

Addressing Gender in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations in the Philippines

Sonia Margallo

Summary Findings

This working paper presents the findings and recommendations of a review undertaken to identify how gender is addressed in various conflict and post-conflict situations in the Philippines, with a focus on Mindanao. Published and unpublished documents, books and websites were consulted to review recent and ongoing efforts to address gender and gender issues in communities affected by conflict, some of which are no longer experiencing conflict while others are still affected by violence. To validate and complement the findings from the desk review, twelve gender focal points and program managers were interviewed in the cities of Manila, Zamboanga, Davao, and Cotabato.

The review identified three major categories of issues in Mindanao and corresponding interventions to address these issues: (i) access to basic services, (ii) protection and security of internally displaced populations, and (iii) disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. In all cases, while the review notes important efforts to address gender concerns around these three sets of issues, there is also a need for greater coordination and a more systematic approach to mainstreaming gender in conflict-affected regions. The review also notes the need to address gender through multi-sectoral approaches.

The paper also presents briefly five case studies of interesting interventions or approaches which may offer lessons for future post-conflict reconstruction in Mindanao. The case studies cover the psychosocial effects of conflict on children, gender-sensitive community-based education for peace, micro-lending and entrepreneurial training in peace zones, the Go and See Visit program for internally displaced persons that are trying to decide whether to return to

their places of origin, and a livelihood assistance program for ex-combatants and their families.

Major recommendations include:

- Ensure use of accurate gender disaggregated data on displaced populations and other groups affected by armed conflict, and train program personnel in recording and consolidating disaggregated data;
- Provide equal opportunities for male and female demobilized combatants in livelihood activities and parallel benefit packages;
- Conduct men's and women's assemblies starting from the *barangay* level to the regional level, to disseminate information, encourage involvement in the peace process, and lobby to have women participate on peace panels and/or have a seat at the negotiations table;
- Consider launching a regional gender and peace audit in Mindanao to monitor the implementation of commitments toward gender and peace;
- Establish stronger and closer coordination among the national and local government, and gender-oriented NGOs at the regional, provincial, and local levels;
- Establish a focal government body to coordinate all projects and programs that provide assistance to post-conflict Mindanao;
- Institutionalize gender and peace education in the country's education system, starting with Mindanao, including a review and revision of the elementary and secondary school curricula; and
- Utilize the media to encourage community awareness and advocacy in relation to gender and peace.

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Addressing Gender in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations in the Philippines

Sonia Margallo

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ARMM	Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
ASFP	ARMM Social Fund for Peace and Development
BMWF	Bangsamoro Women's Foundation for Peace and Development
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CFSI	Community and Family Services International
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSPEJ	Center for Sustainable Peace and Economic Justice of the University of the Philippines
DepEd	Department of Education
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
ELAP	Emergency Livelihood Assistance Program
EO	Executive Order
GAD	Regional Coordinating Committee on Gender and Development
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GENPEACE	Gender and Culture of Peace Project
GSV	Go and See Visit
ICWIP	Indonesian Center for Women in Politics
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
KBP	Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas
MCW	Mindanao Commission on Women
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MRDP	Mindanao Rural Development Project
MinCODE	Mindanao Coalition of Development NGO Networks
NEDA	National Economic Development Authority
NCRFW	National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women
NDFCAI	Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NPA	New Peoples Army
NPC	National Press Club
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conferences
PDA's	Peace and Development Advocates
PDAP	Philippine Development Assistance Program
PDLs	Peace and Development Learning Modules
POPCOM	Population Commission
PROPEACE	Program for Peace and Development
RPDO	Regional Planning and Development Office
SPCPD	Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development
SWIFT	Support with Fast Transition
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Foreword

The paper presents the findings and recommendations of the review undertaken to identify how gender is addressed in various post-conflict situations in Philippines. Published and unpublished documents, books and websites were reviewed to look at recent and ongoing efforts to address gender and gender issues in communities affected by conflict, some of which are no longer experiencing conflict whilst others are still very much vulnerable to violence. To validate and compliment the findings from the desk review, gender focal points and project managers were interviewed in the cities of Manila, Zamboanga, Davao, and Cotabato. Based on the findings of the review the paper has several key recommendations for addressing gender in conflict and post-conflict situations in the Philippines.

The paper was prepared for the purpose of obtaining local lessons for the post-conflict work in Mindanao and to gain insights for the joint multi-donor assessment of post-conflict reconstruction needs in the area. It is part of a series of informal publications of ongoing work and has not been formally reviewed nor does it necessarily reflect the views of the World Bank.

Joachim Von Amsberg
Country Director, Philippines
East Asia and Pacific Region
The World Bank

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Mary Judd
Country Sector Coordinator
Environment and Social Development Unit
Manila, November 2004

Executive Summary

The paper presents the findings and recommendations of a review undertaken to identify how gender is addressed in various post-conflict situations in the Philippines. The geographical scope of the study aimed to cover conflict-affected areas in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. However, Mindanao was the primary focus area of the review owing to: (i) length and intensity of conflict, (ii) level of national and international assistance received, and (iii) accessibility to documents and stakeholders.

The key constructs of the paper are *gender* and *post-conflict*. The paper adopts the World Bank's definition of gender. It recognizes that religious or cultural traditions define distinct roles and behaviors of males and females, but suggests that gender roles and behaviors can change historically, sometimes relatively quickly, even if aspects of these roles originated in biological differences between the two genders. With regards to post-conflict, although it typically refers to the period that begins immediately following cessation of hostilities, post-conflict in the Philippines can more accurately be defined as lulls in the fighting between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Muslim separatist groups that have been fighting for more than thirty years.

