Leaders' Narratives

Stories of Leadership & Peace
By the Cohort 5 Fellows, Mindanao Bridging Leaders Program

The Mindanao Bridging Leaders Program
Co-Creating Peace in Conflict Affected Areas in Muslim Mindanao
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STORIES OF LEADERSHIP for PEACE
AIM-TeaM Energy Center for Bridging Leadership Cohort 2

Introduction

More than a year ago the second cohort of fellows of the Mindanao Bridging Leaders Program began their “change” journey. Between “workshops”, (see Annex A for Bridging Leadership framework) they worked to understand the challenges of social “divides” and how their interventions addressed these “divides”, build and co-create with their multi-stakeholder networks new “arrangements”, prototypes for peace-building in communities made fragile by conflict and violence. The Bridging Leadership technology enables a response adequate to meet the complex challenge framed by deep “divides” and repeated cycles of conflict and violence.

The Program fellows’ prototypes come at a most opportune time as the details of a framework agreement for the Bangsamoro is close at hand. Restoring confidence and transforming security, justice, and economic institutions is possible even within a generation in Mindanao. Transforming institutions that can deliver jobs, justice and security start with “building blocks” of multi-stakeholder communities working together to address “divides”, building adequate confidence for sustainable peace-building.

Abstracts of each MBLP Fellow’s narrative of leadership and the challenge of getting results and relationships right are laid out in the following pages. The abstracts are drawn from interviews, presentations and updates by the fellows themselves and third-party monitoring and evaluation with their immediate collaborators and community members. Each Fellow’s narrative will be presented by them during this “recital”. Each Fellow will have a unique starting point – and given the fragile state in which bridging leadership processes are to be put in place, the speed and depth of the transformation will differ for each of the fellows. For all, the “co-creation” phase has started and deepened. The runway of the program is too short to see the substantial long-term impacts of the change projects. The Center will return to the fellows (from both cohorts 1 and 2) in 2014 to do an impact assessment.

Narratives from the Ground

The fellows’ change projects are “prototypes” of and “pathways” for addressing community-driven concerns on peace and development. These are the result of a better understanding of the “divides” and what causes them; multi-stakeholder engagements, beginning with the Guiding Coalitions; and the access to building and co-creating “new” arrangements to a challenge that has been “co-sensed” and co-defined” by a growing number of “owners”. Fast and visible results help restore confidence and transform institutions not only of government but of families and communities. In dealing with violent threats and implement institutional and sustainable change, in the end.

Through the fellowship period, the fellows formed their own network, to include other fellows of previous cohorts and the partner-academic institutions to mobilize the communities and the change. In these change projects, the concept of “co-leading” or “walking with others” towards one specific vision or goal is emphasized (co-ownership in the language of Bridging Leadership). These change projects will hopefully influence policy, program development and implementation, resource allocation and prioritization, based on the lessons they have generated and will hopefully aid the transition of the Bangsamoro.

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1 The MBLP has two cohorts of 20-22 fellows each from different sectors like the military, the local governments, etc. Cohort 1 fellows presented on. Their stories may be accessed at www.bridgingleadership.aim.edu.
The Fellows

The fellows also form a multi-stakeholder “learning laboratory” that mirror the “ground”. Majority of the fellows (80%) are either from or implementing projects in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) with the rest of the fellows implementing their change initiatives in Iligan, North Cotabato, Zamboanga City, and Davao Oriental. Of the twenty (20) fellows, 35% are government representatives at the national, regional and provincial levels; 20% are from non-government or civil society organizations; another 20% from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (from the Philippine Marine Corps and the Philippine Army up to a two-star General); and the rest from the academe (10%) and, for the first time, from business(10%) and media (5%).

Platforms for Action

The Fellows’ stories are grouped according to four (4) key “platforms” or themes that address the areas of “vulnerability” of communities in a “fragile” situation as Mindanao:

1. assurance of security and protection of human rights;
2. improving the Delivery of Basic Services;
3. provision of livelihood and economic opportunities;
4. strengthening of social capital/social cohesion

The platforms are NOT exclusive of one another. Many of the projects actually deliver on more than two of these platforms. Bridging leadership and its processes serve as “backbone” to enhance, accelerate and deepen the interventions. In some cases, fellows changed the direction and the scope of their initial proposals. Good governance and the creation of inclusive-enough coalitions anchor all FOUR platforms towards addressing the repeated cycles of political and criminal violence, compromised economic growth and stagnant human indicators typical of conflict-affected communities. Restoration of confidence in collective action towards helping restore confidence in legitimate institutions and governance to ensure citizen security, justice, and sources of income are made available

Ensuring a coalition based on confidence in improved justice and shared economic prospects is seen to help sustain Mindanao’s momentum for change – creating the necessary break from past gestures and practices. These “acts of leadership” become indispensable ingredients in making development more responsive towards addressing – even in pockets or in phases – the cycle of violence and the fragility that has beset Mindanao for years.
Platform 1:  
ASSURANCE OF SECURITY  
AND PROTECTION  
OF HUMAN RIGHTS  

Without a basic level of citizen security, there can be no enduring social and economic development. The following stories show how security can be secured, stabilized or recovered and equally eroded with the presence or absence of development initiatives. They also showcase how fast and visible results help restore confidence in the government’s ability to deal with violent threats and implement institutional and social change. The role of community, non-government groups, and private-sector partnerships in extending the state’s capacity to deliver is emphasized in these stories and how security operations can pave the way for economic activity for marginalized groups that, in turn, help improve perceptions of justice by the community. These stories signal the positive effects of inclusive coalitions. Civil and military cooperation has been central to the fellows’ initiatives helping redefine the rules of engagement among the military, civil society organizations, community members and even humanitarian organizations. Such changes constantly pose important questions for all sectors helping to find common ground and agreements on core issues of responsibility and expertise towards the ultimate goal of saving lives and maintaining human dignity in the face of widespread threats to human survival in a conflict state. The following stories showcase how fast and visible results help restore confidence in the government’s ability to deal with violent threats and implement institutional and social change. The role of community, non-government groups, and private-sector partnerships in extending the state’s capacity to deliver is emphasized in these stories and how security operations can pave the way for economic activity for marginalized groups that, in turn, help improve perceptions of justice by the community. These stories signal the positive effects of inclusive coalitions.

