emergencies.

In Maluso, on the island of Basilan, said to be the home base of the extremist Abu Sayyaf group with which no peace

negotiations have yet been successfully initiated, Mayor Sakib Salajin goes to extremes to safeguard the image of the GenPeace radio station.

He declined the invitation to host the Mayor's Hour on community radio dxMR-FM, worried that such a program could create the impression that GenPeace takes political sides. Still, LGU projects and other activities are regularly broadcast over the radio.

Newspapers, national or regional, do not reach Maluso. Television is limited to the very few who can afford satellite receivers. Community radio is virtually the only source of information. The local government, aware of radio's role, had scrapped its coffers to come up with a P250,000 counterpart fund for their prized 300-watt transmitter.

The radio stations, while providing vital information, strive for fairness in all its programs. During the 2004 election campaign in Upi, Maguindanao, GenPeace broadcast volunteers followed the equal-time-equal-space dictum of the Commission on Elections to the letter. Station guidelines remind broadcasters always to air both sides of a conflict—whether this be a sectoral dispute between jeepney drivers and farmers, a clan war or political issues involving many factions.

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The key to this perception problem will ultimately rest on the composition and active involvement of the Community Media and Education Council, a multi-stakeholder body which manages the station.

So far, however, GenPeace is a heartwarming success.

There are some characteristics common among the most outstanding stations:

- **The spirit of volunteerism among the youth**

The most vibrant GenPeace stations are those with a strong young volunteer broadcasters base. Their energy and enthusiasm is electrifying the airwaves. They are indeed the driving force of GenPeace.

- **Strong local government support.**

This is another big factor. Partnering with the local governments was a correct decision for us. Many local mayors have been the champions of GenPeace. They immediately saw its benefit and their response was often more than expected. In Maluso, the mayor prioritized the construction of a new building for the radio station even before his own municipal hall could be rebuilt.

The financial capabilities of local governments differ. Yet even the poorer local governments have time and again been able to come up with creative ways to support the project.

- **Active community participation**

This is yet another big factor that defines the level of vibrancy of a radio site. As the radio guests, the call-ins and comments of listeners start coming in, the programs excite the community and moral and financial support increase. In some towns with limited budgets, community members lend vehicles and radio handsets to their broadcasters.

- **The participation of women**

Women's strong participation in GenPeace must be noted. Up to half of all the radio volunteers are young women, who are proving to be role models in a region where women have traditionally been less active, less involved in community projects.

- **Literacy programs working in tandem with the radio component.**

Early this year, dxUP-FM broadcast the graduation of 700 literacy class participants, mostly out-of-school youth. The mayor challenged them to take the next steps themselves and pledged scholarships to those who could make to college level.



Among these graduates may rise the next generation of technicians, broadcasters, teachers and managers of GenPeace. And who knows? Perhaps even a future mayor, governor, senator, or even president?

#### • **Community ownership**

Our role in the foundation is to facilitate community ownership of the project. This is the peace process in action—trust, open dialogue, and patience.

Our guiding policy is to turn over the project to the community immediately. The community partners do the recruitment and organization of both the literacy classes and the radio component. GenPeace does not bring in outsiders. Selected communities have never lacked their own qualified non-formal education facilitators and leaders.

They have made their own mistakes along the way. But in most cases they have also overcome the problems on their own. This is a process. They must take responsibility for the project and develop a strong sense of collective ownership.

The result is that almost all of them are looking forward to strengthening and expanding their community stations.

The project WED faced so many challenges in the past, being church-based, our intentions have always been questioned, but we persisted and never were daunted.

For our ultimate goal is to serve and reach the most isolated and unserved communities. Beyond diversity of faith and culture is the vision and collective task of building trust and giving trust through education, training and peace.

Today, GenPeace partners are one in saying that in any development initiative, the popular will of the community is of paramount importance.

Any development intervention must be owned by the community, implemented with the community and sustained for the community by the community. This in essence is **empowerment**.



## CHAPTER V

# The Lead Agency: NDFCAI-WED

**The Notre Dame** Foundation for Charitable Activities, Inc. – Women in Enterprise Development (NDFCAI-WED) is in the forefront of literacy, non-formal education and enterprise development in Southern Philippines. It is the lead agency for the GenPeace project.