Within this context, published and unpublished documents, books and websites were reviewed to look at recent and ongoing efforts to address gender and gender issues in communities affected by conflict, some of which are no longer experiencing conflict while others are still very much affected by violence. To validate and complement the findings from the desk review, twelve gender focal points and program managers were interviewed in the cities of Manila, Zamboanga, Davao, and Cotabato.

The review identified three major categories of issues in post conflict Mindanao and interventions carried out to address these issues. The three major categories of issues are: (i) access to basic services and livelihoods, (ii) protection and security for internally displaced populations, and (iii) disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, summarized below.

Access to Basic Services. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is the major government actor in promoting access to basic services among the communities of post-conflict Mindanao. Within this context, basic services include education, health, and livelihood opportunities. DSWD primarily locates populations in various geographic areas and gathers data for development organizations to plan and implement programs to improve access to basic services. Alongside the provision of basic services, the beneficiaries of these programs venture into entrepreneurship that opens up job opportunities in their respective communities. The report identifies several interventions undertaken in Mindanao to improve access to basic services and elaborates on examples and case studies, including programs targeting children, and literacy and livelihood programs for Muslim women.

Protection and Security of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Within the limits of what is feasible in the Philippine setting, government agencies such as DSWD and well-established NGO service providers adopt measures that attempt to improve security for IDPs. Specific measures include: (i) establishing a visible and regular presence in the area, (ii) negotiating with both sides of the conflict to obtain unfettered access to the affected communities, (iii) lobbying all concerned to view the evacuation centers as places of refuge and zones of peace, and (iv) promoting active participation of the affected populations in decision making as well as program design and implementation. In addition, NGO flags and banners are flown to indicate that these are sites of humanitarian and not military activity. The report provides a number of examples of similar interventions and also elaborates on a case study on the program "Go and See Visit"—which has proven to be helpful in facilitating IDPs in deciding whether to the return to their places of origin.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. Efforts to end conflict with the separatist groups have involved a number of peace negotiations, amnesties, and “rebel returnee” programs. The demobilization of armed elements is one of the important features of the Government of the Philippines’ peace-building efforts, where the combatants who surrender and/or agree to lay down their arms are provided with amnesty and a package of benefits. The amnesty packages of the late 1980s and early 1990s included basic assistance such as skills training, livelihood projects, or employment. The 1993 Executive Order No. 125 made provision for the reintegration and rehabilitation of former rebel combatants. It guaranteed amnesty and cash payments for each firearm surrendered as initial assistance to ex-combatants during the transition periods of reconciliation and reintegration. However, the review did not identify any reference to engendering beneficiaries for this program, although there were references to families of demobilized combatants. The report also provides a list of interventions relating to the above issue and elaborates on a case study on the Emergency Livelihood Assistance Program (ELAP) which was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Based on the review findings, the following are a few select key recommendations included in the report.

Recommendations

- Ensure use of accurate gender disaggregated data on displaced populations and other groups affected by armed conflict during planning and the design of appropriate security interventions and assistance. Within this context, train program personnel in recording and consolidating disaggregated data;
- Provide equal opportunities for male and female demobilized combatants in livelihood activities and parallel benefit packages;
- Conduct men’s and women’s assemblies starting from the *barangay*¹ level to the regional level so that they are better informed/involved with the peace negotiation process, and lobby to have women serve on peace panels and at the negotiations table;
- Consider launching a regional gender and peace audit involving a representative number of women’s organizations in Mindanao to monitor the implementation of commitments toward gender and peace;
- Establish stronger and closer coordination among the national and local government, and gender-oriented NGOs at the regional, provincial, and local levels;
- Establish a focal government body to coordinate all projects and programs that provide assistance to post-conflict Mindanao;
- Institutionalize gender and peace education in Philippine schools, starting with Mindanao. This could be achieved through review and revision of elementary and secondary school curricula; and
- Campaign for community awareness and strengthen media watch and mechanisms of advocacy in relation to the gender and peace component of visual and oral media materials. This should, in parallel, give attention to print media and television shows that target young audiences.

¹ *Barangay* is a village or collection of villages, and is the smallest local government unit of the Philippines.

ADDRESSING GENDER IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Background on Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations in Mindanao

The fighting in Mindanao—which has continued for three decades—was particularly heavy during the 1970s and 1980s, but it dissipated into sporadic guerrilla attacks in the latter part of the 1990s. Toward late 1996, after a quarter of a century of armed conflict between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), there was an attempt to bring the fighting to an end through a peace agreement signed between the Government of the Philippines and the MNLF. While this was a major turning point for Mindanao—as well as the nation as a whole—conflict between the AFP and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the second largest secessionist group, not only continued, but also intensified after the peace agreement. Over 120,000 people have died as a result of fighting between the AFP and Muslim separatists groups (CSPEJ, undated) and there have been at least 25,000 deaths owing to conflict between the AFP and the New Peoples Army (NPA) (Project Ploughshares 2002). President Joseph Estrada declared an “all-out war” against the MILF in 2000 resulting in massive damage and the displacement of more than 900,000 persons (CFSI 2003).