- “Constituency Building with the Security Forces in Lantawan, Basilan”  
  Maj. Franco Raphael H. Alano

- “Access to Economic Opportunity and Empowerment of Farmers in Lantawan”  
  Myra M. Alih

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- “Protecting Women Manobos’ Rights Against Violence and Abuse”  
  Jennifer Pia Sibug-Las
Constituency Building with the Security Forces in Lantawan, Basilan

Maj. Franco Raphael H. Alano

Joined the fellowship as Executive Officer, Special Operations Task Force Basilan, Philippine Marine Corps, Armed Forces of the Philippines; Presently the Deputy U7 of the Western Mindanao Command, PMC-AFP

“I never imagined that I would be able to contribute to society the way I do today, and I never expected to be this attached to my project. MBLP made me a better person that even my closest friends and relatives noticed the change in me and it gave me the ability to help others change as well.” (2/6/2013)

Having grown up in Basilan, Franco’s dedication to ensure the province’s development and security is deeply ingrained. As he grew up, he realized the need for more “inclusivity” in his actions. So much so that Muslim communities have welcomed him with open arms – a stark difference from what he grew up hearing from some relatives (“dapat patayin na lang lahat ng Muslim” – we should just kill all Muslims). Franco’s strong sense of nationalism further drives his need to help ensure that Basilan thrives as an economic center.

As a member of the marine corps, Franco’s first challenge to realize his personal vision was his organization. The question was: Given the directive for Bayanihan, how could they, as a unit, help establish better understanding within the military on how to work towards peace and development? What process did they need to go through to have a better appreciation of how their role as members of the AFP has changed? To understand the community better, Franco started with a survey of the community’s perception of the “frontliners”, the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Units (CAFGUs). With this in hand, he convened his own community to work on the survey results with the other stakeholders. Initiatives were implemented such as: monitoring of conflicts resolved through CAFGUs; projects for CAFGUs integrated in barangay peace and development plans; the need to define and establish the role of the CAFGUs in the peace agreement transition period; community involvement in capacity building for CAFGUs across 30 barangays. A second survey to assess the level of trust the community had in the military for the local government unit of Lantawan was conducted midway through the fellowship period with encouraging results. resulting in positive feedback.

Access to Economic Opportunity and Empowerment of Farmers in Lantawan

Myra M. Alih

Provincial Science and Technology Director

Department of Science and Technology – Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao

Complementing the efforts of previous MBLP fellows such as Yusop Alano (MBLP Cohort 1) who initiated youth empowerment summits in Lantawan, Basilan, Myra embarks on a journey that brings her to the grassroots level. For the first time, she begins to understand the workings of the common farmer in Basilan, specifically in Lantawan, and the challenges they face. Dialoguing with the community of farmers (from 10 out of 25 barangays in Lantawan) brings her to act on certain initiatives such as ensuring regular access to market information (ex. daily monitoring of price of commodities) to ensure farmers are able to negotiate good prices for their products, helping the farmers’ groups form associations and federate to ensure their voice is heard in policy development and in program implementation by both government and non-government bodies. Tapping into her social capital, she reaches out to multiple sectors (ARMM government line agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and within her organization as well, the DOST; civil society groups such as Nagdilaab Foundation, Inc., led by a pioneer BL Fellow of the Center, Ms. Dedette Suacito; members of the private sector and chambers; and the like) as well as her co-fellows under the MBLP (ex. Franco Alano). Myra works with the farmers of Lantawan in their bid to be responsible for their own development and government to secure their economic futures.

Together with her multi-stakeholder Guiding Coalition, Myra convenes an Agri-Business Summit in October 2012, a first for Lantawan and Basilan. The weeklong affair spurred collaboration of farmers’ associations who actively contributed to the implementation of activities per day (sharing the cost of meals, sharing produce and technical know-how). Marketing opportunities and linkages with key agencies such as the DTI were established during the Summit. The summit has also been incorporated as a regular component of the Municipal Development Plan with a special body created to ensure farmers’ federations’ participation in LGU
decision-making for agricultural and entrepreneurial development. Lantawan now engages in inter-cropping and multi-cropping supported by a provincial ordinance to replicate the initiative in other municipalities.

Part of these associations are members of the MILF and some rebel returnees who have found the engagement worthwhile and responsive to their needs. Technology transfer and capacity building activities continue for Lantawan farmers.

Winning and Sustaining Peace and Development in the Province of Davao Oriental: Human Security through Human Development

Maj. Gen. Ariel B. Bernardo
Commanding General of the 10th Infantry Division
Philippine Army, Armed Forces of the Philippines

The General had initially come with a plan all ready to be implemented. He realized, however, that for the program to be sustainable, beyond his tour of duty or when the AFP will “move out” of the community, the community must be involved. Because of his commitment to listen to other stakeholders, and given his position of authority, Ariel is able to mobilize and convince various stakeholders to share in the vision of a truly developed and peaceful Davao Oriental.

Part of his listening entailed the conduct of a needs assessment survey to determine issues and concerns of stakeholders on the ground. Post-intervention surveys are also being developed to assess impact of interventions. Various opportunities for dialogue through summits towards institutionalizing the Serbisyo Caravan of the 10th Infantry Division resulted to partnerships with and resources from the LGUs – considering the LGUs are seen as the sustaining mechanism for development programs primarily initiated by the AFP. Partnerships with IP communities, various non-government agencies and other stakeholders through the conduct of economic and livelihood activities have served as platforms for dialogues between rebel returnees, government and community members. These include projects such as Gulayan sa Barangay/Paaralan, mushroom culture, tilapia raising, banana fiber production, livestock and poultry.