The Foundation's main mission is to assist disadvantaged women and girls become active participants in the economic mainstream of their communities through literacy, non-formal education, skills development and entrepreneurship support.

The vision is the empowerment of women for peace and development. The Foundation believes that breaking the bonds of ignorance is a major component in poverty alleviation and that a further step is to provide adult

education and functional literacy, livelihood skills training, enterprise development, and credit assistance to enable disadvantaged people to become productive members of society. In particular, the Foundation believes that educating the women will go a long way in bringing literacy benefits down to other members of the family and the community.

The NDFCAI-WED also emphasizes education and training as a vehicle to promote peace and inter-faith understanding among the tri-people of Mindanao: the Christians, Muslims and Indigenous People.

Respect for one's religion, culture and traditions is one of the Foundation's unifying principles, together with full respect for human rights, and the promotion of truth and justice.

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The Foundation evolved from the Women in Enterprise Development (WED) project of the University of Notre Dame's College of Commerce, which began in 1984. It was later merged with the existing Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities, Inc., (NDFCAI) in 1992.

The Foundation has established its institutional credibility. When the NDFCAI-WED adult literacy programs started, it could not get even 20 people to attend its first class in Cotabato City. The poor Muslim women and girls of Cotabato City and Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao which the project aimed to reach, were afraid that this initiative by a Catholic-based organization was just another campaign to "Christianize" them. Today, having graduated over a hundred thousand Muslim, Christian and indigenous women and girls, NDFCAI-WED has been accepted as a sincere, culture-sensitive educational foundation in the region. Its programs and training centers can now be found throughout Mindanao, including the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. The Local Governments of Muslim-dominated Maguindanao Province and Cotabato City are fully supportive of the Foundation's activities and encourage village officials to cooperate and coordinate with NDFCAI-

WED in serving their communities.

The Foundation headed by its Chairman, Archbishop Orlando P. Quevedo, OMI, DD, former president of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), Myrna Lim, former dean of the College of Commerce of the Notre Dame University in Cotabato City, is its powerhouse executive director.

The NDFCAI-WED offers seven program components which have assisted the transformation of thousands and thousands of disadvantaged girls, women and out-of-school youths to self-confident and productive individuals. These are:

1. Functional Literacy/Adult Education
2. Skills and Enterprise Development
3. Micro-Credit Assistance
4. Marketing Assistance
5. Cooperative Formation and Development Assistance
6. Technical Assistance and Consultancy
7. Research and Advocacy

The institution's success can be attributed to its strong management, and technical and financial capability.



## AWARDS AND CITATIONS

The NDFCAI-WED, for its dedicated service and strong vision for the empowerment of the non-literate, unemployed, marginalized women and out-of-school children and youth in troubled Southern Philippines, has received numerous national and international awards and citations:

- 2000 Top 3 Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc. – First Triennial Awards (Individual & Institutional Category)
- 1999 UN ESCAP Awards on Human Resource Development
- 1998 Rafael M. Salas Award for Population and Development
- 1997 UNESCO International Literacy Prize by the Korean Government and UNESCO-Paris
- 1996 Philippine Best Project for Community Development sponsored by Population Commission
- 1996 ACCU Literacy Prize Awardee for Video Production
- 1995 First Philippine Most Outstanding Literacy Program by UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines and the Department of Education, Culture and Sports.

## SOME NDFCAI-WED PROJECTS IN MINDANAO

### ACCESS MINDANAO

**Accreditation and Equivalency Support Program for Out-of-School Children and Youth (ACCESS) in Mindanao**

2005 – present: A project of the United States Agency for International Development.- Creative Associates International, Inc. (CAII) under its Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLS) program.

The Foundation is the lead implementing agency of the ACCESS project, an Alternative Learning System which targets at least 5,000 disadvantaged out-of-school children and youths (ages 12-20 years) in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao for educational accreditation and equivalency support. This will enable them to rejoin the formal education system or into entrepreneurship.

