



MPI 2011 ANNUAL TRAINING REPORT

I. Introduction: The Sacred Space

It was another successful training experience!

It has re-affirmed the uniqueness of the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute (MPI) to create the **sacred space**, a free and safe environment where peacebuilders from different countries gather together and share their stories, experiences and lessons from their own involvements in the work for peace and justice, allowing them to renew and strengthen their commitment to peacebuilding.

The sacred space was created during the **MPI 2011 Annual Peacebuilding Training** which was held from May 16 to June 3, 2011 in Davao City, Philippines. The builders of such space were the 127 participants, 24 facilitators and 16 secretariat volunteers from the 22 countries in Asia-Pacific, Africa, Europe and North America who dynamically participated in this three-week event. They represented different sectors such as the civil society, government, academe, military institution, legal profession, women, youth and indigenous cultural communities.



MPI offered foundation, thematic and field-based courses on various areas such as peacebuilding, conflict transformation, active non-violence, mediation, and trauma healing, among others (see *complete list of courses under IIa*). Given the growing needs of our partners and the emerging peace issues, MPI also developed and offered new courses with focus on advanced civilian protection, peace and justice advocacy, advanced mediation and gender and peace in relation to everyday life security.

Describing the course design and methods in this year's training program, MPI Director Christine Vertucci said that the diversity of the modules seeks to address the increasing complexity of conflict issues and socio-political contexts from which the participants come, while at the same time, presenting the success stories and other lessons from Mindanao.

In our continued pursuit for innovations, we organized two special events intended to reinforce the learning environment of the course structure: 1) the forum on *Peacebuilding through the Lens of Mindanao and International Civil Society* organized in partnership with the Mindanao Peaceweavers, and 2) the special workshop on *The Living Symbol of Song as a Resource for Nonviolent Action*.

The complementary contribution between and among the international and local facilitators in designing and handling the courses balanced the environment of learning and understanding.



Their experiences and expertise encouraged participants to enhance their knowledge and skills applicable 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 class, 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 operations of the training. It was the combination of the sincere efforts of the participants, facilitators and secretariat team that led MPI 2011 to its overwhelming success.

The overall evaluation of the training was inspiring and humbling. Out of 119 respondents, majority of them, or 70% found their overall experience at MPI to be excellent, and 25 or 21% gave the institute a rating of good. In terms of the relevance and application of courses, 64% ranked it excellent. In terms of the overall performance of the facilitators, an 81% rating of excellent was given.

At the end of each course, participants were also asked how they intend to apply the learnings acquired at MPI. Several ideas for peacebuilding initiatives emerged. The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), for instance, proposed to incorporate active non-violence theories in the basic orientation on peace education to its staff and partners. Those who are directly engaged in community organizing work plan to continue to transform local communities especially those that are vulnerable to armed skirmishes into sanctuaries of peace where people from diverse backgrounds live in harmonious co-existence with each other. Members of the academe also aim to incorporate peace education in the school curriculum and develop modules for alternative dispute resolution in the school system.



These, among others, form part of the web of interconnectedness that continues to expand as the work for peace also continues. The core of such a web is the commonality of the principles and views that fuel the minds and hearts of peacebuilders who were once gathered at the sacred space and are now entrusted to put to life the theories and concepts they have all learned and shared during the MPI training.

II. MPI 2011 Annual Training

a. Course Offerings and Facilitators

For 2011, MPI offered four foundation courses in Week 1, five thematic courses in Week 2, and two thematic and three field-based courses in Week 3. As earlier mentioned, MPI added four new courses to its curriculum: a) Theory and Practice of Mediation, b) Working Towards Change: Peace and Justice Advocacy, c) Gender, Peace and Everyday Life Security, and d) Advanced Civilian Protection. MPI also expanded its resource pool by inviting new experts to join its distinguished roster of MPI facilitators – King Oey from Indonesia/Netherlands, Chan Shun-hing and Chan Wai-fong, both from Hong Kong, China, and Michael F. Alar from the Philippines. A total of 18 classroom-based facilitators and 5 local organizational partners facilitated the foundation, thematic and field-based courses at MPI respectively.

