



Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute 2012 Annual Peacebuilding Training *Report*



AUGUST 2012
DAVAO CITY, PHILIPPINES



I. Introduction

In its earnest desire to be a wellspring of peacebuilding efforts, ideas and solidarity among peace practitioners and advocates, the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute (MPI) once again created a sacred space where peacebuilders from different walks of life met in order to understand the fundamental concepts of how peace is built and how conflicts are resolved; to hear, feel and speak of untold stories filled with wisdom and hope; to appreciate diversity while also acknowledging one's identity; and to keep abreast of the challenges and developments stemming from the issues of peace, justice and conflict.

These great minds, hearts, and spirits converged during the **MPI 2012 Annual Peacebuilding Training** from May 14 to June 1, 2012 in Davao City, Philippines. In the three-week training, a dynamic group of 125 participants, 19 facilitators and 12 secretariat volunteers from 21 countries in Asia-Pacific, Australia, Europe and North America participated. They represented various sectors such as the civil society, government, academe, security, religious and youth.

MPI offered 13 foundation, thematic and field-based courses on a variety of subjects such as peacebuilding, conflict transformation, active nonviolence, peace education, interreligious dialogue as well as new and advanced courses on arts *vis-à-vis* peacebuilding, peace education, trauma healing, and restorative justice.

In its desire to continue to improve its in-depth learning environment, MPI again organized a peacebuilding forum that was open to the general public and offered a special workshop for the participants, two innovations initiated during the 2011 Annual Peacebuilding Training. This year, a forum on *Restoring Justice, Building Peace: Learning from Indigenous Peoples* and a special workshop on *"The Laughter that Knows the Darkness: The Role of Humor and Play in Peacebuilding"* were organized.

The international and local facilitators' complementary roles in designing and handling the courses contributed to the environment of learning and understanding in the classes. The local partners in the field were also able to create a safe environment for mutual sharing between the participants and the communities where they were immersed. The richness of the experiences and expertise of the facilitators encouraged the participants to enhance their own set of knowledge and skills suitable to their respective fields and influence. The participants also exhibited much enthusiasm, dynamism and passion not only in the discussions and activities that took place inside the classes, but also in the cultural interactions and sharing of stories that transpired during special events, country presentations, cultural ceremonies, and even over meals. The secretariat team also made valuable contributions by ensuring the smooth continuity of the training. It was the combination of the sincere efforts of the participants, facilitators and secretariat team that led MPI 2012 to its overwhelming success.

II. MPI 2012 Annual Training

a. Course Offerings and Facilitators

MPI systematically prepares the content and process of the courses that are offered annually. The Institute not only aims to offer fundamental courses on peacebuilding and conflict transformation each year, but also sets its sight on designing new courses and materials that respond to the identified needs of its network. MPI develops courses based on the following principles: applicability, relevance, necessity and social impact.

For this year’s annual peacebuilding training, MPI concurrently offered four Foundation Courses in week one, three Thematic and two Field-Based Courses in week two, and three Thematic Courses and one Field-Based in week three. Out of the total 13 courses, five were new additions to the MPI curriculum – 1) Arts Approaches to Community-Based Peacebuilding; 2) Asian Faces of Justice: Restoring Harmony and Accountability in Asian Communities; 3) Community-Based Trauma Healing Program Design and Implementation; 4) Resource-Based Conflict Transformation Initiatives: A Community Perspective; and 5) Strengthening Peace Education Training Skills.

Alongside the development of its curricula, MPI also expanded its team of esteemed facilitators by renewing its relationship with some of the Institute’s early mentors and inviting well-experienced MPI alumni and network partners as new facilitators. These were: Mr. Babu Ayindo from Kenya who was with MPI during its earlier years pioneering the Arts and Peacebuilding Course; Ms. Kyoko Okumoto who is from Japan working with the sister institute of MPI, the Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute; Mr. Jeremy Simons from the USA who is currently the Community Outreach and Education Program Officer of MPI; and Mr. Rodilo Lebiano and Mr. Rolando Nim, grassroots peacebuilders from Cotabato, Philippines. A total of 15 classroom-based facilitators and three local organizational partners facilitated the Foundation, Thematic and Field-Based Courses at MPI this year.