The policy of President Estrada’s successor—President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo—has been until recently, “all-out peace.” Further, her administration has followed a strategy of peace negotiations simultaneously with development efforts in conflict-affected regions. However, global terrorism and continued difficulties in Mindanao presented significant challenges, resulting in President Arroyo’s ordering the AFP to use greater force more often. She has deferred peace talks and threatened to declare the MILF a terrorist organization if it does not surrender individuals considered to be terrorists, and disassociates itself from what are considered to be terrorist tactics. The series of bombings of various public places in Mindanao and armed attacks between the military and rebel groups created a new exodus of tens of thousands of displaced people and families to evacuation centers, raising security concerns for people displaced by war, particularly women and children. More recently, however, the groundwork for peace negotiations between the government and the MILF has started with the Organization of Islamic Conferences (OIC) and the development partners offering support and assistance.

Objectives, Scope and Methodology

The objectives of the review were two fold:

- Review how gender is addressed in various conflict and post-conflict situations in the Philippines, with a focus on Mindanao; and
- develop case studies to highlight types of assistance provided.

The geographical scope of the study was, in principle, all conflict-affected areas of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, the three main regions of the Philippines. However, Mindanao was the primary focus of the review owing to: (i) the intensity and duration of armed conflict over the last 30 years; (ii) the high number of deaths and injuries, extent of displacement, significant property damage, and broad socio-economic impact of the conflict on Mindanao, as well as on the Philippines as a whole; (iii) the size of assistance received from both local and international sources; and (iv) increased access to material relevant for the proposed review and stakeholders to interview. Many of the documents reviewed were easily accessible in either hard copy or electronic formats.

Within the context of the review, the following definitions were used:

- *Gender* is defined as “...culturally based expectations of the roles and behaviors of males and females. The term distinguishes the socially-constructed from the biologically-determined aspects of being male and female” (World Bank 2002). It recognizes that “...religious or cultural traditions...define and justify the distinct roles and expected behaviors of males and females...” but suggests that “...gender roles and behaviors can change historically, sometimes relatively quickly, even if aspects of these roles originated in the biological differences between the two genders” (Ibid).
- *Gender and development* as a major theme as well as an approach, according to the Government of the Philippines is “...one that focuses on the social, economic, political, and cultural forces that determine how differently women and men participate in, benefit from, and control resources and activities. It recognizes the unequal relations between women and men and their different roles, interests, and needs” (NCRFW 2001).
- *Gender mainstreaming*, as defined by the Government of the Philippines, is “...a process or strategy through which gender perspectives are integrated into the overall operations of an agency. It is an organized effort to bring gender perspectives in the goals, policies, structures, processes, programs, and projects of the agency. It also focuses on developing institutional mechanisms and strategies to address specific gender issues or concerns” (NCRFW 2001).

Published and unpublished documents, books, and websites were reviewed. To validate and complement the findings from the desk review, 12 gender and peace focal point persons and program managers were interviewed in the cities of Manila, Zamboanga, Davao, and Cotabato (see Annex 1 for a list of persons interviewed).

Current Status of Gender in Conflict Situations

Filipino culture in general, and the Muslim culture in particular, are still basically patriarchal and traditional, with strong gender identities and where roles and behaviors are assigned to one gender or the other (Byrne 1995). Gender identities are culturally-created and individuals are expected to fit the cultural, traditional, and social mold attributed to their particular gender group. In the Philippine social context and particularly in the Muslim Mindanao context, women are accorded due respect and recognition as members of the family and of the community. However, the tradition of leaving major decision making to the men of the family still prevails. For instance, among the displaced people temporarily housed in evacuation centers in post-conflict Mindanao, the man of the family generally still makes the final decision of whether to go back to the family’s place of origin or not. At a higher decision-making level, enabling the participation of women in peace negotiations between the Government of the Philippines and rebel groups remains an advocacy concern.

Male dominance still prevails at the level of national political leadership, notwithstanding the fact that a woman occupies the Philippine top leadership post, President Arroyo. Women who have been elected to top government positions are often members of political dynasties and frequently perceived as substitutes for their fathers or husbands (Tancangco, cited in Monares 1990). They are often Filipina leaders from educated, rich, elite families with access to politics or have other members of the family—usually men—who are in politics.

Although the Philippines’ social and political context remains patriarchal and traditional, the Government has made important efforts to mainstream gender throughout its laws, institutions and programs. Starting with the Philippines Constitution, legislation explicitly promotes gender equality and the protection of human rights, particularly the rights of women and children. Moreover, national, regional, and local

government units have specific focal points and people who are tasked with coordinating and monitoring gender mainstreaming activities in their respective areas of responsibility.

For example, the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) issued Joint Circular No. 2001-1, which provides policy guidelines for gender mainstreaming. This was in compliance with an Executive Order from the President of the Philippines to mainstream gender within government agencies. Specifically, Executive Order (EO) No. 273—signed by then President Fidel V. Ramos—“Approving and Adopting the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development” and covering the period 1995-2025, requires government agencies and organizations to institutionalize gender in their annual planning, programming, and budgeting processes (EO 273, 1995). This means that virtually all national government offices have—or should have—focal point persons to address gender concerns. The circular also indicates that local initiatives on gender will receive “umbrella” support from institutionalized mechanisms, specifically, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). The NCRFW organizes conferences, conducts seminars, promotes awareness, provides training, links local, national and international initiatives, and generally aims to advance the situation of women in the Philippines, including those affected by armed conflict in Mindanao.