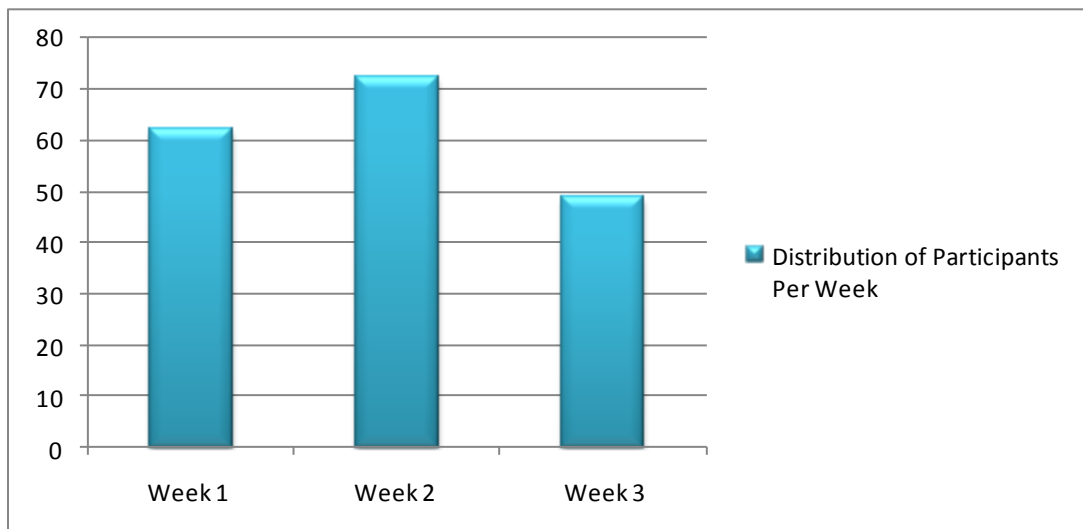
Here is a complete list of courses and facilitators during the MPI 2011 training.

Week 1: May 16-20, 2011 (Foundation Courses)		
1	Introduction to Conflict Transformation (ICT)	Wendy Kroeker (Canada) King Oey (Indonesia/Netherlands)
2	Fundamentals of Peacebuilding (FPB)	Paulo Baleinakorodawa (Fiji) Deddette Suacito (Philippines)
3	Peace Education: Concepts and Approaches (PECA)	Ofelia L. Durante (Philippines) Essex Giguiento (Philippines)
4	Active Non-violence: Philosophy, Theory and Practice (ANV)	Myla Leguro (Philippines) Jonathan Rudy (USA)
Week 2: May 23-27, 2011 (Thematic Courses)		
1	Conflict Resolution Skills: Mediation, Negotiation and Dialogue (CRS)	Paulo Baleinakorodawa (Fiji) Emmanuel Amancio (Philippines)
2	Theory and Practice of Mediation (TPM)	Wendy Kroeker (Canada) Jae Young Lee (South Korea)
3	Religion: Peacebuilding in Multi-Cultural Societies (REL)	Jonathan Rudy (USA) Alzad Taradji Sattar (Philippines) Maria Ida L. Giguiento (Philippines)
4	Trauma Healing and Reconciliation in Divided Communities (TH)	Al Fuertes (Philippines/USA) Deddette Suacito (Philippines)
5	Working Towards Change: Peace and Justice Advocacy (WTC)	Myla Leguro (Philippines) Michael Frank Alar (Philippines)
Week 3: May 30-June 3, 2011 (Thematic and Field-Based Courses)		
1	TC: Gender, Peace and Everyday Life Security (GP)	Chan Shun-hing (Hong Kong, China) Chan Wai-fong (Hong Kong, China)
2	TC: Advanced Civilian Protection (ACP)	Suzanna Tkalec (Croatia/Italy) Orson Sargado (Philippines)
3	FBC: Indigenous Peoples' Peacebuilding Mechanisms (IPPBM)	Kinaiyahan Foundation, Inc. (KFI)
4	FBC: Approaches to Grassroots Peacebuilding: Interreligious Dialogue and Zones of Peace (AGPB)	Elwyn Neri (Philippines) in coordination with Oblates of Mary Immaculate – Interreligious Dialogue (OMI-IRD) and Integrated Mindanaoans Association of Natives (IMAN)
5	FBC: People's Participation in Peace Processes (4Ps)	Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits, Inc. (EcoWEB) and PAKIGDAIT, Inc.

b. Participants

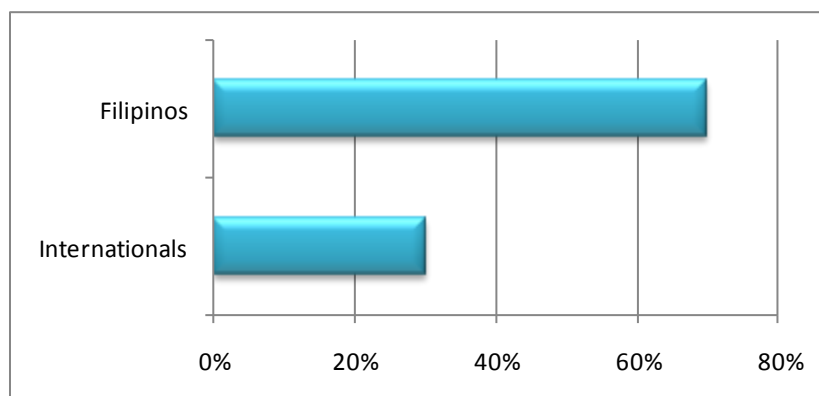
As stated earlier, a total number of **127 participants** attended the MPI 2011 Annual Peacebuilding Training. The statistics as to distribution of participants per week, origin, gender, religion, and organizations represented are provided below.