The ACCESS-Mindanao project will provide funding assistance for the construction and rehabilitation of 100 Community Learning Centers (CLCs), where 200 learning classes will be opened. Each center will also be provided with Science and Math kits. A total of 100 barangays will be served by the CLCs in the ARMM Provinces of

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## **THE MINDANAO NGO LITERACY AND EDUCATION NETWORK**

NDFCAI-WED, chosen as the Asia Pacific Cultural Center for UNESCO (ACCU) Philippine Literacy Resource Center (LRC), is the Education for ALL (EFA) forerunner in the promotion of literacy, education and training for the tri-people of Mindanao-Christians, Muslims and Indigenous People.

It has develop, and will continually develop, indigenized learning and instructional materials that are culture-sensitive, relevant, appropriate and responsive to their learners. The Foundation is responsible for the establishment and organization of the Mindanao NGO Literacy and Education Network. It initially started with six NGO network members, participating in the UNESCO-Paris World Education project in 1996, and expanded to a membership of 36 organizations all over Mindanao. The network is still expanding. Membership represents the diverse cultures of Mindanao, with Indigenous People, Muslim and Christian NGOs working together for literacy and education.

A number of its trained member NGO partners and Local Government Units are recipients of various literacy and educational awards, both local and international.



Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao.

NDFCAI-WED works closely with partner NGOs namely, Muslim Upliftment Foundation of Tawi-Tawi, Inc.; Bangsa Moro Youth Ranao Center for Peace and Development, Inc.; Federation of United Mindanawan BangsaMoro Women's Multi-Purpose Cooperative; Nagdilaab Foundation, Inc.; and Maluso Outreach Project - Basilan

### **LEAD MAGUINDANAO**

#### **Lifelong Education for Accreditation and Development (LEAD) Project**

*2005-2006 United States Agency for International Development. – Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLS); International Youth Foundation and Consuelo Foundation*

The project, employs the Alternative Learning System for accreditation and equivalency in education for out-of-school children and youth from Muslim, Christian and Indigenous communities. It focuses on Maguindanao province in central Mindanao. It targets the setting up of 58 learning classes in the municipalities of Shariff Aguak, Guindolongan, Datu Odin Sinsuat and Sultan sa Barongis

and Cotabato City those not served by ACCESS Mindanao. Covered are some 1,450 out-of-school children and youth, ages 12-20 years old. These are the most vulnerable groups, easily prone to drug addiction, crime and arm conflict recruitment.

### **PEACE MINDANAO**

#### **Progressive Educational Support and Accelerated Community-based Entrepreneurship (PEACE) in Mindanao**

*2004-2006 Japan International Cooperation Agency – Community Empowerment Program for Southwest Mindanao*

The 18-month project implements a skills training package composed of basic livelihood skills with integrated entrepreneurship for some 2,500 marginalized and indigenous women, men and out-of-school youths in the conflict-affected municipalities of Barira, Parang in Maguindanao province, parts of Sultan Kudarat Province, Cotabato City and Marawi City. The aim is to enhance the learners' livelihood and increase their participation in the development activities of their communities. As lead implementor, NDFCAI-WED, is working closely with Salam Women's Group, Inc.; Association of Women in Development,

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## **DEVELOPING A STANDARD CURRICULUM FOR PHILIPPINE MADRASAH EDUCATION**

For the Madrasah education in Mindanao, NDFCAI-WED organized and facilitated the Madrasah Exposure Visit of Philippine education officials (Region 12 and ARMM) in Indonesia conducted June 13-19, 2004. They visited government educational agencies, Indonesian Educational Organizations, and other Islamic organizations and schools. After this activity, a series of capacity-building workshops intended for the institutionalization of a Madrasah educational system was initiated by the Philippine Inter-Regional Team lead by NDFCAI-WED.

NDFCAI-WED's contribution to the final "Standard Curriculum for Basic Madrasah Education" was the basis for the issuance of the Philippine Department of Education Order No. 51, Series of 2004, by the former Secretary of the Department of Education, Edilberto C. de Jesus. This major breakthrough, of sharing work for a functional and unified curriculum on Madrasah Education will enable pupils to move from a Madrasah to the formal school system and vice versa, thus ensuring their transferability and equivalency in any grade level they might qualify.