Initiatives have also been undertaken at the regional level in Mindanao. For instance, the Regional Coordinating Committee on Gender and Development (GAD) was created in Region XI (Davao area) in 2002, to “provide guidance and direction on the implementation of GAD initiatives as well as to analyze, evaluate, and recommend improvements on GAD plans and programs in Region XI” (National Statistical Coordinating Board 2002). Further, the Regional Planning and Development Office (RPDO) of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) has been proactive in gender education and in raising the awareness of the *Bangsamoro*² women of their right as well as responsibility to participate in peace and development efforts. As a result, local women’s organizations have gained confidence in directly advocating for their cause. For example, they have advocated for the establishment of zones of peace, carried out peace pilgrimages, and participated in local peace dialogues.

Women’s voices have so far been dominating the clamor for the promotion of gender concerns and issues. Coming from the perspective that women have been victims of the imbalance of opportunities and violation of rights, efforts at balancing the gender scale through the elevation of the status of women have dominated the gender advocacy efforts. These efforts have gained world-wide support and have been effective in drawing the attention and support of advocacy groups, governments, and international bodies. Local, national, and international symposia, workshops, conferences, and similar gatherings of gender advocates have enabled the participation of a large number of women from different walks of life and sectors.

For example, the nongovernmental Mindanao Commission on Women (MCW) organized a high profile, national peace advocacy campaign—called the “Mothers for Peace”—that kicked off on May 11, 2003 (i.e., Mother’s Day). The aim was to convince the government and the MILF to immediately resume peace negotiations. The strategy included speaking to cabinet-level officials, lobbying the leadership of the AFP and the MILF, and getting the voice of the women—particularly mothers—out to the Philippine population as a whole. Large numbers of displaced women in Mindanao participated in the preliminary activities of the campaign, all wearing blue headscarves as a symbol of solidarity. Well-known television stars in Manila—mothers themselves—secured television time and made it possible for the women of Mindanao to speak to the viewing audience. In addition, a half page of a national newspaper was dedicated to the cause. It included a dramatic photo of a child lying dead on the ground, covered by a

² *Bangsamoro* “the Moro People” is the generic name for the 13 ethnolinguistic Muslim tribes in the Philippines, which constitute a quarter of the population in Mindanao in the Southern Philippines.

sarong, with only the feet showing. Written in bold, crumbling white letters on top of the picture were the words:

Are there enough children left in Mindanao to celebrate mother's day?

This example of empowered women is one of many that could be cited. These women spoke effectively of their needs, interests, and vision for the future. They were well informed, highly participative, and well organized.

Moreover, an increasing number of men are becoming involved in the promotion of gender equity, both on the international and the local scenes. In neighboring Indonesia, the Indonesian Center for Women in Politics (ICWIP) noted that “sensitizing and involving men in the change process is crucial.”³ ICWIP believes that men’s understanding of the concerns of women and gender biases, and the effort to secure their support for women’s issues will accelerate positive action and measures to elevate the status and situation of women in society. With this approach, gender-related initiatives will no longer be perceived as for women only, but on a more holistic manner—as a partnership of women and men in the pursuit of peace and development.

The Asia Foundation has been an active player in the multi-donor efforts toward peace and development in Mindanao. It seeks partners from the private sector, civil society and government who can constructively work together with the Foundation to achieve peace and development. One of Asia Foundation’s gender-related contributions to this goal is the support for the Institute for Women’s Leadership in its efforts to organize advocacy by young female leaders to promote peace in the region. Asia Foundation’s support for the achievement of peace and development in Mindanao includes:

- Support for the “Tri-sectoral Conference on Mindanao Development,” hosted by the Mindanao Coalition of Development NGO Networks (MinCODE) to encourage cooperation among the private sector, NGOs, and the government;
- Support to the Al-Mujadila Development Foundation in Marawi City in its work with the local government in providing relief goods to malnourished children;
- Extended a grant to Kusog Mindanaw, a local organization, to begin a process of increasing the voice of Minadanaons in national public policy making; and
- Support to the Mindanao Business Council in the development of an economic recovery plan for Mindanao to be implemented when the conflict subsides (see below).

In the Philippines, men are thus becoming more supportive of gender balance. An example is the Mindanao Business Council—a male-dominated group—which supports and funds gender-related initiatives, the latest of which is the “Mothers for Peace” campaign started by the MCW. In the POPCOM XII Regional Office, two of the pioneer gender sensitivity training designers and trainers are men. Male government officials are counted among the vocal supporters of gender balance, both in words and in official documents that emanate from their respective offices. The process involves gender sensitizing and involving the men from the communities in gender issues and concerns and in all initiatives geared toward gender equity. The timing and recent developments in Mindanao, i.e., the momentum gained by women’s movements and NGOs and the promotion of gender issues and concerns, even by ARMM government offices—are encouraging, and provide a good basis from which to enlist more active support for gender equity from men.

³ From “Women in Government–50/50 by 2005: Get the Balance Right!”, Asia Pacific Workshop on Gender Balance in Political Representation, a website publication.

Table 1 below presents a sample of the large number and varied nature of gender activities and the range of organizations and institutions involved in gender-related activities in Mindanao.