Figure 1. Distribution of participants per week



Out of 127 participants, the distribution per week was: 62 participants in Week 1, 72 participants in Week 2, and 49 participants in Week 3. While participants are encouraged to participate for the entire three weeks, they have the choice to take either one, two or three courses.

Figure 2. Origin



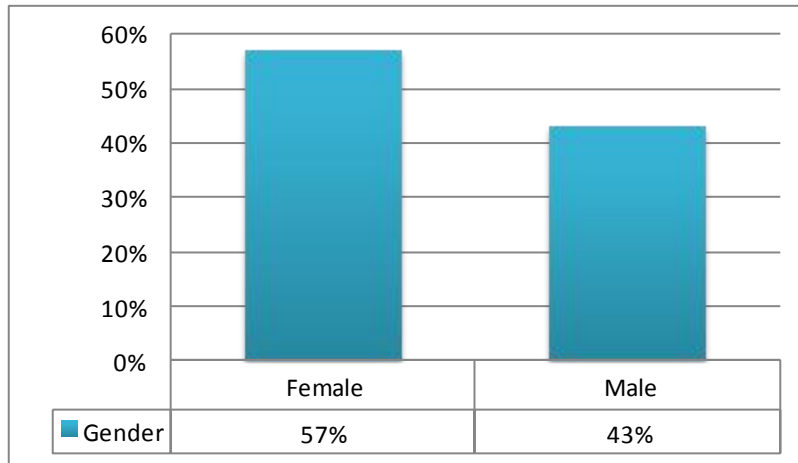
Out of 127 participants, 70% of them were Filipinos while 30% were internationals.

Filipino participants came from different areas all over the country, such as Pasig, Quezon and Taguig in Luzon; Samar and Antique in the Visayas; and Surigao, Butuan, General Santos,

Cotabato, Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Iligan, Basilan, Zamboanga, North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Compostela Valley, Davao Oriental, Lanao del Norte and Misamis Oriental in Mindanao.

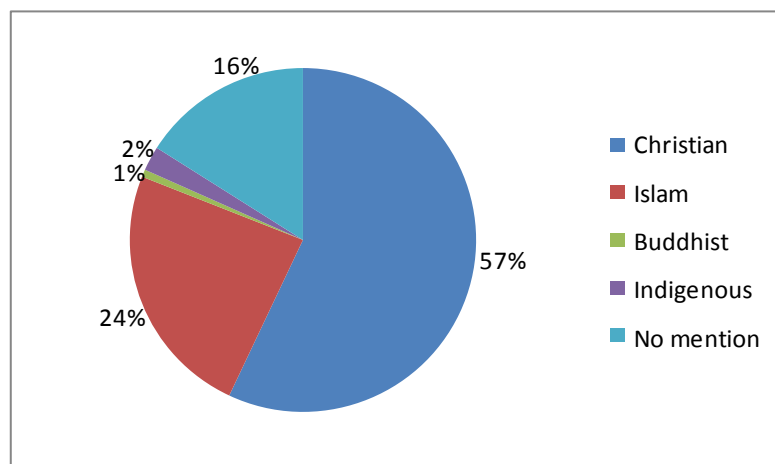
The international participants reached as far as Nigeria and Sierra Leone in Africa; Germany, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland in Europe; Canada and the United States in North America; Fiji in the South Pacific; Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Myanmar/Burma, Pakistan, South Korea, Sri Lanka, and Timor-Leste in Asia.