Through the partnership of the 67th Infantry Brigade and the provincial and municipal agricultural offices, a demonstration farm in Brgy. Aragon, Cateel, Davao Oriental was established (Aug. 27, 2012). The farm provides training on livelihood from seaweeds and tilapia fingerling production, animal dispersal and has served as the base for the 10th ID’s community development training in the municipality.

For the General, the ultimate measure of success for the AFP’s goal of ensuring human security in key conflict areas is when “sila na mismo nag-iisip nang kung anong pwedeng gawin for human development” (when they are the ones that actually look for what can be done to ensure human development).

Sustaining Peace in Pikit, North Cotobato:
Understanding How to Sustainably Address Rido

Maj. Benjamin D. Hao
Batallion Commander, 7th Infantry Brigade (Pikit, North Cotabato)
Philippine Army, Armed Forces of the Philippines

As part of ensuring he has data on rido and that his theories on addressing them are sound, Benjie went into intensive research on recorded incidents of rido since 2011 in Mindanao. Results of his research covered type, causes, recurrence, cost and displacement of families. His research revealed to him that (1) data on rido were limited and unable to define which rido are recurring and which are new; and (2) the challenge would be to convince members of his guiding coalition (GC) to find ways to ensure sustainable interventions in addressing or preventing rido.

Together with a Guiding Coalition, Benjie continues to work on five (5) cases of rido, with 10 or 15 more expected to occur in coming months.

Benjie is a member of the Good Wednesday Group for Peace which enables him to assess, with other stakeholders, how the AFP implements its Bayanihan program – whether this is truly responsive to the
community development needs and the concerns that spur rido. Benjie also goes on a regular radio program where he reiterates the idea that “the military is not the solution” to rido or conflict...that while the military can intervene and help solve the fighting, the main problems, the underlying causes are not addressed. Benjie attempts to capture the underlying causes of rido in the hope that articulating the same will empower key stakeholders in Pikit to find ways to manage or avoid contributory factors or ensure mechanisms are put in place to ensure continued peace in Pikit (rido in Pikit is at a standstill following interventions from the local Mayor). He continues to compile stories of peace and narrate the same to young members of the community, to students, with the end goal that awareness on conflicts in the area is raised through the ‘stories of hope.’ Benjie believes that the youth need to be involved to ensure rido is avoided and peace be attained for a long time in Pikit.

| Protecting Women Manobos’ Rights Against Violence and Abuse |
| Jennifer Pia Sibug-Las |
| Legal Officer, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples |
| North Cotabato Provincial Office |

Jen went through a long process of self-reflection as part of the fellowship. Faced with the various issues of indigenous peoples in an ever-changing environment that has further marginalized the rights of her people, the Manobos, she goes into several processes determining what would be the best and most representative change initiative she can undertake in the fellowship.

Finally coming to terms to what is closest to her heart as a tribal leader and merging her role as a legal officer of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), she pursues the protection of women Manobos. Traditional practices of the Manobos further undermine the rights of women Manobos who are raped by their peers or fellow Manobos. Though offending parties may be incarcerated, in the cases of Women Manobos, tribal leader and datus negotiate the release of such parties without consideration of what steps must be undertaken to protect the woman Manobo who has been violated and victimized. A sensitive topic among Manobo elders, Jen attempts to mobilize and capitalize on her authority as a tribal leader herself, to convince tribal elders to formulate an agreement on how to manage such cases to ensure women’s rights are protected. Several summits and consultations have been done with multiple stakeholders to finalize and ink an agreement for this purpose.
Platform 2:
IMPROVEMENT IN THE DELIVERY OF BASIC SERVICES

The delivery of basic services is a prerequisite to trust-building in communities that have been accustomed to fear, harassment and political pressure in exchange for any benefit they can receive from governing bodies (not necessarily government as we know it). The lack of access to basic services also drives communities to participate in non-state armed groups and activities.

The fellows under this platform help us understand how to reduce such vulnerability of key groups, specifically, indigenous people such as the Sama Dilaut and key Muslim groups such as the Iranon, helping ensure their access to education, health services such as blood sources for transfusion, and basic security against pilferage of fishing harvest. Key marginalized groups find their voices in the stories of these fellows – their voice and their identity being intertwined in their capacity to be productive members of society.

One of the key challenges of ensuring access to basic services is an awareness of where to access them. A fellow belonging to the media sector helps generate good news on governance programs in Sulu to ensure that locals, the people of Jolo, are not only able to find the opportunity to gain access to critical government services but, also, find an avenue to express good news and good things that happen to them. Whereas news in Jolo always seem to highlight armed conflict, this fellow explores the effect of generating good news to improve the outlook and participation of community members. When once they could not be heard, they now find their voice through the Sulu Communications Network or SULCOMNET via Radyo ng Bayan in Jolo, Sulu, revitalizing citizen empowerment in contributing to clean elections and other such initiatives.

In the delivery of basic services, contexts play a significant part. A private sector fellow explores the possibility of encouraging a Chinese school to adapt to a steadily changing multi-faith and multi-cultural environment in Zamboanga City through transformative education while balancing the unique needs of the Filipino-Chinese community and the need for the St. Joseph School to continually pursue academic excellence.

- “Improving Maguindanao People’s Access to Quality Education”
  Rollie P. Dela Cruz

- “Institutionalizing the Inclusion of Islamic Teachings in Health Education: Tools on Voluntary Blood Donation”
  Sherjan P. Kalim, MD, DPSP

- “Giving Voice to Jolo: Sharing Good Governance by Transforming Media”
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  Dr. Jeffrey Yasin A. Noor

- “Transformative Education in Multi-Cultural Zamboanga: The Case of St. Joseph School”
  Edwin To
Having come from a family that involved a rebel brother, Rollie values the role of education in his life which he believes had saved him. His commitment to Maguindanao’s Iranon community, the least accessed, least assisted remotest minority schools in Maguindanao, is testament to the belief that education can save lives.