Table 1: Gender and Conflict Activities in Mindanao, 1996-Present

Post-Conflict Activities and Interventions	Responsible Organizations and Institutions
Conference on Women Working on a Mindanao Agenda–produced position paper for the Government of the Philippines and MNLF peace negotiation panels.	Regional multi-donor programs, BWSF, RPDO-ARMM
One-day symposium on Bangsamoro Women in Armed Conflict and as Partners in the Search for Peace, Cotabato City, March 21, 2003.	RPDO-ARMM
“Women Working for Peace,” two-day consultation on the peace process, Marawi City, October 18-19, 2002.	MCW
Lobbying and advocating for more active participation of women in governance.	MCW
3-year program on politics and governance.	MCW
Establishment of the Regional Gender and Development Coordinating Committee (RGADCC).	NEDA Region X
Gender mainstreaming training.	KFI
Passage of the Gender Development Code (GAD Code): Misamis Occidental, Davao City, Cotabato Province, and Quezon City.	Misamis Occidental Provincial Government; WHSMP-PC, DOH; Provincial Governments of Cotabato Province, Davao City and Quezon City
Public Forum: “The Quest for Lasting Peace in the Philippines: The Gender Perspective of the Mindanao Conflict: Securing Alternatives for Peace,” September 2000.	CRS, Akbayan, Alayon Mindanao, Bisig Nederland
Capacity building for 50 local commissions on women.	NCRFW
Formation and mobilization of women’s movements among Muslims and Indigenous People (IPs).	NCRFW
Gender seminar for <i>Subanen</i> women and husbands.	MCW, BWFPD, etc.
Organization of indigenous women.	Unidentified; RPDO-ARMM
Coordination of Women’s Month celebrations.	POPCOM XII, NGOs LGUs, provincial government offices of Government of the Philippines and ARMM
Training on self-enhancement and leadership.	MCW
Two-day seminar on Empowerment of Women in Public Service, Cotabato City.	RPDO-ARMM
Mindanao Peace Summit: Workshop on the Role of Women in Peace-building, Davao City, September 10-12, 2002.	Initiatives for International Dialogue: Mindanao People’s Caucus
Gender sensitivity training.	KFI

Review Findings

The review findings are clustered under three major categories of issues as identified in post-conflict Mindanao. These issues are detailed in the following paragraphs with specific interventions relating to them. They are categorized as: (i) access to basic needs (health, education, and livelihood opportunities);

(ii) protection and security for internally displaced people (IDPs); and (iii) disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration.

Access to Basic Services

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), has the critical role of locating populations in different geographic areas to collect, collate, and disseminate information required to plan for both publicly- and privately-funded responses. While the socio-demographic statistics provided by the DSWD, and by the local as well as regional government offices, are generally considered as timely and helpful, data is not disaggregated by gender and/or age. It is thus difficult to formulate gender-sensitive programs and plans, and estimate relief and reconstruction requirements in a manner that is truly responsive to the different needs of displaced men, women, and children. International experience suggests that it is women and very young children that are most severely impacted by the lack of data and information disaggregated by gender and age.

A base line study on the effects of armed conflict among the children of Pikit, North Cotabato by Balik Kalipay provides empirical evidence on the importance of such information in the Mindanao context to address the basic needs of these communities. Balik Kalipay is not an organization, but a project of the University of the Philippines that looks into the effects of war and provides appropriate interventions. However, the gender related impact of the programs is yet to be analyzed (see Case Study 1: Balik Kalipay).

Case Study 1: Balik Kalipay

A study of the effects of armed conflict on children was conducted by Balik Kalipay, a Project of the University of the Philippines in Pikit, North Cotabato in the third quarter of 2002. This was part of Balik Kalipay's psychosocial needs, assessment, and community mapping of Pikit, aimed at gathering baseline data for the Project Team's psychosocial services in the area.

A total of 1,200 children who were attending the Balik Kalipay play therapy were studied through individual interviews with their respective parents. Using the combination of a modified version of the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire and a self-reporting (in this case, parent-reporting) health questionnaire designed for the purpose, eight trained local community interviewers interviewed parents in Pikit's 12 *barangays*, using a randomized household survey sampling method.

Basically, the interviews focused on calamity and war-related experiences of the children that included loss, torture, death, and displacement; symptoms of trauma; and self-report on the daily social functioning and health status of the children. At least four trauma related experiences with corresponding trauma symptoms were deemed indicative of trauma among the children.

Preliminary results indicate that over 94% (1,128) of the children manifest trauma symptoms. Of this number, 12% (150) children were found to be severely traumatized including the 2.8% (34) who were found to be torture survivors. Balik Kalipay is planning a rehabilitation program for these children.

Source: Interview with Dr. June Lopez, Project Director, Balik Kalipay, Pikit, North Cotabato. Quezon City. June 2003.

The second major role of DSWD and the local government units is improving the access to basic services among the Mindanao populations. Within this context, basic services include education, health, and livelihood opportunities. A large percentage of prevailing interventions in Mindanao focus on improving access to basic services among poor women and men, especially those in war-affected areas. Although improved access to social services is important, it is also necessary to focus on improving economic opportunities more generally. As populations improve their economic conditions, there is a concurrent increase in their personal status, health, and functioning level. In many cases, when opportunities exist, beneficiaries can venture into entrepreneurial activities that open up job opportunities in their respective communities, making a valuable contribution to socio-economic development prospects for the

community as a whole. This multi-sectoral approach underlies efforts by development agencies, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), to encourage more gender sensitive development in the Philippines, especially in conflict-affected areas.