Figure 3. Gender



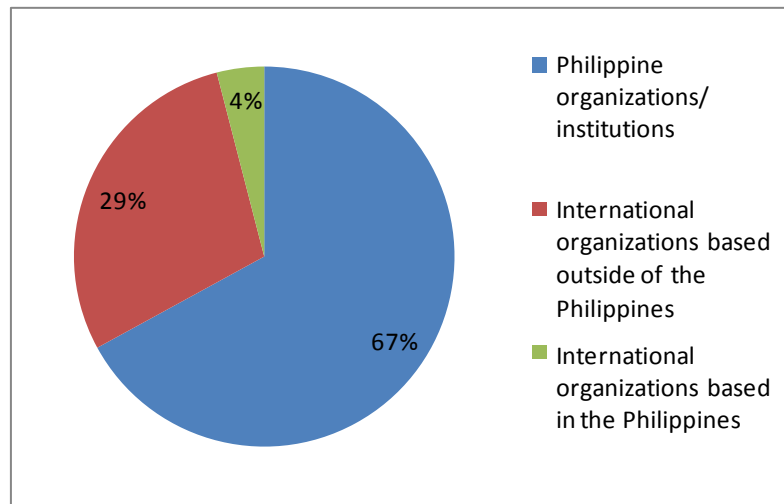
There was a good balance of participants in terms of gender. 57% of the participants were female, while 43% were male.

Figure 4. Religion



While the majority of the participants were Christians, other religious traditions such as Islam, Buddhism and indigenous faiths were also represented.

Figure 5. Background



In terms of participants' representations, 67% of the total number of participants were from Philippine institutions/organizations, 29% from international institutions/organizations based outside of the Philippines, and 4% from international institutions/organizations based in the Philippines.

The Philippine institutions and organizations represented were the following:

- 1) the government such as the Philippine Army and the Philippine Marines of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Education (DepEd), Local Government Units (LGUs) of Alamada, North Cotabato and of Kolambugan, Lanao del Norte, and the Davao City Prosecutor's Office;
- 2) the civil society groups such as the Mindanao Peoples Caucus (MPC), Kadtuntaya Foundation, Inc. (KFI), PAKIGDAIT, Inc, Reconciliatory Initiatives for Development Opportunities (RIDO), Mindanao People's Peace Movement (MPPM), Kaagapay OFW Resource Service Center, Tower, Inc., Peace Advocates Zamboanga (PAZ), Bangko sa Balay Foundation, Inc., Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits, Inc. (EcoWEB), Nagdilaab Foundation, Inc., Kagan Foundation, Mindanao Peaceweavers (MPW), Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS), Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), Education Development Center, Kinaiyahan Foundation, Inc., SALIGAN Mindanaw, Peacebuilders Community, Inc., Documentation Action Group for Sulu (DAGS), Suara Kalilintad, and the Mindanao Women Writers, Inc;
- 3) the civilian protection groups such as the Bantay Ceasefire, the Civilian Protection Component of the GPH-MILF International Monitoring Team, and Sagip Sibilyan;
- 4) the academe such as Southern Christian College, Miriam College Center for Peace Education, Ateneo Peace and Culture Institute of Ateneo de Zamboanga University, Claret School of Tumahubong, and the Religious Studies Program of Silliman University,
- 5) the indigenous group such as the MAMACILA Apo Ginopakan Higa-onon, Inc, and
- 6) the religious sector such as the Oblates of Notre Dame from Notre Dame University.

The international institutions/organizations outside of the Philippines represented in the training included the following:

- 1) **ASIA.** Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, Mennonite Central Committee from Laos, Southern Sumatra Christian Church, Nahdhotul Ulama, YABIMA (Self Guidance Education) and FPLAG Solo from *Indonesia*; Gereja Kristen Injili di Tanah Papua (Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission) from *West Papua*; Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment, Inc. from *Myanmar/Burma*; Catholic Relief Services from *East Timor*; World Council of Religions from *Pakistan*; CORNERSTONE from *India*; Ritsumeikan University from *Japan*; Nonviolent Peaceforce from *Sri Lanka*; Korea Anabaptist Center, Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute (NARPI) and Connexus from *South Korea*; Sanayee Development Organization from *Afghanistan* and Lingnan University from *Hong Kong, China*;
- 2) **AFRICA.** Mankind's Activities for Development Accreditation (MADAM) and Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADEA) from *Sierra Leone*; and Reconciliation Trainers Africa (RETA) from *Nigeria*;
- 3) **EUROPE.** Civil Peace Service from *Germany*; and Bethlehem Mission Immensee from *Switzerland*;
- 4) **NORTH AMERICA.** George Mason University and Juniata College from the *United States*; and Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Canadian Mennonite University, and the University of Manitoba, Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice from *Canada*; and
- 5) **SOUTH PACIFIC.** Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding from *Fiji*.

The international institutions/organizations based in the Philippines were forumZFD in Surigao, Davao and Butuan and Binhi ng Kapayapaan in Quezon City.

c. Secretariat Team

The **MPI 2011 Secretariat Team** was a dynamic group of young professionals and university students, bringing with them to the training their own contribution of skills, experience and expertise, in the spirit of teamwork and volunteerism. They passed the screening process and stood out from the rest of the applicants who also expressed interest to be part of the team. They possessed the qualifications that MPI sought in its volunteers, such as active involvement in community-based programs, openness to work in a multi-cultural setting, willingness to work under pressure and during odd hours, and ability to work in a team.