The Department of Education is currently engaged in the development of Islamic based instructional materials for the primary education, from Grade 1 to VI. This is a major breakthrough for the Government. And the Foundation is a major partner in this endeavor.



Inc.; and the Federation of United Mindanawan BangsaMoro Women's Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

### **WOMEN MARKET VENDORS**

#### **Social Protection for Poor Women Market Vendors in Mindanao**

*2004-2007 Asian Development Bank-Department of the Interior and Local Government-Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction*

This gender-related poverty alleviation project targets 1,600 poor women vendors in public markets in Mindanao. The project have served more as lead agency, NDFCAI-WED will develop sustainable, gender-sensitive social safety nets for this sector in eight project sites: The towns of Parang and Buluan in Maguindanao province; Cabadbaran in Agusan del Norte; and Mahayag in Zamboanga del Sur. Also included are poor areas in the cities of Kidapawan, Panabo, Surigao and Ozamiz.

The Foundation works in close collaboration with Local Government Units (LGUs), the Women Market Vendors Association as the Project Implementation Unit, and National Government Line Agencies.

### **GENPEACE**

#### **Gender, Peace and Development in Mindanao**

*1998-present: UNESCO-Jakarta, United Nations Multi Donor Program-Phase 3 and the Canadian International Development Agency-Local Government Support Program (CIDA-LGSP)*

The successful implementation of the "Gender and Culture of Peace" project (1998-2000 UNESCO-Jakarta) in three pilot sites brought about the project's replication and expansion under the Government of the Philippines – UN Multi-Donor Programme. The GENPEACE Project has two basic components: Peace Literacy Classes and the installation of community radio stations.

The UNESCO/GOP-UN MDP3 GENPEACE Project is a tri-people capabilitybuildingandcommunity-based mobilization effort addressing the basic need for education and the necessity for communication facilities implemented in five (5) regions in Mindanao – Region 9, 10, 11, 12 and ARMM. GENPEACE is also replicated by the Canadian International Development Agency – Local Government Support Program (CIDA-LGSP) in their project: "Localizing Peace and Development through Peace Zones." As of March

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2006, 15 community radio stations have been set up.

### **MINLIT**

#### **Mindanao Literacy for Peace and Development (MINLIT) Phases 1-4:**

*1996-1998: Asian Development Bank, Department of Education and the Bureau of Non-formal Education*

The Foundation managed and implemented a basic literacy program serving 104,000 illiterates and neo-illiterates in SZOPAD and ARMM areas in Mindanao. As lead agency, NDFCAI-WED provided technical assistance to its partner organizations to enhance their capability to implement literacy programs.

NDFCAI-WED specifically conceptualized and managed the setting up and initial operations of the project literacy programs in the 13 provinces. It conducted project orientations, surveys and needs assessments. It established literacy guidelines and procedures for implementation, which other organizations have adapted. It also designed and conceptualized appropriate training workshops. It proposed interventions to the Department of Education for more effective literacy implementation.

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**Myrna Lim**  
**Executive Director, NDFCAI-WED**

Myrna Lim, Executive Director of NDFCAI-WED, is the woman behind GenPeace in Mindanao and the Foundation's many internationally acclaimed literacy and enterprise projects.

The former dean of the College of Commerce of the Notre Dame University in Cotabato City, Myrna Lim had set out in 1987 to teach simple bookkeeping to poor women in the city during her spare time, as part of the school's community outreach program. She had established Small Business Institute and a market vendors cooperative. In 1987, with a small grant from the USAID, she expanded the Women in Enterprise Development (WED) project, which was later attached to the Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities, Inc. But she soon discovered that many women in the war-torn city could not participate in her projects. Many could not read or write, what more keep accounting books.

Today, Myrna Lim runs the biggest literacy and education network in Mindanao, the Philippines second largest island grouping. In 1992, she decided to leave the confines of formal education and devote her full time to developing non-formal education programs among the poor and marginalized people of Mindanao.

She put her Masters in Business Administration to maximum use in setting up what is now considered one of the best run non-government social development agency. Over the past decade and a half, she has managed more than 24 projects, many of them internationally-funded literacy and capability building programs and are replicated many times over in Mindanao.