The World Bank, under the Country Assistance Strategy, committed \$1.44 billion to fund 22 projects in the Philippines for the period FY2003-2005. Out of the 22 projects, 13 will directly target poverty reduction and two of those projects directly address conditions in Mindanao. They are, the ARMM Social Fund Project (ASFP) and the Mindanao Rural Development Project (MRDP). Gender is an integral part of both projects, which aim to improve access to basic services and livelihoods for communities in Mindanao, despite the ongoing conflict.

Table 2: Post-Conflict Gender Issues, Activities and Organizations, 1996-2004

Post-Conflict Gender Issues	Post-Conflict Activities/Interventions	Responsible Organizations and Institutions
<p>1. <i>Livelihood Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vulnerable widows and orphans • limited revenue-generation capacities; odd jobs; no job • part-dependency on relief goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities for the promotion of the welfare of widows and children orphaned by Government-MNLF conflict in Sulu and Zamboanga • Livelihood skills training, star-up livelihood assistance • Livelihood projects, micro-finance, training on enterprise development, marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSWD, NDFCAI-WED, KFI, CFSI, PKCC, BWFPD, NDF-CO, NPDS, SBFI, PDASP, BRC • NDFCAI-WED, KFI, CFSI, PKCC, BWFPD, NDF-CO, NPDS, SBFI, PDAP, BRC • CFSI
<p>2. <i>Health</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-medication • traditional healers; • government health facilities • complicated grief, • continuing trauma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relief and medical mission • Symposia, training on basic health • Accessible health services, reproductive health • Trauma counseling; crisis interventions, critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) counseling; mobilization of support system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BRC • DOH • DSWD, CFSI, BRC/NDU Peace center, Balik Kalipay
<p>3. <i>Basic Education (Literacy)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • re-opening of schools • high number of out-of-school children • high illiteracy rate • gender insensitive school curricula 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal schools within and outside EC, re-opening of <i>barangay</i> schools • Adult literacy classes • “Arms are for Hugging” project • Review of school curriculum and development of gender-fair curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDFCAI-WED • DepEd • BWFPD, CFSI, BRC • CFSI • NCRFW
<p>4. <i>Protection and security</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimal protection afforded by the temporary shelters • harassment and/or retaliation by members of the opposing armed forces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of the police on humane standards for treating women in detention • Women’s summit in the Protection of Women’s Rights, Davao city • Paralegal assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCRFW • Regional multi-donor program, BWSF • BRC
<p>5. <i>Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demobilization • decrease in loose firearms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELAP, SWIFT, LEAP projects • “<i>Balik Bari!</i>” (Return Arms) Program; Farms for Arms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARMM (SPCPD)/BWFPD/USAID • Government of the Philippines

ADB’s Gender and Development Program Plan for Years 2002-2004 is framed within an assessment of the Philippines’ status in relation to implementation of gender-related programs and interventions. The Philippines ranks 62nd out of 146 countries in a gender-related development index, and 46th out of 64

countries in a gender empowerment measure (GEM). Regional disparities are also evident, especially in Southern Philippines, where women continue to have limited access to basic social services, as well as opportunities for productive activities and financing assistance. In response to this, ADB attempts to address access to basic services and livelihoods through projects such as:

- Basic Education Development Project—to narrow gender gaps in education;
- Upland Communities Development and Rural Micro-finance Project—to assist in income generation for women; and
- Women’s Health and Safe Motherhood Project—targeted on poor urban communities to ease the domestic burden on women.

Table 2 above provides a brief overview of various gender issues in the Philippines’ post-conflict settings, related interventions, and organizations and institutions responsible for specific interventions.

Examples of approaches to address basic services and livelihoods are mentioned briefly below and in the Case Studies 2 and 3.

Case Study 2: GENPEACE

GENPEACE is a highly innovative project aimed at functional literacy and continuing education for both men and women through community-based radio stations in selected areas of Mindanao. The main theme of this project is that the participation of women is essential to the development and promotion of a culture of peace. The project seeks to integrate peace education and gender development in these activities. It has adopted the radio as a tool for communication and community mobilization.

The first phase of the project was implemented in three pilot areas in the provinces of Maguindanao, Sulu, and Zamboanga Sur. Community radio stations were installed and used to promote a culture of peace, community participation/mobilization, and communication among the Muslim, Christian, and Indigenous Peoples affected by conflict. Capacity building and awareness raising for peace promoters and women leaders as well as at the grass roots level were conducted. Besides basic education, women were provided entrepreneurial training, agriculture relevant skills, and access to informal participatory forums that raise awareness amongst women. GENPEACE learning modules, designed by each partner NGO and which have become peace and development learning modules (PDLs), have increased the women’s productivity and capacity to contribute to family economic security as well as poverty alleviation efforts. Activities are implemented by the local NGOs, led by the Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities (NDFCAI).

The project was expanded in 2002 with UN Multi-Donor funding to cover Zamboanga Norte, Lanao Norte, Lanao del Sur, South Cotabato, Davao del Sur, and Tawi-tawi. In all these sites community leaders and local governments were quick to respond to requests for local counterpart funding. The expanded project has the following objectives:

- Promote gender sensitive community-based peace education.
- Launch community-based projects to enhance economic activity and to improve the delivery of basic services for both men and women.
- Enhance community mobilization, collaborative action, and communication.
- Implement UNESCO’s Culture of Peace Programme at the grass-roots level in Mindanao.