Here is the complete list of courses and facilitators during the MPI 2012 training:

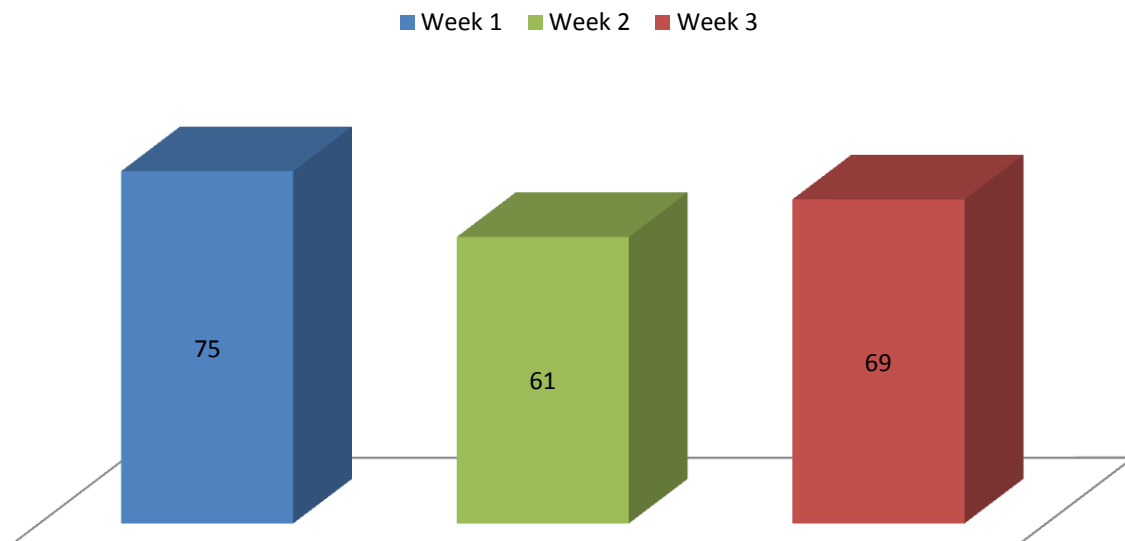
Week 1: May 14-18, 2012 (Foundation Courses)		
1	Introduction to Conflict Transformation (ICT)	Wendy Kroeker (Canada) and Michael Frank Alar (Philippines)
2	Fundamentals of Peacebuilding (FPB)	Paulo Baleinakorodawa (Fiji) and Maria Ida L. Giguiento (Philippines)
3	Peace Education: Concepts and Approaches (PECA)	Ofelia L. Durante (Philippines) and Essex Giguiento (Philippines)
4	A Force More Powerful: Theory and Practice of Nonviolence (FMP)	Jonathan Rudy (USA) and Myla Leguro (Philippines)
Week 2: May 21-25, 2012 (Thematic and Field-Based Courses)		
1	Conflict Resolution Skills: Mediation, Negotiation and Dialogue (CRS)	Paulo Baleinakorodawa (Fiji) and Emmanuel Amancio (Philippines)
2	Religion: Dialogue, Theories and Practice for Peacebuilding (REL)	Jonathan Rudy (USA), Alzad Taradji Sattar (Philippines) and Maria Ida L. Giguiento (Philippines)
3	Strengthening Peace Education Training Skills (SPE)	Wendy Kroeker (Canada) and Miriam L. Suacito (Philippines)

4	Approaches to Grassroots Peacebuilding: Interreligious Dialogue and Zones of Peace (AGPB) (Field-Based Course)	Rolando Nim and Rodilo Lebiano
5	Resource-Based Conflict Transformation Initiatives: A Community Perspective (RCTI) (Field-Based Course)	EcoWEB, Inc.
Week 3: May 28-June 1, 2012 (Thematic and Field-Based Courses)		
1	Asian Faces of Justice: Restoring Harmony and Accountability in Asian Communities (AFJ)	Jeremy Simons (USA/Philippines) and Myla Leguro (Philippines)
2	Community-Based Trauma Healing Program Design and Implementation (CTH)	Al Fuyertes (Philippines/USA) and Miriam L. Suacito (Philippines)
3	Arts Approaches to Community-Based Peacebuilding (AACP)	Babu Ayindo (Kenya) and Kyoko Okumoto (Japan)
5	Indigenous Peoples' Peacebuilding Mechanisms (IPPBM) (Field-Based Course)	Betty Tagle-Cabazares and Kinaiyahan Foundation, Inc.

b. Participants

The MPI 2012 Annual Peacebuilding Training was attended by a total of 125 participants. The statistics as to the distribution of participants per week, origin, gender, religion and sectoral representation are provided below.