Following his last leadership workshop under the program, Rollie was convinced that his change initiative needed to focus on piloting reading comprehension interventions as well as mother tongue adaptation in two (2) schools in Maguindanao: Datu Pinguiaman Elementary School and Tuka Elementary School. Identifying non-readers in grade levels 5 to 6, a total of thirty (30) pupils per school are assisted through his initiative. The challenge in both schools was the veracity of data on the reading abilities of the children – which were mostly adjusted by the teachers themselves in fear of being blamed for poor performing students. Through constant dialogue and pocket discussions, teachers were eventually convinced to provide actual data based on the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL IRI). Conducting the regional assessment for mathematics, science and English (RAMSE) as administered by coordinators or teachers from other regions to specific classes also helped validate data.

The process was not easy as this meant gaining the trust of the teachers to come forth with actual data. This also meant healing the relationships between superintendents and teachers, principals and superintendents, students and teachers, including parents and teachers. The approach Rollie adopted was focused on assessing the needs of each stakeholder and from there, discussions on the needs of the school children were touched on. This level of transparency between stakeholders is essential to ensure sustainability of educational interventions.

This summer, students will have remedial reading classes to improve their reading capabilities. The first step for the process was ensuring the platform of trust among the key players that would influence the children’s education (ex. parents ensuring that they improve the study habits and nutrition of their children).

The Iranon mother tongue integration paves the way for giving voice to this marginalized community.

Drawing from a personal tragedy in his family, Sherjan committed himself to the profession of medicine. In particular, he has dedicated his life’s work to blood bank management and voluntary blood services with particular focus on how to keep the “blood flowing” for Muslim recipients. The fellowship has helped him “organize” a broad coalition beyond the Department of Health which regularly meets and now conducts regular information and education campaign to change “mindsets” about voluntary blood donation and the Islamic faith (where blood now serves as a unifying and common good across community members).

With his coalition, a National Consultative Meeting was conducted focused on merging Islamic values, healthy lifestyle and voluntary blood donation in government and through non-government organizations. Community fora have been conducted leading to greater awareness on the need for Muslims to donate blood in Cotabato City. These efforts have all been geared to Sherjan’s hope that all cultures, regardless of religion or race or lineage, be empowered to help during emergency situations and to also be informed recipients or beneficiaries should they be victims of emergency situations.
Giving Voice to Jolo: Sharing Good Governance by Transforming Media
Zenaida T. Masong
Station Manager, BBS-DXSM Radyo ng Bayan
Jolo, Sulu

Being a veteran in the broadcast industry, Zeny did not expect she would be revitalized by the fellowship. She was looking forward to retirement. But coming into the second workshop of the MBLP, Zeny realizes her capacity to mobilize stakeholders and her potential to do new things in her field.

Her change project started out as a simple idea to share government programs through Radyo ng Bayan to make people more aware of what services they can avail of. In the process of doing so, Zeny ended up reactivating the defunct Sulu Communications Network (SULCOMNET), an organization composed of key representatives of government agencies and non-government groups working through radio communication. With Zeny’s change initiative, this network was revitalized and has now been expanded due to the clamor for information from communities in Jolo. The participation of the SULCOMNET has converted a regular program into a “grassroots radio program” led by members of the community themselves.

Conducting a survey on listenership and trends of 19 municipalities in Jolo, Zeny realized the opportunity to share good news with fellows residents in Jolo. A MOA for the reactivation of the SULCOMNET was revisited and re-signed with the support of Governor Sakur Tan. The network has not only served as a source of real-time information for broadcast news but also as a resource for workshops held in Jolo that need facilitators, commentators, coverage and the like.

Key achievements so far have been: (1) SULCOMNET news Text brigade for fast and convenient broadcasting deployed for registration of voters which has resulted to increased transparency of information to communities in Jolo; (2) Now, government agencies voluntarily provide updates on their projects daily through the grassroots radio program on Radyo ng Bayan; and (3) Good news are shared by community members as opposed to merely negative reports.

The project is being considered for replication by the management committee of Radyo ng Bayan in other areas of the Philippines. A Code of Ethics is intended to be developed for SULCOMNET to ensure consistency of representation to community and stakeholders.

Tabaang Raayat: Empowering the Sama Dilaut Towards Peace and Development
Dr. Jeffrey Yasin A. Noor
Asst. Director for Secondary Education/Graduate School, Mindanao State University-Tawi Tawi

Being an educator at heart, Jeff has focused his attention on educating the Sama Dilaut towards improved access to economic opportunities. He has successfully taught Arabic to members of the association he has formed for the Sama Dilaut (over 100 persons with 3 Tausug members) which will enable them to protect themselves in the coming elections (ability to write, ability to vote). Moreover, initial activities are being identified through the organized association geared towards cooperative livelihood activities.

The association has conducted community needs and assessment resulting to identification of the need for an ice plant (preserving fish catch prior to marketing) and enhancing quality of fish catch. Tausug members of the association have served to protect fish catch, temporarily, by intervening when groups harass the Sama Dilaut as they go about their daily fishing activities. This relationship between the Tausug and the Sama Dilaut is unique and worth noting as this kind of partnership has never happened to the community before.

It is not common for the Sama Dilaut to be recognized. But now, an organized group named “Tabaang Raayat Association, Inc.” with over 100 members was established on February 2013. Most of the members are fishermen. The organization will be the mechanism to mobilize technical and financial assistance.

Practical dialogues and discussions with the Sama Dilaut elders and local authorities have been conducted. As a result, the Sama Dilaut established a certain degree of confidence in dealing with local authorities. Today, they are the ones who approach the local authorities. The regular lobbying of community projects and activities are done by the Sama Dilaut themselves. The community is now informed about government
programs and projects as they continually learn the art of networking. This ability to network and dialogue has provided the community opportunities to assert their rights to quality delivery of basic and social services from government.

On top of Arabic lessons, spiritual and values transformation is shared with the association members. Also, practical orientation on marine protection is provided in cooperation with MSU-Tawi-Tawi teaching personnel and other network affiliations of Jeff.