Source: Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Acts Incorporated “UNESCO Gender, Peace and Development (GENPEACE)-Phase 1 and 2” in NDFCAI-WED Project Profiles, Cotabato City, Philippines. 2003.

In 1996-1999, the Mindanao Women Education Project: Expanding NGOs’ Functional Literacy in Muslim Mindanao—a joint project with World Education and local women’s organizations in Mindanao—targeted the problems of illiteracy among Muslim women. The project aimed to empower women and girls in poor Muslim communities by developing their skills and knowledge to help them develop and gain control over their lives. In 1999, UNESCO funded the Gender and Culture of Peace Project (GENPEACE), a highly innovative project to promote functional literacy and continuing

education for both men and women through community-based radio stations in areas of Mindanao (see Case Study 2: GENPEACE).

With respect to economic opportunities, various livelihood and micro-finance projects were undertaken through the Philippine Development Assistance Program, Inc. (PDAP) and its coalition. They covered 200 community-based NGOs in the Special Zones of Peace and Development areas in Mindanao. These were partly funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (see Case Study 3).

Protection and Security of Internally Displaced People

Displacement causes fundamental change in the lives of displaced individuals and their families. For example, the roles of family members usually change, at least temporarily if not permanently. Men in the evacuation centers find themselves in situations of very limited authority and great dependency. Generally unable to work, afraid of being labeled “rebel” by the military, they often become depressed, anxious, and aggressive within their household and domestic circles. Domestic violence, excessive smoking/alcohol intake, and, in some cases substance abuse, are signs of their distress and frustrations.

In the evacuation centers, more and more frequently, food and other relief supplies are being delivered through women who are considered by providers to be more efficient and less likely to allow the supplies to be diverted, stolen, and/or misused. Women and girls must often wait in line to obtain food rations, assist with food distribution, fetch water and/or do the laundry, prepare meals, and provide care for their children as well as their husbands and/or elderly dependents. In addition, they are often the ‘target beneficiaries’ of both public and private service providers, as well as peace educators and advocates. Their already long and busy days before displacement become doubly long and busy upon displacement. Assistance is generally provided to men and women alike in evacuation centers, often with little regard as to gender-appropriateness when it comes to the nature of the relief supplies.

Case Study 3: Micro-lending Program for Women and Men

The war converts subservient and economically dependent Moro women into independent and assertive decision makers in their homes and in the community. Forced to fend for themselves and for their children in the absence of the combatant men of their respective families, the Moro women venture into various ways of earning a living. One of the most common earning ventures is small-scale business, with the capital borrowed from money lenders who exact usurious interests. Many women who are forced to accept the offer of money lenders often find themselves poorer, and with the additional burden of debts to pay.

The Philippine Development Assistance Programme, Inc. (PDAP), sees this economic rut that poor women get trapped in. Through its Programme for Peace and Development (PROPEACE) which operates in Special Zones for Peace and Development areas, PDAP provides a way out for the victimized women. They are encouraged to join a cooperative, membership which opens for them opportunities for capability building in small scale business enterprise. The training includes financial management and bookkeeping, enterprise development, membership education seminars, cattle fattening, gender and development training, and organizational development.

The PDAP is a coalition of six Philippine NGO networks that have over 200 community-based NGOs and people’s organizations as partners and members. Funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Philippine NGOs, PDAP provides both training and financial assistance to cooperative members in the form of a micro-lending program. As cooperative members, women (and men) venture into vegetable and fruit selling in market stalls, cattle fattening, farming, trading, welding, and steel fabrication.

PDAP also has about 200 peace and development advocates (PDAs). These are former MNLF combatants who have opted to engage in community development work instead of continuing to fight in battles. They render service in 157 Peace and Development Communities which are areas that were severely affected by war, and have become active participants in promoting peace and development.

Source: “Bearing the Torch of Peace,” Philippine Development Assistance Programme, Inc. (PDAP). 2003.

A recent Social Assessment carried out by the World Bank notes the different impact of conflict on women.⁴ In Maguindanao and Cotabato, for example, adult Muslim men were generally absent. They were either combatants in the MILF, they were suspected of being combatants and so feared for their safety, or they left their families to avoid conscription. Women also reacted differently to the violence. In Dalengaoen in Pikit North Cotabato, after the attacks in November 11, 2000, the collective opinion of men was that they should arm themselves. The men disregarded the voices of the community's women, who argued that a call to arms would attract more violence. Moreover, small arms ordinarily cost the equivalent of a few months of a poor family's income (World Bank 2003).

Case Study 4: "Go and See Visit"

Promoting the transition from conflict to peace and development at the community level is a pilot project funded from the World Bank's Post-Conflict Fund and implemented by community and family services international (CFSI) in Central Mindanao. The project aims to make a difference in the lives of the displaced by working with the affected communities to develop enabling conditions that encourage safe return and provide a foundation for sustainable peace and development. The project is also testing approaches to the transition from conflict to peace, with total project coverage of 33,550 people in two provinces of Mindanao.