Figure 1. Distribution of participants per week



Out of the 125 participants, 75 participated in Week 1, 61 in Week 2 and 69 in Week 3. MPI allows each participant to determine the number of weeks they wish to attend. Participants have the option to take either one to three courses depending on the extent of learning they would like to gain from MPI. In the chart above, it can be inferred that majority or 60% of the total number of participants were more interested in taking foundation courses.

Figure 2. Origin

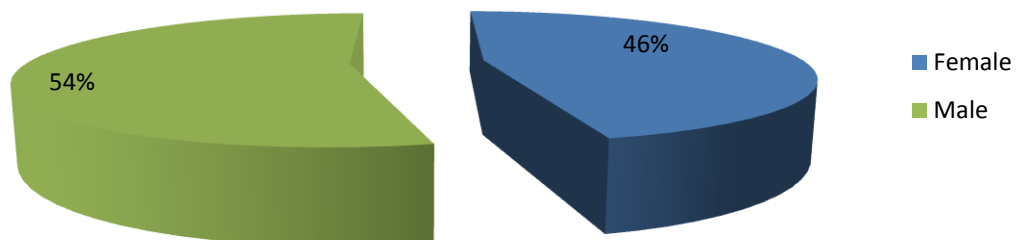


Out of 125 participants, 60 or 48% were Filipinos while 65 or 52% were Internationals. Unlike previous years, there was a good balance between Filipino and foreign participants this year.

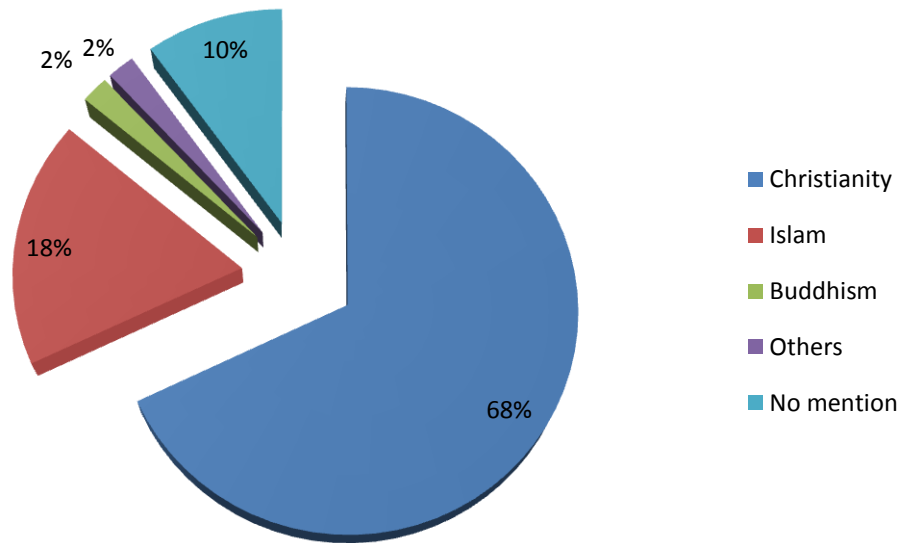
Participants from the Philippines came from different areas all over the country such as Butuan, Cagayan de Oro, Compostela Valley, Cotabato, Davao, Davao del Sur, General Santos, Iligan, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Manila, North Cotabato, Pasig, Quezon, Sarangani, Surigao, Surigao del Sur, Sulu, Quezon, and Zamboanga.

On the other hand, international participants came from as far as Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom in Europe; Canada and the USA in North America; Australia and Papua New Guinea in the Pacific; and Afghanistan, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, India, Japan, Laos, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand and Timor-Leste in Asia.

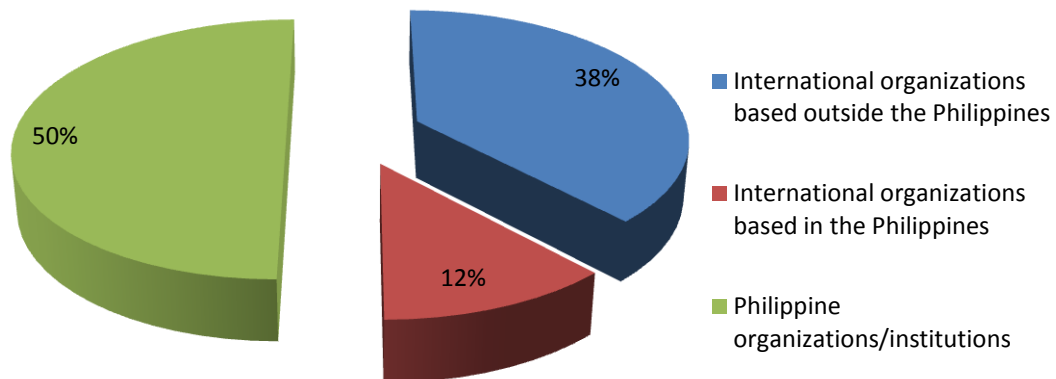
Figure 3. Gender



In terms of gender, the participants were almost equally divided between males and females: 54% were males while 46% were females.