The Secretariat Team was a good mix of internationals and Filipinos working hand-in-hand to meet the needs of the participants and facilitators and the demands of the training as a whole. It was a mutual learning experience for each of the secretariat, not just in terms of sharing commitment and work discipline, but also exchanging the uniqueness of each one's culture and values. Filipino volunteers came from the areas of Davao, General Santos, Iligan, and Metro Manila while the international volunteers came from such countries as Canada, Japan, South Korea, and the USA.

The Secretariat Team was composed of the secretariat head, class assistants, special events coordinator, class documentors, photographer, video documentor, and translator. Prior to the training, the team had orientation and participated in a teambuilding process which helped them get to know each other's strengths and limitations. During the training, the team participated in daily briefing and debriefing sessions to address emerging concerns and problems.

The sharing of inputs and suggestions between the Secretariat Team and the representative of the Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute (NARPI), Ms. Karen Joy Spicher, also helped MPI in enhancing further the administrative and logistical aspects of the training, including the registration process and classroom scenarios. The learning was also reciprocated on her part given that her immersion with MPI equipped her to prepare for NARPI's first training in South Korea in August this year.

d. Classroom-based Courses



The methods, strategies, and course contents applied 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 classroom settings were interactive, participatory and dynamic. Handouts were given and audio visual materials were used to supplement the learnings of the participants.

Facilitators invited guest lecturers to provide valuable inputs related to the topics. The Active Non-Violence class, for instance, invited an Aikido master to teach the participants the art of self defense without resorting to violence. The Peace and Justice Advocacy class invited the Head of the Mindanao Commission on Women to provide inputs on women's participation in peace and security processes and mechanisms. The Advanced Civilian Protection class invited the Bantay Ceasefire and the Nonviolence Peaceforce Civilian Protection Component teams to present the actual efforts of communities to monitor ceasefire violations and uphold human rights and international humanitarian law.

An exciting innovation designed by the facilitators this year was the inter-class simulation exercise involving two classes: Introduction to Conflict Transformation and Fundamentals of Peacebuilding. It was the first time that two classes merged for a simulation activity with topics that related to both courses.

Field trips were also organized. The Religion: Peacebuilding in Multi-Cultural Societies class, for instance, took a trip to the Islamic Center of Davao City and the Bishop-Ulama Conference for the participants to directly hear from different religious groups their efforts for interfaith dialogue and reconciliation. The Gender, Peace and Everyday Life Security class went to the public market in Davao City in relation to their topic on food security.

e. Field-Based Courses

e1. People's Participation in Peace Processes



This course was designed and facilitated by Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits, (EcoWEB) and PAKIGDAIT, two NGOs that are located in Iligan City and operate in Lanao del Norte Province. Six participants from Afghanistan, Indonesia, Timor Leste and the Philippines participated in this course that looked at grassroots peacebuilding initiatives and interfaith peacebuilding approaches to resolve resource-based conflicts. They visited affected communities and had

discussions and exchanges with religious leaders, local government officials, and military personnel. The participants received insights and gained understanding of practical applications of peacebuilding theories and strategies used by local peace advocates in Lanao del Norte.

e2. Indigenous Peoples' Peacebuilding Mechanisms

This course was designed and facilitated by Kinaiyahan Foundation. It looked at conflict resolution from the perspective of two indigenous communities – the Matigsalugs in Marilog District, Davao City and the Talaandigs in Sungco, Lantapan, Bukidnon Province. The nine participants from Germany, Indonesia, Nigeria, Timor Leste, the USA and the Philippines experienced how these indigenous peoples settle conflicts based on their indigenous values. The participants visited these communities and spoke with tribal leaders and community members about their perspectives on peacebuilding. The visitors also experienced the traditional culture of these communities and heard their stories and listened to their traditional musical instruments. With the Talaandigs, the participants danced with the community and viewed the soil paintings portraying their folk heroes and ancestors. Through this course, the participants began to understand the integration of peacebuilding with the culture and traditions of these tribal peoples.



e3. Approaches to Grassroots Peacebuilding: Interreligious Dialogue and Zones of Peace