Jeff sees partnerships for the Association with government agencies such as the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and other essential partners necessary towards establishment of a center for trade (bagsakan) for the fisherfolk. The future for Jeff’s change initiative looks at replicating lessons learned to other Sama Dilaut communities in Tawi-Tawi. Integration into MSU-Tawi-Tawi’s research and extension activities is another avenue for development for the Tabaang Rayaat.

Before, the Sama Dilaut fished for food security of the family, now, they plan to capacitate themselves to engage in large scale fishing (basnigan) for increased income generation.

Transformative Education in Multi-Cultural Zamboanga: The Case of St. Joseph School

Edwin To
Trustee, St. Joseph’s School / Executive Vice President, Zamboanga Chamber

Having come from a privileged background borne out of a family’s dedication to entrepreneurship, Edwin has had the opportunity to find ways of giving back to the community. One of his key commitments is the development of the St. Joseph School in Zamboanga City. Much like other Filipino-Chinese schools, St. Joseph is focused on academic excellence for its students and the preservation of the Filipino-Chinese culture.

The challenge Edwin poses to the school is the challenge of how to remain relevant in the face of multi-ethnicity and multi-culturalism that Zamboanga evidently is undergoing. Zamboanga is a natural gateway to many cultures and peoples from neighboring provinces. How does a Filipino-Chinese school, the St. Joseph High School, prepare its students and community to flourish in a Mindanao with Bangsamoro and a Philippines in an ASEAN community, with a distinct Muslim population? Edwin attempts to introduce to the school the concept of peace and development and the Muslim culture highly relevant to Mindanao’s (and the country’s) growth and future through dialogues with its Board of Trustees, teachers, students and the parents of the students.

Edwin still has a long way to go but has managed to validate perceptions on peace and development within the school and is also looking at linking with a nearby Turkish school to showcase Islamic communities and academic excellence with St. Joseph’s own community.
Platform 3:  
PROVISION OF LIVELIHOOD  
OR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Creating opportunities for economic growth in a conflict state entails confidence-building: (1) building the confidence of the participating groups that they can and have the capacity to implement entrepreneurial endeavors; and (2) strengthening the relationship among key stakeholders who have long been accustomed to distrusting one another. These stakeholders can take the form and shape of Muslims and Christians, of state and community groups, and even of the private sector and government. These stakeholders can even also involve government to government relationship-building.

Fellows show us that the process of peace-building in conflict-affected Mindanao must lead to strengthening and enhancing the legitimacy of existing institutions or the ones created to promote trust and confidence. Fellows in this platform also show us the necessary building blocks needed to prototype livelihood initiatives in conflict-affected communities and how the same livelihood/economic opportunities may be an alternative platform for engagement, for relationship-building and peace-building. Without a broad coalition, confident in improved justice and shared economic prospects, it is difficult to sustain the momentum generated by a peace agreement.

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  Susano B. Balais III

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- “Sustainable Youth Entrepreneurship Development for Peace and Security in the Province of Maguindanao”  
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- “Working with the Community to Re-Establish Marawi City as a Key Tourist Destination”  
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- “Awareness on the Bangsamoro Culture: Bridging Peace, Security and Development in the ARMM”  
  Sittie Jehanne U. Mutin-Mapupuno
Mixing Arabica (Muslims)-Robusta (Christians):
Bringing People Together for Socio-Economic Development in Bumbaran, Lanao del Sur
Susano B. Balais III
Manager, Business Development Services
Katilingbanong Pamahandi sa Mindanaw Foundation, Inc. (KPMFI) – Balay Mindanaw

A young student leader from Xavier University, immersed in farming communities, Sano continues to work with upland and lowland farmers towards improved livelihood with the vision that this will bring peace to Mindanao.

With the belief that could find local chief executives supportive of their endeavors, KPMFI-Balay Mindanaw undertook economic development initiatives in the ARMM with the guidance of former NEDA Director General and AusAID Adviser and now Chairperson of the Center for Bridging Leadership,, Dr. Cielito Habito. Mayor Mastura Manabilang turned out to be a staunch supporter along with barangay leaders and people’s organizations in Bumbaran. The presence of UniFrutti Corporation’s Engr. Rovie P. Banzon, was key in organizing and gaining entry into Bumbaran. These form part of Sano’s guiding coalition.

For this initiative, the ‘anchor farm model’ was adopted (where the presence of an agribusiness firm enlisting farmers to produce the same crops to pool bigger volumes during harvest season for bulk marketing). More interesting to note was the project’s long-term vision to contribute to the development of the Bumbaran-Cagayan de Oro Highway which could effectively link multiple food baskets including Bumbaran all the way to the southwestern part of Bukidnon and Wao, Lanao del Sur. By building the capacities of areas such as Bumbaran to generate products that will be demanded by consumers from Cagayan de Oro, for example, development is seen to be pushed faster for the area.

The project has been successful in merging communities that were not able to work together before to come up with a unifying product: Mindanaw coffee, a mix of Robusta and Arabica. Arabica, grown in the highlands, are mainly cultivated by Muslim communities. Robusta, grown in the lowlands, are mainly cultivated by Christian communities. The mix of both have led to the creation of a bond between the two communities in Bumbaran.

The project has been presented to the Department of Agriculture and Department of Trade and Industry (DA-ARMM and DTI-ARMM) which has resulted to generation of support for the project through agricultural technicians and financial advisers that can empower the farmers to sustain the product value chain and ensure they prosper as micro-entrepreneurs. The project is a prototype of what support and interventions both from the LGU and external investors/funders can do for agricultural productivity. It has become the blueprint for drafting the comprehensive development plan for the municipality which now includes a plan for collaborative production, planting, harvesting and marketing of agricultural products.

A joint venture with Coffee Anthropology is being pursued to entice interested investors to Bumbaran. The high elevation areas of Bumbaran are promising areas for coffee production.