Figure 4. Religion

A clear majority of the participants were Christians but other religions such as Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism were represented. Some of the participants, however, did not state any religion.

Figure 5. Background

Regarding organizational background, half of the total number of participants worked for Philippine organizations or institutions, 38% worked for international organizations based outside the Philippines and 12% belonged to international organizations based in the Philippines.

Philippine organizations and institutions represented at MPI 2012 included the following:

- 1) **Non-governmental organizations** such as the Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits, Inc. (EcoWEB); iEmergence; Kaabag Ranaw, Inc.; Kadtuntaya Foundation, Inc.; Kasilak Development Foundation, Inc.; Maranao People Development Center, Inc.; Mindanao Peoples Caucus; Mindanao Women Writers, Inc.; Pailig Development Foundation, Inc. (PDFI); PeaceBuilders Community, Inc.; Reach International Healthcare and Training, Inc.; Surigao del Norte NGO Coalition for Development Inc., (SUNGCOD); and the Surigao Sur Organization for Human Development, Inc. (SSOFHDEV, Inc.);
- 2) **Governmental organizations** such as the Philippine Army and the Peace Process Office of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; Commission on Higher Education; Department of Education; Department of Social Welfare and Development; Local Government Units (LGUs) of Alamada and Tulunan; Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, Provincial Government Unit of Sarangani;
- 3) **Academic institutions** such as the Ateneo de Zamboanga through their Peace and Culture Institute; De La Salle – College of Saint Benilde through their Social Action Center; Mindanao State University in General Santos City; Mindanao State University - Iligan Institute of Technology through their Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao; and the Southern Christian College;
- 4) **Religious institutions** such as the Claretian Missionaries; Missionaries of the Assumption; and the United Methodist Church; and
- 5) A private medical institution in Davao City called Davao Doctors Hospital.

The international institutions and/or organizations outside the Philippines represented in the training were, among others:

- 1) **ASIA-PACIFIC.** The Deaconess School of Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP), Evangelical Christian Church, Indonesian Christian Church, Forum for Peace Interreligions and Ethnic (FPLAG), Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace, Indonesian Student Christian Movement; Mennonite Central Committee, and Yabima, all of which were from *Indonesia*; Caritas Australia and the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission of Dili from *Timor-Leste*; Kachin Women's Association from *Burma/Myanmar*; Mennonite Central Committee from *Laos*; Christian Reformed World Relief Committee from *Cambodia*; Youth Development Association (YDA) and the Tavoyan Women's Union from *Thailand*; Tokaigakuen University from *Japan*; Caritas India and Dan Church Aid from *India*; Diocese of Raiwind of the Church of *Pakistan*; United Mission to *Nepal*; Oxfam Novib from *Afghanistan*; Wi'am Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center from *Palestine*; Caritas Australia and Spread Out and Stick Together from *Australia*; and Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency from *Papua New Guinea*;
- 2) **EUROPE.** Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED) and German Development Cooperation (GIZ) from *Germany*; and
- 3) **NORTH AMERICA.** George Mason University in the *USA*; and the Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice and Selkirk College in *Canada*.

The international organizations based in the Philippines represented were: Catholic Relief Services in Davao, Forum Civil Peace Service (forumZFD) in Butuan and Davao, and the Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Pasig.

c. Secretariat

One of MPI's programs and services is to provide opportunities for young and dynamic individuals to become potential peacebuilders in the region by equipping them with the necessary skills and mindset. It is the Institute's hope that they will be able to participate in and contribute to peace initiatives in their own communities after the training.

MPI recruits these people to staff the Secretariat Team during the annual training. An experienced person guides them in their work and ensures that they learn the fundamentals and acquire the skills needed in running a training of this importance.

A group of young professionals and university students comprised this year's Secretariat Team. In the spirit of teamwork and volunteerism, they brought with them their own contribution of skills and experience. They were chosen based on the following criteria: active involvement in community-based programs; openness to work in a multi-cultural setting; willingness to work under pressure and during odd hours; and the ability to work in a team and think on one's feet.