This course was facilitated through the support of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate – Interreligious Dialogue (OMI-IRD) in Pikit, and the Integrated Mindanaoan Association of Natives (IMAN) in Kabacan, both in North Cotabato Province. Six participants from Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, the USA, and the Philippines were immersed in the zones of peace in Pikit and in Muslim communities in Maguindanao Province. They learned about these local communities' perspectives on

peacebuilding in the midst of poverty and conflict. The participants began to understand the struggle of the Moro people for justice and peace, and community efforts to bridge the divides of religion and ethnicity. Through their interactions with these rural folks who suffered greatly during the years of war in Mindanao, the participants came to understand that peacebuilding is a multi-dimensional process and that there is always a need for safe spaces for healing.

f. Opening and Closing Cultural Ceremonies

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

The Kaliwat Theatre Collective is a group of performers and artists whose skills and creativity are inspired by the cultures and traditions of the indigenous cultural communities and aesthetic richness of Mindanao.



The theater group led the singing, dancing and rejoicing which brought to life this year's theme *Building Peace across Borders and Cultures*.

As per MPI's tradition, the Kaliwat performers escorted participants on stage during the so-called parade of nations to represent their respective countries.

Distinguished speakers gave inspirational messages during the opening ceremonies. Bae Era España, a woman tribal leader from Kidapawan in Mindanao, encouraged the participants to use their learnings at MPI to rebuild the culture of peace in themselves, their community, and their country. Ms. Myra Alih, Secretary of the Regional Department of Labor and Employment in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), also graced MPI with her inspirational message, expressing her gratitude for being able to return to what she considered home. Mr. Jae Young Lee, Director of the Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute in South Korea and Mr. Paulo

Baleinakorodawa, the Program Manager of the Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding in Fiji, both of whom were MPI 2011 facilitators, also presented their stories and lessons on peacebuilding and described the importance of education in the work for peace, justice and reconciliation.

g. Country Presentations

Country presentations are special events where participants make creative presentations that represent their countries' cultures and traditions.

Two sets of evening country presentations per week for the first two weeks were organized.

The first to present were the participants from India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka who called the night a *Hot Masala Night* because of the variety of sights and sounds they presented. The Pakistanis showed us their country's geography, economy, education and culture through a creative audio visual presentation. The Indian participant presented his country's national flag, explained its design and symbolism and connected it with his country's political scenarios and conflict situations. The participant from Sri Lanka rendered a song of his own composition about his life and work in the country. The highlight of the night was the fashion show performed by all the participants from the three South Asian countries showcasing their traditional clothes with much flare and bravado!



The second presenters were the Filipinos. The concept of their presentation was to allow the international participants the opportunity to play Filipino childhood games such as *Luksong Tinik*, *Bulan-Bulan* and *Tumba Preso*. The night was called a *Kasiyahan Night* or night of fun. Filipino participants reminisced about the joy of their childhood through these games that depict the liveliness and vigor of Filipinos. The international participants played these games with much enthusiasm and appreciation. It was a night full of cheers, applause and glee!

The third presenters were the participants from Myanmar/Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos and Timor Leste. Since they were all from Southeast Asian countries, they called the night *SEA SAW Night*. Their concept was not only to show the distinct features of each of their countries, but also to present their commonalities in the fight against violence and oppression and the work for just and peaceful societies through the preservation of their music and culture. The Burmese and Indonesian participants danced their traditional dances, bringing with them the messages for peace and equality. The participants from Cambodia and Timor Leste presented through audio visual presentations their countries' current political, economic and cultural situations. The participant from Laos played his traditional musical instrument and sang a traditional song. After all presentations, the audience was invited to dance with them and celebrate the night of their different cultures.

The participants from Afghanistan, Germany, Japan, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and the USA were the last presenters in the series of country presentations. The Afghan participant who wore his traditional costume danced his country's traditional dance and encouraged participants to know more about the beauty of his country. The Germans described the uniqueness of their country by showing their sports, foods, tourist attractions, and historical sites. The Japanese taught us how to

bow and its relevance in their culture. The two from Sierra Leone taught us one of their dances. The Nigerian talked about the similarities between rural Philippines and rural Nigeria. And the Americans taught us a Hawaiian dance and played a Native American chant on an Apache flute. Because of the diversity of the cultures presented, they called the night a *ONE POT NIGHT*, which demonstrated unity and harmony amidst such diversity.

h. Special Events Program

As part of the 2011 training, MPI instituted its Special Events Program that was an innovation this year. This consisted of a peacebuilding forum and a special workshop which are part of MPI's efforts to enhance its educational goals and to better serve the growing needs of partners and networks.

h1. Peacebuilding Forum

A forum entitled *Peacebuilding through the Lens of Mindanao and International Civil Society* was organized by MPI in partnership with Mindanao Peaceweavers, the largest consortium of peacebuilding organizations in Mindanao. Held on May 21, 2011, the main objective of the forum was to provide an opportunity for mutual learning and sharing among the people of Mindanao and other countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. Through such a forum, MPI aimed to strengthen its relations with local partners and expand its network in Mindanao.