Committed to Patikul’s and Tawi-Tawi’s Development:
The Private Sector’s Challenge
Michael Kelly P. Tiu Lim
Executive Vice President and General Manager for Zamboanga Operations
Mega Fishing Corporation

With the enthusiasm of a true entrepreneur, Michael embarked on a journey in Patikul, hoping to be able to address community needs and his company’s needs for stable fishing catch and safe fishing for their personnel. Some of his company’s workers were recently kidnapped in the area and Michael wanted to explore the possibility of bridging government, private sector and community towards protecting fishing operations while also contributing to local development. Michael, however, could not be expected to be onsite continually, given security concerns, but he attempted to work through the efforts of a past fellow of the Center, Ms. Jainab Abdulmajid. However, given various security issues and competing priorities of members of his guiding coalition, the Patikul initiative had to be put on hold. As a parallel project, Michael pursued the same initiative in Tawi-Tawi, specifically, in Tengol-Tengol.
With the help of Mayor Jasper Que, MBLP Cohort 1 fellow, the project in Tawi-Tawi materialized fast. Abalone production was explored in place of grouper fish cages for Sama Dilaut fishers, abalone deemed more technically and financially viable in the area for the communities given water current considerations. The idea behind Michael’s initiative is to create a community-based production model for Mega Fishing Corporation that would not only benefit the company but the community as well. Michael focuses on continually empowering the fishing communities so they can set up an abalone farm that can be sold to Mega Fishing Corporation. It is expected that production will be full-swing in 6 months to a year. More stakeholders are expected to be mobilized to ensure community ownership of the project (ex. local police, bantay dagat).

Because of Michael's project, Mayor Que came to know that Tengol-Tengol’s school was no longer operational. Teachers were no longer coming in to hold classes. Baseline and literacy tests are to be implemented as part of Mayor Que’s initiative as well as installation of a teacher for the school. Michael hopes that his project will eventually help generate savings for the community in Tengol-Tengol so that parents can afford to have their children go to school and also be free to pursue other livelihood opportunities for their families.

### Sustainable Youth Entrepreneurship Development for Peace and Security in the Province of Maguindanao

Engr. Marites Maguindra  
**Formerly the Regional Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry – ARMM**  
**Presently the Regional Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries - ARMM**

Tes’ story is a microcosm of the volatility and flexibility of ARMM governance at the moment. The need for immediate and visible results has led her transfer from one ARMM department to another midway through her fellowship. However, all was not lost, as what she started with DTI-ARMM, she ended up enhancing in DTI-DAF. Faithful to the principles of co-ownership, Tes was able to mobilize a guiding coalition in DTI-ARMM that saw her initiatives through. In DTI-ARMM, a guiding coalition member, Ms. Catalina Icalina, now ensures that the momentum for change does not disappear.

Her commitment to empowering the youth is driven by the fact that the 50% of unemployed Filipinos belong to the ages of 15 to 24 years old ² and another 31.4% are between 25 to 34 years old reaching a staggering total of 81.4% of unemployed all within the youth category. In Mindanao, this is compounded by the risks and challenges that include children in conflict with the law, children in conflict areas, the youth as victims of violence and abuse, and household poverty, especially in the ARMM.

Her initiative focuses on organizing Moro youth entrepreneurs as champions for development and peace. So that the youth can be capacitated to reap the benefits or ensure access to the promises of growth that the peace accord brings with it. She continues her initiatives in DAF-ARMM by tapping youth farmers across three (3) pilot communities: in Parang (22 youth farmers), Upi (17 youth farmers) and the municipality of Sultan Kudarat (10 youth farmers). More than the prevalent political youth summits, Tes wants to introduce entrepreneurship to the youth as way to lasting peace and development. Paving the way for the youth to regain their self-esteem and their confidence that they can generate income on their own is a way to ensure that the youth are not excluded in the promised growth of the ARMM and are able to participate in self-governance with a better quality of life.

### Working with the Community to Re-Establish Marawi City as a Key Tourist Destination

Nassreena Sampaco-Baddiri  
**Former Regional Secretary of the Department of Tourism-ARMM**

Within government, trust-building in ARMM remains a CHALLENGE. Beset by years of political appointees and pressures, government institutions in ARMM face the challenge of reviving each government servant’s trust in the system of governance and in their leaders. The Department of Tourism, the least-funded, least-prioritized unit in the ARMM government, helps realize this change with the help of a fellow dedicated to making tourism work in Marawi City.

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² Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, 2011
For tourism to work, the Department itself had to be re-oriented as far as work practices and approaches to projects were concerned. This was the first step that Nash took to ensure that some projects would take off for the department and for Marawi. The Department was a broken community in itself that needed to be healed. Separated by conflict, factionalism, low trust levels, low esteem, and skepticism, the test for Nash was how to be a leader by example to DTI employees. Her pockets of success have now paved the way for a less troubled Department of Tourism for ARMM and a more productive agency.

Marawi was identified as a key interest area given its colorful history. Tourism stakeholders’ meetings (including Tourism in the ARMM as a Path to Peace Forum) were held as well as local tourism promotions (ex. Light for Peace in Parang, Maguindanao). The tourism stakeholder and council meetings resulted to a bottoms-up planning whose work has been submitted to the DTI (national) for consideration. This is a first for the ARMM – an actual tourism roadmap that involves community-based tourism. Though there is much to be done in terms or preparing infrastructure and the people themselves for tourism in Marawi and in ARMM, in general, Nash remains hopeful for the future.

### Awareness on the Bangsamoro Culture:

**Bridging Peace, Security and Development in the ARMM**

Sittie Jehanne U. Mutin-Mapupuno  
Former Asst. Sec. of the Bangsamoro Peace and Development Office of the OPAPP  
Presently the Regional Secretary of the Department of Tourism - ARMM

Involved in the very process of peace negotiations and peace programs facilitated by the national government, Jehanne attempts to revisit a basic appreciation of Muslim history and culture in her organization, the OPAPP. Helping to promote her people’s history and culture is a step towards bridging and deepening the process of ensuring that national peace programs be responsive to the community’s basic needs.