The Secretariat Team was composed of the secretariat head, deputy head, social/special events coordinator, class documenters, class assistants, photographers and translators. Prior to the training, the entire team had an orientation and growth session to help them get to know each other's strengths and limitations. This proved to be beneficial to everyone as it facilitated the process of trust and interdependency among everyone. During the training, the process was continued as the team participated in daily debriefing sessions to address emerging concerns and problems.

Majority of the volunteers this year were Filipinos and only two were internationals. The Filipino volunteers were from the areas of Davao, Tagum and Metro Manila. The international volunteers were young Americans working for a partner organization in the Philippines with whom MPI has links through its programs. MPI is very grateful for the readiness and willingness of each of the volunteers to participate despite the daunting task that was ahead of them. In fact, in the evaluations, facilitators and participants both acknowledged and appreciated the enthusiasm of the Secretariat to accommodate their needs and those of the training as a whole.

d. Classroom-Based Courses

A total of 10 classroom-based courses were offered this year. By tradition, two capable instructors facilitate each course and are chosen based on complementing traits, skills, experience and knowledge.



The methods, strategies, and course contents used in the classes were based on how the facilitators designed the courses to meet the needs of the participants and the objectives of the courses. The courses were all varied in terms of learning styles, but generally interactive, participatory and dynamic methodologies, such as journal writing, role playing, group discussions, field trips, class simulations and creative outputs, were employed by the facilitators. The courses also took on an elicitive and critically reflective approach to learning. In the evaluations, some participants expressed that the balance of both conventional and unconventional ways of facilitation worked well and made the experience more meaningful and valuable. Handouts were given and audio visual materials were used to supplement the learnings of the participants.

However, inside the classroom, it was not only the facilitators that played the role of mentor. Participants were also given the opportunity to share and discuss with their peers and facilitators their own experience and best practices in response to peace and justice issues in their home communities. Some of the facilitators also invited resource speakers from partner organizations to provide valuable input to the participants. The class of the *A Force More Powerful: Theory and Practice of Nonviolence*, for example, invited a master in the art of nonviolent self-defense or Aikido, as it has done in the previous years, to demonstrate the basics of this Japanese martial art to the participants. The *Asian Faces of Justice: Restoring Harmony and Accountability in Asian Communities* class drew significant input from two Philippine Indigenous leaders and two experts in Islamic justice systems who were invited to share the ways justice and accountability are addressed and restored in their communities. Howard Zehr, a pioneer in the field of Restorative Justice and author of *“The Little Book of Restorative Justice”* and *“Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice”* was also invited by the class to speak through a Skype conference. Even from thousands of miles away, the participants were able to ask their own questions to and hear the thoughts of Mr. Zehr.



The restraints posed by the four corners of the room did not hinder the classes from increasing their scope of learning. Some of the classes also organized trips in order for the participants to directly learn from local partners and experts the Philippine context of specific topics and issues, and to, in a way, break from the rigors of the classroom setting.

The *Religion: Dialogue, Theories and Practice for Peacebuilding* class visited the Islamic Center of Davao City and the Bishops-Ulama Conference (BUC) for the participants to hear from different religious groups their efforts for interfaith dialogue and reconciliation. The BUC is a dialogue forum established in 1996 and is composed of Catholic Mindanao bishops, Muslim ulama, and Protestant bishops who, in a spirit of interreligious dialogue, affirm their commitment to the peace process.

The class *Arts Approaches to Community-Based Peacebuilding*, on the other hand, took an exposure trip to meet a local cultural group in Davao collectively known as the *Kalumon Performing*

Ensemble. Kalumon means a close knit of kin, a family and a clan. These homegrown performing artists create contemporary pieces rooted in the culture indigenous to Filipinos. The class also visited the studio of a prolific local artist in Davao, *Kublai Millan*, who is known for his paintings and sculptures that depict the vibrant culture of Mindanao. Milan shared about how sculptures can become visible pieces to convey a message in a larger form. Some of the participants expressed that after these trips they were able to tangibly realize the crucial role of arts in peacebuilding.

e. Field-Based Courses

e.1. *Approaches to Grassroots Peacebuilding: Interreligious Dialogue and Zones of Peace*

This field-based course was facilitated by the organization *Tulunan Community Development Center* in Tulunan, North Cotabato. Being a recent addition to the pool of local partners of MPI, this is the first instance that the organization facilitated a course in the annual peacebuilding training. The course focused on two emerging grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Mindanao – interreligious dialogue and zones of peace. It aimed to give the participants the opportunity to discover and learn from the actual experiences and on-going initiatives of local people in Central Mindanao at how they sustain their peacebuilding efforts through community dialogues, participatory local governance, and direct stakeholder settlements.