Distinguished speakers from Mindanao, Sierra Leone, and Pakistan presented the challenges they face in their work for peace and their stories of success in the midst of conflict and war.



Prof. Rudy (Ompong) Rodil, an active Mindanao historian and peace advocate, spoke about his so-called distilled version of his 38 years conscious study of the major conflicts in Mindanao-Sulu. He presented the three major political conflicts in Mindanao, Sulu Archipelago and Palawan: the struggle for Bangsamoro self-determination, the struggle for national democracy with a socialist perspective, and the assertion of the indigenous right to self-determination. Prof. Rodil described how the uncolonized Moro sultanates were

included in the Spanish cession together with the newly independent Philippines to the USA through the Treaty of Paris without their plebiscitary consent. Such illegal annexation caused the armed conflict in Mindanao to remain unresolved until today. He emphasized that the settlement of conflict is healing wounds and building relationships in the indigenous way. At the end of his presentation, Prof. Rodil posed a challenge to transform negative energies into positive ones in order to create the climate for a culture of peace in the Philippines.

Atty. Raissa Jajurie, Mindanao Coordinator of SALIGAN Mindanaw, on her part presented the peacebuilding initiatives of civil society in Mindanao in response to the ongoing armed conflict as described by Prof. Ompong. She explained how civil society groups in Mindanao work in the different tracks of the peace processes – for political settlement, for interfaith dialogue, or for peacebuilding and conflict transformation at the grassroots level.

Shecku Mansaray, an adult educator and administrator from the Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADEA), shared peacebuilding initiatives in post-conflict Sierra Leone and the Mano River Region since the civil war ended nine years ago. He presented an overview of the situation in his country and the once volatile Mano River Basin, zeroing in on the main interventions of civil society and the SLADEA initiative for consolidating the hard-won peace in Sierra Leone.

Raheel Sharoon, Coordinator of the World Council of Religions in Lahore, Pakistan presented how civil society intervenes in the issues of peace and conflict in his country since Pakistan has long been under military rule and is facing challenging problems including terrorism, poverty, illiteracy and corruption. He emphasized the importance of dialogue and awareness building in resolving conflicts and the need to engage youth in peace education.

The forum was attended by the MPI 2011 participants and about 50 local partners from Bukidnon, Davao, Cotabato, Iligan and Zamboanga in Mindanao.

h2. Special Workshop

With a dynamic group of 20 participants, Christy Reed, from the Conflict and Peace Studies Program of the University of Manitoba in Canada, facilitated a special workshop on May 25,



2011 entitled *The Living Symbol of Song as a Resource for Nonviolent Action*. The purpose of the workshop was for the participants to identify historic and current ways in which music is being used as a community resource in their contexts and to imagine future ways that these musical forms could be used to mobilize and invigorate nonviolent action.

Ms. Reed drew on Gandhian theories of nonviolent resistance and presented the work and music of Papuan anthropologist and musician Arnold Ap in establishing nonviolently a unified Papuan identity. The presentation invited participants to engage in an interactive process of song exploration in their own cultural traditions. The participants were grouped

according to the communities or countries they represented, and were asked to translate into songs the struggles or problems of their respective country or community. They presented unique compositions of songs that depicted their sentiments, feelings and stands on critical issues they encountered in their own countries, and created a sense of solidarity and unity among all the participants.

i. Documentation of New Courses

MPI continuously develops its programs to respond to the growing needs of our partners. Peace is a broad and dynamic concept that consists of an interplay of issues and schools of thought that are made more complex by the influence of values, norms, systems, policies and institutions. Surrounding the concept of peace are interconnecting dots showing causes, effects and relationships between various emerging concepts relative to it. It is essential for MPI to cover the interconnected branches of peace and the different layers of intervention in order to ensure an optimum learning experience for the participants and to live up to MPI's goal to become one of Asia's innovative and dynamic training centers for peacebuilders.

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

- Theory and Practice of Mediation facilitated by Wendy Kroeker and Jae Young Lee in Week 2;
- Working Towards Change: Peace and Justice Advocacy facilitated by Myla Leguro and Michael Frank Alar in Week 2;
- Gender, Peace and Everyday Life Security facilitated by Chan Shun-hing and Chan Wai-fong in Week 3; and
- Advanced Civilian Protection facilitated by Suzanna Tkalec and Orson Sargado in Week 3.