A perception survey of Muslim culture was conducted among 60 per cent of 100 employees at the OPAPP resulting to a clearer understanding of how OPAPP employees can also work towards bridging cultural divides on the ground and in relation to how programs are implemented.

The Fellow started as part of her job at the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) to conduct an education campaign. At the same time, she decided to start in Marawi as part of her vision of a peaceful and developed Bangsamoro region by promoting Marawi as a cultural tourism destination and establishing systems to bring visitors to the city and erased the perception of Marawi as a dangerous place to stay. The development of cultural tourism will serve as point of entry to peace and development and, at the same time, a measurement of the peaceful condition of Marawi especially on changing opinions by media. Maranao culture similar to other Islamized tribes in Mindanao is rich of its architecture, motif, designs, clothes, songs, dances, food and other traditions that would be very attractive to tourists if well organized and managed. Jehanne believes this will be her contribution to the emergence of the Bangsamoro region. She is poised to realize this better as she has just assumed the position of Department Secretary for ARMM-DOT.

Her efforts complement that of co-fellow, Nash Baddiri, having conducted several consultative processes resulting to city resolutions on the establishment of a tourism plan for Marawi and its surrounding villages, transport system for tourists coming from Cagayan de Oro and Iligan for guided tours, and agreements with businessmen to provide food and accommodation for tourists who would like to stay longer in the city. Jehanne continues with a massive education campaign at the community level on the Bangsamoro history as a way to spur pride and awareness on all that is Bangsamoro, especially in the light of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB).
Platform 4:  
STRENGTHENING OF SOCIAL CAPITAL / SOCIAL COHESION

Violence is spurred by local stresses wrought by, among others: youth unemployment, increasing and visible inequality between social, ethnic, regional and religious groups; economic shocks; infiltration of trafficking networks; aggravated by external conditions such as climate change catastrophes (such as Sendong, landslides, etc).

Lack of access to justice and lack of access to markets for employment opportunities lead to the corrosion of social cohesion. Strengthening social cohesion is necessary to ensure citizens are not excluded from social justice or economic progress. The lack of social cohesion provides little to propping up communities’ ability to “keep standing.”

A fellow advocates for electoral reform in a city that has long been challenged with various political pressures driven by poverty in the communities. In the same city, another fellow helps the premier academic stronghold of the State regain public trust by mobilizing multiple stakeholders towards the restoration of peace.

The preservation of traditional justice systems for Maranaos is pursued by two fellows who merge their projects with one ensuring youth participation and appreciation of the traditional justice system while the other helps ensure that the Philippine Justice System integrates such traditional forms of justice through the Mushwara Kalilintad.

- “Increase Capacity, Reduce Misery: Strengthening Community Resilience to Disasters”  
  Dante B. Eleuterio

- “Electoral Reform: The First Building Block for Good Governance in Marawi City”  
  Brig. Gen. Daniel A. Lucero

- “Strengthening the Role of the Mindanao State University in Restoring Peace in Marawi City”  
  Dipunudun D. Marohom

- “Bridging Maranao Elders and the Youth: Strengthening the Maranao Traditional Justice System”  
  Abdul Hamidullah T. Atar

- “The Mushwara Kalilintad: A Way to Synergize Maranao Customary Laws and Traditions with the Philippine Justice System”  
  Atty. Abdul Gaffur Madki Howard M. Alonto II
Increase Capacity, Reduce Misery: Strengthening Community Resilience to Disasters
Dante B. Eleuterio
Formerly Head of Field Office-CDO, Community Family Services International (CFSI)
Presently with the OPAPP’s Sajahatra Program

As an NGO worker, Dan has been working with local government units with the thought that working with the LGUs is more compliance than actual, real partnership. His perspective changed as he went through the fellowship. Deepening his understanding of co-ownership, he began to dialogue with barangay leaders and eventually was able to have a partnership with them and commitment evidenced by the counterpart support provided by the said barangay leaders.

Most recently, Sendong (or Washi) came to Mindanao. Dan had to re-engineer new relationships and new “arrangements” put together by broad-based coalition to address the catastrophic dimensions of Sendong’s wrath. A slow process of confidence-building in order to face the work of re-building communities was nurtured by Dan and his group. The communities needed to ensure that they could withstand another Washi. This meant working with various sectoral groups – from the academe to government to other NGOs and members of the community.

Dan’s project focuses on providing psycho-social assistance to help communities cope with the realities of loss, death, the focus and will to start over... Dan’s change project serves as a prototype for enhancing community resiliency in Mindanao with Mindanao expecting more storms and natural calamities in the coming years as its environment has been severely degraded and with changes in climate globally.

Electoral Reform: The First Building Block for Good Governance in Marawi City
Brig. Gen. Daniel A. Lucero
AFP Commander, 103rd Infantry Brigade (Marawi City, Lanao del Sur)
Philippine Army, Armed Forces of the Philippines

A voracious reader with a natural penchant for learning new things and new ways, then Colonel and now General Dan innovates in Marawi City as he realizes the AFP’s changing role in community and peace-building. Drawing from his bridging leadership capital, he has become an inspiration to various stakeholders in Marawi City but has also gained the ire of stakeholders wanting to keep the status quo. Despite threats to his security and person, and unfounded complaints filed against him all the way to the Office of the President, Dan stood firm in his commitment to ensure clean and honest elections in Marawi City.

The success of his initiatives will be tested in the May elections but Dan has already achieved certain gains at this point in time: (1) the voters’ list in Marawi City has been cleaned from 66,988 to 33,718, a 49% reduction (and in Lanao del Sur from 521,969 to 350,268, a 33% reduction); (2) Heavy public information campaign, including a hotline for complaints about him and his men as well as other parties in the City that will hinder/enhance the electoral process; (3) a summit on general registration among various stakeholders that served as a platform for dialogue on key issues that were never discussed before; (4) covenant on good governance signed among various stakeholders including the LGU that can spur change in local governance; (5) decrease in crimes (the military works with the PNP to ensure that, for example, even environmental violations are addressed since the PNP cannot enforce the law alone given local dynamics). Even the garbage, like the padded voters’ lists serve to reflect the disorder or breakdown in governance.