Seven participants from Indonesia, India, the USA and the Philippines attended the course. The participants immersed themselves in different peace zones, Indigenous Peoples communities, and Moro communities for a span of five days. In these community immersions, the participants were able to meet and discuss with grassroots peacebuilders, local government officers, religious leaders and community residents about the history of Tulunan which is marred by conflicts due to different cultural backgrounds, political interests, and socio-economic perspectives of its people. They also talked about how they overcame such conflicts and refocused their efforts to achieving lasting peace; and how they aimed to sustain their peace efforts.



The participants expressed that although there were disparities between what they saw in the field and what they learned in class, they were still able to affirm and connect some of the theories.

e.2. *Resource-Based Conflict Transformation Initiatives: A Community Perspective*

An offshoot of the course *People's Participation in Peace Processes* from the previous annual trainings, this field-based course was developed in response to the growing concern of different peacebuilders in addressing and transforming resource-based conflicts at the community level. The course was designed and facilitated by MPI's long-term partner organization in Northern Mindanao, *Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits (EcoWEB), Inc.*



This field-based course was attended by four participants from Indonesia and four others from the Philippines. The course gave them hands-on experience and insights in the conflict transformation process of a resource-based conflict over coconut lands in Kolambugan, Lanao del Norte, Northern Mindanao, at the community level. They were able to interact with major stakeholders of the conflict and other parties involved such as non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, national government agencies and the local government that have all supported the peace processes developed in

response to this conflict. According to one participant, the exposure not only gave them first-hand experience about knowing how the community is working to solve their issues, but also exposed the MPI participants to the deeper cause of the conflict which they found helpful in understanding their own context. Their knowledge of different conflict transformation processes and strategies also was expanded as the facilitators of the course shared about the tools that were employed to address this conflict.

e.3. Indigenous Peoples' Peacebuilding Mechanisms

A course developed and facilitated by Kinaiyahan Foundation, Inc., *Indigenous Peoples' Peacebuilding Mechanisms* has been a mainstay field-based course in the annual training for the last three years. The field-based course focuses on the cultural practices of Indigenous Peoples in Mindanao, collectively referred to as Lumads; how they look at peace; and what community mechanisms and processes they employ to resolve disputes in their communities and address external factors that threaten the existence of peace in their ancestral domains.

This year, the course centered on two tribes: the *Mansakas* in the valley of Compostela at the southeastern part of Mindanao and the *Obu Monuvus* in the province of North Cotabato at the center of Mindanao. The two tribes warmly welcomed the 13 visitors from Laos, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, the USA, and the Philippines. They shared about how they settle conflicts by ascribing to their indigenous values and traditional justice systems. The participants also experienced the vibrant culture of these communities, heard their stories, and listened and danced to their traditional music. The rich natural beauty of the areas they visited made their exposure to the communities even more meaningful.



f. Documentation of New Courses

MPI continuously develops its programs to respond to the growing needs of its partners. It is essential for MPI to accommodate these needs and provide peacebuilders the platform to learn current trends in peacebuilding, conflict transformation and other related areas. In order to live up to its goal to become one of Asia's most innovative and dynamic training centers for peacebuilders, MPI tries to break new ground by exploring emerging issues related to peace and justice and new and different ways of intervention that are being developed.

In this year's training, five new courses were offered by MPI, to wit:

- Arts Approaches to Community-Based Peacebuilding facilitated by Babu Ayindo and Kyoko Okumoto in Week 3;
- Asian Faces of Justice: Restoring Harmony and Accountability in Asian Communities facilitated by Jeremy Simons and Myla Leguro in Week 3;
- Community-Based Trauma Healing Program Design and Implementation facilitated by Al Fuertes and Miriam L. Suacito in Week 3;
- Resource-Based Conflict Transformation Initiatives: A Community Perspective, which is a Field-Based course in Week 2; and
- Strengthening Peace Education Training Skills facilitated by Wendy Kroeker and Miriam L. Suacito in Week 2.