She herself has continuously upgraded her own capabilities and skills in various international training seminars- in Sweden, the United States, Canada, Thailand, Bangladesh, China, and many others. Her fields of specialization have expanded to include: Non-Formal Educational Management, Non-Formal Education and Alternative Learning Systems; Enterprise Development, Gender and Development, Peace Education, Accreditation and Equivalency, Instructional Materials Development, Networking, Advocacy, Social Marketing and Project Management among others.

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Her pioneering work in developing non-formal education modules incorporating both literacy, gender concerns and enterprise development was the first of its kind in Mindanao, and has been recognized and adopted by non-government agencies in other parts of the country. NDFCAI-WED projects are also known for their follow-up micro-lending component. "It's a convergence of services," says Mrs. Lim, who speaks five Philippine languages and dialects.

Myrna Lim is often invited as resource speaker in international and local conferences to share their project experiences.

The production of innovative instruction materials that are culture-sensitive and responsive to indigenous community learners are also among the highlight of the Foundation's work. The Foundation also participated in the development of a curriculum for Philippine Madrasah schools that would enable pupils to move from a Madrasah to the formal school system and vice versa.

For their dedicated work, the NDFCAI-WED was awarded the UNESCO King Sejong International Literacy Prize in 1997.

Myrna Lim received the prestigious Rafael M. Salas Award for Population and Development in 1998, and many other citations and awards from the people of Mindanao. She is also a sought-after international consultant and resource speaker for NGO's in other countries.

Still, she finds time to be active in other development boards and civic organizations. She is a board member of the Mindanao Commission on Women and former private sector representative to the Mindanao Economic Development Council.

"Even during the height of the Muslim separatist rebellion in Mindanao in the 1970's, it never entered my mind to leave Mindanao. This is my home. I am blessed to be able to see peace and development dawn in my lifetime," says Mrs. Lim, a cheerful and proud wife of a Cotabateño, Arsenio Lim, a mother of four, a grandmother of eight.



**MONICA FERIA** is a veteran Manila-based journalist. She began as a newspaper reporter in 1975 and went on to become an editor at the Agence France Presse Manila Bureau and correspondent for regional magazine *Asiaweek*. She was the managing editor of *Graphic Magazine*, a national political and business newsweekly, and is editor in chief and general manager of *Mirror* magazine a lifestyle and features magazine. Her articles have also appeared in the *International Herald Tribune* and *Forbes* magazine.

She has done extensive work on strife-torn Mindanao island in southern Philippines. She was in Jolo in 1977 to monitor the first peace negotiations between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front. In 1985-86, she spearheaded a six-month field investigation into the insurgency and general situation in Mindanao, producing 16 of a 32-part series that appeared in the *Sunday Inquirer* magazine, titled "Inside Mindanao." Her interviews with rebel priests in communist guerilla bases in northeastern Mindanao, with then president Ferdinand Marcos and, after the 1986 people power revolt in Manila, with president Corazon Aquino, were cover stories of the London-based third world development magazine *South*.

Women health and environment issues are also among her special concerns. She is co-chairman and organizer of *The Health Forum*, a weekly news conference and dialogue between media and medical professionals.

She has produced two historical yearbooks: "Salute to the Millennium: 1,000 People, Places and Events in the Philippine Saga" (Philippine Graphic Publications Inc., 2000), and "100 years of Philippine Independence" (1998).

**MALU CADELIÑA MANAR** is a recipient of the 2003 *Eduardo Salanga Excellence in Peace Reporting* and has received numerous awards for her investigative and documentaries stories from the Cultural Center of the Philippines Center for Broadcast Arts in early '90s and other award-giving bodies.

At present, she is the program director of radio station DXND-AM, a Peace Radio owned and managed by the Notre Dame Broadcasting Corporation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. She also works for the *MindaNews*, an alternative website that tackles stories about Mindanao, especially in conflict-affected areas.

**Manar**, member of the Peace and Conflict Journalists Network (PeCoJoN) in the Philippines, has recently completed a course on Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney in Sydney, Australia.