What is the role of the military in the particular context of a Marawi City? In the rebuilding of governance, much less the assurance of security for various stakeholders to bring order and “predictability” into Marawi City? The military, on its own, would not have the ability to accomplish much in so short a time. Dan built an almost-inclusive coalition including other fellows of the MBLP, such as Dipsy Marohom, Pogie Atar and AG Alonto and members of the academe, LGUs, media, religious, youth, traditional leaders and other essential stakeholders (from the MILF to sultans and datus).

For Dan Lucero, the ultimate test for the success of initiatives that his guiding coalition has started is if people start to move on their own without their prodding or influence. He believes that this is slowly happening.
Strengthening the Role of the Mindanao State University in Restoring Peace in Marawi City
Dipunudun D. Marohom
Coordinator for Peace Action, Mindanao State University-Marawi
Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao (IPDM)

Dipsy is an academician with deeply set ways. Her story involves having to change some of her preconceptions and notions on how to engage stakeholders and also on what can work in terms of quick wins towards more sustainable change. Her change project has served to bridge MSU-Marawi and MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology, two “competing” universities.

Passionate about her beliefs, she has been a key supporter and stakeholder for co-fellows’ projects such as Dan Lucero, Nash Baddiri and has leveraged her influence to help other fellows under the MBLP such as Linky Mapandi.

Dipsy began with a project for women and fisherfolk and changed this altogether after several processes of listening and learning with fellows and coaches under the program. Ultimately, closest to home was her work with the IPDM. Taking off from this, she started to engage various stakeholders, whom to her surprise were very open to the idea of restoring peace in the MSU-Marawi campus and, eventually, in Marawi City. Her coalition eventually held a summit on Security Reform in MSU Marawi in February 2013. A multi-sectoral cooperation for peace has been formed. RLA ARMM Resolution 480 declared the MSU System as a zone of peace approved in principle by the Board of Regents, and a joint task force has been organized among the MSU Department of Security Services, AFP, PNP and community stakeholders.

She continues the work with her coalition with the goal of ensuring MSU is a peaceful world-class institution of higher learning that can serve as a “live laboratory” for national integration.

Bridging Maranao Elders and the Youth: Strengthening the Maranao Traditional Justice System
Abdul Hamidullah T. Atar
Executive Officer, Reconciliatory Initiatives for Development Opportunities (RIDO), Inc.

“I am a victim of my own culture.” In the 3rd Leadership Workshop under the MBLP, Pogie shared with his fellows that part of the struggle of the Maranao is the constant occurrence of rido which has split friends and relations. He is not alien to this occurrence. The resolution of such events is something Pogie has dedicated himself to for years. In particular, he has found that the Maranao traditional way of addressing rido has been the most effective approach. The current Philippine Justice System does not seem to accommodate the cultural intricacies of the Maranao culture. Pogie’s project focuses on documenting the process of the Maranao in resolving such rido and engaging Maranao youth (as “second-liners”) while doing so in the hope that Maranao youth will take this on and practice the same. This will help ensure sustainability of practices that have been tested over time to ensure. The Maranao council of elders co-own this initiative while Pogie continually links with other stakeholders such as the military to ensure that current rido are properly addressed. Pogie has linked with co-fellow Brig. Gen. Lucero for this purpose. To ensure that the process is integrated into the Philippine Justice System, Pogie also works with co-fellow AG Alonto.

The Mushwara Kalilintad: A Way to Synergize Maranao Customary Laws and Traditions with the Philippine Justice System
Atty. Abdul Gaffur Madki Howard M. Alonto II
Associate Prosecution Attorney II
Department of Justice, Iligan City

A descendant of the founder of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and many others in building the Muslim community in the Philippines, AG Alonto draws from his lineage to determine his commitment to social justice and equity. AG found that having Maranao conflict or disagreements resolved through the current justice system only served to make things worse or lead to more rido. He proposes an alternative structure within the current Philippine Justice System: the Mushwara Kalilintad – a parallel structure to the Lupon ng Tagapamayapa but focused on Maranao processes.
His journey under the fellowship began with many challenges coming from his own department – where the idea of merging the traditional Maranao justice system with the current system was difficult to accept. With the signing of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB) towards the end of 2012, the department became more open to AG’s proposal to establish the Mushwara Kalilintad and to also ensure other aspects of the rido resolution system are integrated into the contemporary legal system.

AG continues to build baseline data through the conduct of several consultations and round-table discussions in Tawi-Tawi, Marawi City, Zamboanga and Cotabato City involving multiple stakeholders such as representatives from the Ulama, Women and Youth. The consultations have helped validate the perception of stakeholders on the Taritib Ago Igma (Maranao customary laws), Shariah Law and Regular Courts. Included in these consultations are presentations to the Governor, Vice-Governor, provincial board and peace council members. A closed door meeting was held with the Top 90 and 300 (MILF and MNLF). A peace committee is also being institutionalized at the provincial level to implement the Taritib ago Igma seen to help settle disputes emanating from rido or those affecting the general peace and order in the province.

**Conclusion**

The work of nation-building in “fragile” areas of Mindanao require bridging leaders in all sectors, in the mainstream or in the “margins”, to come together to deliver citizen security, improved justice and dispute resolution, and jobs. These building “blocks” and success in each of these increase the probability of success in transforming institutions and good governance for a truly free and democratic Mindanao.

The Center will monitor the work of the different fellows and their projects in the next year to be capped by an impact assessment fifteen (15) months from today. The full stories and case reports will be made available via [www.bridgingleadership.aim.edu](http://www.bridgingleadership.aim.edu) in April 2013. Initial stories of Cohort 1 are now available in the same website.