Class documenters were assigned to each of these classes to record the methods, strategies, tools, and classroom scenarios used and to describe how the objectives of the courses and the expectations of the participants were met. The documentation serves as a means for the facilitators to assess and improve their course syllabi and as an important reference for MPI in evaluating the continuation of the courses for future trainings. The final output of the documentation is, however, not available for public distribution. Nevertheless, the proceedings can be reviewed at the MPI Office in hardcopy form.

g. Social and Cultural Events

g.1. Opening and Closing Cultural Ceremonies

After six consecutive years of gracing MPI with its dances, music, and energy, the *Kaliwat Theatre Collective* once again led the festive celebration during MPI's opening and closing cultural ceremonies.

The *Kaliwat Theatre Collective* is one of the Philippine's leading theater institutions. They create original plays and performances based on the Mindanaoan people's stories and cultural traditions. The very heart of their existence, however, lies in their intensive cultural action work and advocacy campaigns.

The theater group led the singing, dancing and rejoicing that brought to life this year's theme ***Restoring Justice and Building Peace***.



As per MPI's tradition, the Kaliwat performers escorted the participants by country during the so-called *Parade of Nations* to acknowledge each one that was present. The parade is MPI's way of symbolically ushering the participants into the sacred space of openness and respect.

During the opening ceremonies, messages were given by distinguished speakers to inspire the participants to start their week of intense learning and sharing enthusiastically.

A former student activist and now program manager for the Capability Building Program of the Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), MPI Alumna *Ms. Ma. Carmen Lauzon-Gatmaytan* told the participants of the first week about why she keeps returning to MPI and how she draws inspiration from the great company of people present at each training. She spoke passionately about being able to learn, re-learn and refresh one's reservoir of knowledge on peacebuilding and conflict transformation tools and strategies; to listen to meaningful stories from people rich in wisdom and experience; to meet new friends; and just simply to be surrounded by good intentions and positive energies that are all valuable sources of inspiration that can be found at MPI.

In the second week, participants were moved and inspired by the message of *Prof. Alzad T. Sattar* from the Philippines, who is one of MPI's facilitators. He shared about having been a radical human rights activist, specifically of Muslims rights, after experiencing many tragedies from non-Muslims early in his life, and how he eventually went through a paradigm shift and became a peace worker through his strong advocacy for interfaith dialogue. He concluded his speech by reminding everyone with these words: *"There is no substitute for peace. Peace is everybody's business regardless of tribes, races, religions and even professions."*

Participants in the third week found themselves filled with much fervor after *Mr. Babu Ayindo*, a very animated storyteller and educator from Kenya, and MPI's facilitator in the Arts and Peacebuilding Course, gave his inspirational message. As a story-teller at heart, he shared an animated clip of the stirring fable of *"The Hummingbird"* by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Wangari Maathai. The tale is an inspiring reminder of doing the best you can under seemingly insurmountable odds. The message was short but it did not fail to move each one in the room and encourage everyone to continue working for justice and peace even in the face of great adversity.

g.2. Country Presentations

Solidarity and camaraderie are not only forged inside the classroom and in the field, but also during evenings of music, dance, play and folklore.

The country presentations at the MPI annual trainings are an avenue for the participants to share their culture, traditions, history, current situation, and the like, after formal class sessions. The goal of these presentations is to foster greater understanding, friendship, and appreciation for diversity among everyone.

In order to give each country the chance to present, two sets of evening country presentations per week for three weeks were organized.

The countries that presented were: Afghanistan, Australia, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Canada, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Laos, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, United Kingdom, the USA, and the Philippines.

Almost all of the countries chose to present a special dance to the MPI Annual Training community and everyone was eager to learn them. The *Fire Dance* that was performed by a Canadian participant was truly breathtaking and visually stunning. MPI this year was certainly a year of dances and dancers.

g.3. Weekend Outings

MPI organized outings for participants to give them an opportunity to relax from a week of intensive training and see more of the beauty of Davao City. At the end of the first week, a group of participants toured the city of Davao. They explored the city using the local transportation unique to the Philippines called *jeepneys*; walked along the streets of downtown Davao; and visited historical sites, culturally-rich People's Park, and *pasalubong* centers (souvenir shops). At the end of the second week, participants went on another tour, but this time it was to the scenic islands of Samal and Talikud. Participants were able to enjoy a day of frolicking under the sun; swimming, snorkeling, and kayaking in clear blue waters; and enjoying fresh seafood.

h. Special Events Program

h.1. Peacebuilding Forum

As part of the special events program of this year's annual peacebuilding training, a public forum entitled *Restoring Justice, Building Peace: Learning from Indigenous Peoples* was organized by MPI in partnership with the Mindanao Peaceweavers, the largest consortium of peacebuilding organizations in Mindanao, and Kinaiyahan Foundation, Inc., a non-governmental organization actively helping Indigenous Peoples' communities rehabilitate and protect their resources. The rationale behind the forum was to provide, just as last year, another space for



mutual learning and sharing among the people of Mindanao and of other countries in Europe, North America, and the Asia-Pacific region.