Class documentors 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. This documentation serves as a means for the facilitators to assess and improve their course syllabi and to provide a reference to other peacebuilding institutes interested in how MPI conducts its courses.

j. Translation (Language Not a Barrier to Learning)

One of the requirements to qualify for the MPI training is the ability to speak and write in English. This year, MPI relaxed this requirement to provide opportunities for peacebuilders, who are not proficient in English but whose experience, awareness and commitment to peacebuilding meet MPI's standards, to participate in the 2011 annual training.



To prove that language is not a barrier to learning, MPI welcomed Christy Reed to the team to participate as a translator for two participants from Indonesia and another two participants from West Papua, Indonesia. They are religious leaders whose participation in the MPI training were encouraged and supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Indonesia.

Before the training, there was a long debate about whether or not to accept this challenge, but what prevailed was the principle that, as peacebuilders, translation should allow for honoring each person's experiences by letting them hear and express themselves in the language most comfortable to them. Christy uses her expertise in language as a tool, wherever it is needed, because she finds that when those who have been silenced speak in a time and place where they would otherwise be excluded, everyone experiences a moment of liberation.

At the end of the training, the Indonesian participants found the training to be very enriching, inspiring and meaningful to their work. In her completion report, Christy Reed said connections were made across ethnic divides in Indonesia as well as across international boundaries of difference. Through course interactions, living arrangements, travel, sharing meals together, and participation in after-class events, connections across these divides were begun.

k. Photo and Video Documentation

MPI invited Mr. Toto Lozano to be the official photographer for the training. He worked on a concept entitled *MPI 2011 in Pictures* which aimed to capture the essence of the training in visual form through photos. These were uploaded to the institute's official website and Facebook accounts. (See www.mpiasia.net or www.facebook.com/mindanaopeacebuilding)



The highlight of Mr. Lozano's work was what he called "**Pieces of Peace.**" Every participant, facilitator and secretariat member were asked to write their statement of peace on any kind of material and in any form and pose with it for a single photo shot in black and white. These photos were put into one video stream that created a dramatic flash of portraits, messages and poses of peacebuilders with their interpretations of peace. During the training, this was used as a backdrop to the country

presentations and the closing ceremonies.

MPI also invited Mr. Harris Dunlap from Juniata College in Pennsylvania, USA to be the official videographer for the training. His task was to take footage and conduct interviews in a manner that would present the uniqueness of MPI in providing the sacred space where participants are free to talk, interact and learn from each other. The video aims to promote MPI and its annual training program, recruit participants, and reconnect MPI with its alumni. The video is expected to be finished by the end of 2011.

l. 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, participants went to Eden Nature Park and Resort where they enjoyed a guided shuttle tour around the forestry, gardens and sanctuaries preserved and protected at the park. At the end of the second week, participants hit the Costa Marina Beach Resort on the Island Garden City of Samal to relax by swimming in the clear blue waters of the Davao Gulf and enjoying the tropical natural surroundings.

m. Support to Local Community Producers

MPI believes in the creativity and resourcefulness of local community producers. We do our best to patronize and promote locally-made products as our gesture of support to our local partners who make optimum use of their skills and talents to sustain their economic needs and to empower themselves as self-reliant individuals amidst poverty and insecurity.

Instead of buying bags sold by big companies, MPI used as training kits native bags locally produced by an organized Moro women's association in Kabacan, North Cotabato, who are mothers.

Another gesture of support was allowing Karen handicrafts to be promoted and sold at MPI. These handicrafts were brought to the venue by Ms. Naw Dina, a participant from Burma, who works as a Program Officer of Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment (WEAVE). Her organization is supporting Karen women refugees who, due to the armed conflict, fled to the evacuation camps on the Thai-Burma border for temporary shelter and safe refuge. WEAVE enabled the Karen women in the camps to use their skills to make handicraft products of various kinds by blending traditional and contemporary knowledge of weaving and embroidery. Proceeds of the sale went directly to the women and their families in the refugee camps.

III. Conclusion

On behalf of MPI, we wish to extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all the participants, facilitators, secretariat members, and many others who worked so hard to make MPI 2011 an enriching learning experience and a great success. We hope that these efforts will be multiplied at the community level in our respective countries and the web of interconnectedness will expand to all corners of the globe.

Together we created something bigger than our individual selves. There was a tremendous Spirit flowing through all of us, our classes, and our activities and during those days. It uplifted us and facilitated our exchanges and dialogues and created among us a sense of oneness with each other and all that surrounds us. This experience has given us hope as we continue our work for justice and peace in the face of great adversity and many challenges. Let us draw strength from our unity and solidarity that will sustain us wherever we may be.