Held on May 19, 2012, participants of the annual training, representatives from civil society active in advancing the rights of Indigenous Peoples, indigenous community leaders around Mindanao and members of local government units attended this forum at the Brokenshire Resort and Convention Center to discuss global developments as well as pressing issues that impact Indigenous Peoples, and their communities and resources.

Six indigenous community leaders from Australia, Burma/Myanmar, Canada, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and the Philippines spoke about the many challenges they faced, the resilience with which they grappled with these challenges, and their stories of victory and survival through the centuries. From their presentations, we learned that remembering each and everyone's history, recognizing identities, upholding the humanity inherent in all of us, and learning to listen and dialogue to achieve mutual understanding are what it takes to achieve lasting peace and true justice.

During this forum, people were able to recognize and appreciate the, albeit oftentimes forgotten, practical and useful wisdom of Indigenous Peoples in their efforts to address the challenges with which they have been confronted from the past and until the present. At the end of the forum, the people that were present were not only filled with greater hope and passion for restoring justice and building peace in their own selves, communities and nations, but were also humbled by the rare opportunity.



h.2. Special Workshop

Last year's special workshop on music and how it can be used as a community resource in different contexts and even as an alternative form of mobilizing and invigorating nonviolent action was a humble success. This year, Christy Reed from the Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice at the University of Manitoba, Canada, once again, partnered with MPI to offer another special workshop on nonviolent solutions to conflict and violence. This time, she explored the world of humor.

Twenty-five participants joined Ms. Reed in her workshop this year entitled "*The Laughter that Knows the Darkness: The Role of Humor and Play in Peacebuilding.*" The workshop allowed everyone to share about his/her own experiences of laughter and play in each person's work as a peacebuilder. Together, the participants and Ms. Reed explored the possibilities of humor and play in peace work and how it can transform, create and humanize actions where violence and conflict abound.

i. Evaluation of MPI 2012 Annual Training

The outcome of the training evaluations was very inspiring and humbling. Out of the 107 respondents, **70%** gave the **MPI 2012 Annual Peacebuilding Training** an overall rating of **excellent** while **28%** gave a rating of **good**. Participants said that the training was very creative, engaging, and empowering. In fact, **63%** of them found the content of the courses to be very relevant to their work as peacebuilders. They also emphasized that the exchanges with diverse people; the safe space to discuss learnings, opinions and insights; the expertise of the facilitators; and the varied learning styles employed were some of the elements that made the training meaningful and useful for them. Truly, the result of the evaluations was a testament that MPI has once again succeeded as a training institute that provides resources for peacebuilders and peace advocates.

In the overall assessment, the participants also offered ideas for new courses and other ways that MPI could respond to their needs. Among the suggested courses for next year are the following: peace and governance; appreciative inquiry and local capacities for peace; peace journalism; restoration of social functioning of former combatants; and a field-based course related to restorative justice in the Asian context. MPI values these recommendations because they point towards the areas which MPI should take into consideration in its curricular development.

III. Conclusion

“Diversity, respect, appreciation, dialogue and understanding.” Ms. Christine Vertucci, Director of MPI, summarized the whole training in these five words. The essence of the annual trainings MPI conducts lies in the diversity of people, histories, cultures, ideas, beliefs and principles that are present. In these trainings, we do not fear the differences that abound and the divisions that may exist, but rather, we celebrate, respect and appreciate these differences. For it is through them that we move beyond our comfort zones and what is familiar to the unfamiliar and the unknown, where we challenge ourselves to learn about new paradigms and world views and how to bridge the gaps in between. MPI teaches us that conflict can be transformed, peace can be built, justice can be restored, and unity can exist in diversity. Nevertheless, only when we reach out, dialogue and understand the other can we reconcile these differences and begin the process of transforming our societies into peace-filled and just communities.





Message from the Director

On behalf of MPI, we wish to extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation once again to all the participants, facilitators, secretariat volunteers, and many others who worked so hard to make MPI 2012 an enriching learning experience and a great success. We hope that these efforts will be multiplied significantly at the community level in our respective countries and the web of interconnectedness that binds us all will expand to all corners of the globe. Let us constantly draw strength from the sense of belongingness and solidarity we found together in MPI that we may be sustained in our commitment to working for peace and justice wherever we may be.

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