One of the activities developed by CFSI to both protect and facilitate the return of the displaced to their communities of origins is the "Go and See Visit" (GSV). Based on UNHCR's model for refugee repatriation efforts in conflict-affected areas, these one day visits allow displaced people to briefly return to their communities of origin in safety, dignity, and peace in order to get a first hand feel of the situation prevalent there. In Mindanao, GSVs gave the IDPs the opportunity to get a sense of the security conditions obtaining in their communities of origin/return, to make an on-site assessment of the state of family or community infrastructure and assets, and to determine what would be required for a permanent return. CFSI also helped the IDPs who participated in these visits carry out traditional ceremonies and rituals centered on grief for those lost, respect for the past, and hope for the future.

GSVs are a prelude to 'Site Development Planning' carried out by the IDPs with CFSI support when they return to the evacuation center. Site development planning efforts focus on identifying the anticipated needs as well as resources related to return and reintegration. This information is then shared with the communities of origin in an effort to develop consensus on what actions must take place.

The GSVs and community consultations have proven to be very effective in ensuring a safe, smooth, and sustainable return of the IDPs to their places of origin from the evacuation camps. They also played a vital role in preventing conflict that is often associated with the arrival of returnees into communities that have experienced great hardship and/or have very limited resources to share. Displaced women in particular found the GSVs an invaluable opportunity to assess for themselves how safe it was to return home. Large numbers of female IDPs took the opportunity to participate in these visits. For Laga Dading Padi, mother, single parent, it was the GSV that encouraged her to return. The GSV involved a large group of IDPs from the evacuation center together with personnel from different agencies such as the DSWD, National Irrigation Administration, the municipal government, and several NGOs. "We stayed under the shade of a big tree; there was nothing left here except the big old trees" she recalled. However, through the Go and See Visit, Dading Padi and others from her community were able to successfully link with different agencies for support and assistance for their bid to go back home. She said "if not for the Go and See Visit we would still be in the evacuation site."

Source: "You Listen," Community and Family Services International (CFSI) Monograph, June 2003.

Within the limits of what is feasible in the Philippine setting, government agencies such as the DSWD and well-established NGO service providers adopt measures that could lend some degree of protection to the IDPs. These include: (i) establishing a visible and regular presence in the area; (ii) negotiating with both sides of the conflict to obtain unfettered access to the affected communities; (iii) lobbying all concerned to view the evacuation centers as places of refuge and zones of peace; and (iv) promoting

⁴ The Mindanao Social Assessment, funded by the Bank's Post-Conflict Fund, was prepared by a team led by Mary Judd. It surveyed selected communities in Basilan, Sulu, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Davao del Norte, and North Cotabato. Information was gathered from the second half of 2001 up to the early months of 2002 (World Bank 2003).

active participation of the affected populations in decision making as well as program design and implementation.

However, many of those who are sheltered in the evacuation centers have difficulty making the decision to go back home, despite their wish to do so. Usually they are concerned about security and unsure of the existing situation in their place of origin. The “Go and See Visit” activity has proven to be quite helpful in helping IDPs’ decide whether to return their place of origin (see Case Study 4: “Go and See Visit”).

In preparation for their eventual return to their places of origin, women and men are often provided with livelihood skills training and/or provided with start-up capital with which they can begin to rebuild their disrupted lives. For instance, the Mindanao Project: Rebuilding Lives, a Community and Family Services International (CFSI) project in Mindanao, develops enabling conditions for those displaced by armed conflict to encourage their safe return to their original homes or settlements. It also facilitates the process of transition and stabilization, and in building a foundation for peace and sustainable development. They organize groups made up of women, youth, and the elderly to provide them with livelihood skills, and linkages to appropriate agencies for addressing women’s needs and concerns including peace promotion and education for out-of-school youth.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

Efforts to end conflict with the NPA, MNLF, and MILF as well as others are ongoing major activities of the Government of the Philippines. Various peace negotiations, amnesties, and “rebel returnee” programs are in place. The demobilization of armed elements is an important feature of these peace-building efforts. Addressing the needs of combatants who surrender and/or agree to lay down their arms in return for amnesty is one of the major ways the government tries to build and sustain peace in conflict-affected areas.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, then President Corazon C. Aquino offered an amnesty package to NPA rebels who agreed to stop fighting and reintegrate into Philippine society. Many of the academics, professionals, and student leaders who joined the movement eventually “came down from the hills”. NPA leaders acknowledged the period as the “ebb years of the revolution,” (Mithi 1999) as thousands of their members left the armed struggle for more peaceful means of bringing about change. Thus began the complicated process of being reintegrated into civilian life. Some were provided with basic assistance, including skills training, livelihood projects, or employment.

In 1993, President Fidel Ramos issued Executive Order (EO) No. 125⁵ that defines the “Approach and Administrative Structure for Government’s Comprehensive Peace Efforts.” Section 3 of this order makes provision for the reintegration and rehabilitation of former rebel combatants. One component of this Section—which is entitled Programs for Reconciliation, Reintegration, into Mainstream Society and Rehabilitation—states:

“This component shall include programs to address the legal status and security of former rebels, as well as community-based assistance programs to address the economic, social and psychological rehabilitation needs of former rebels, demobilized combatants, and civilian victims of the internal armed conflicts.”

The implementation of EO 125 included a package of guaranteed amnesty and cash payments for each firearm surrendered as initial assistance to ex-combatants during the transition period of the reconciliation

⁵ *Philippine Executive Order No. 125*. Conciliation Resources: September 15, 1993.

and reintegration process. However, the reviewed documents on demobilization do not mention the gender distribution of the programs' beneficiaries. There are references to the families of demobilized combatants, but there is no explicit statement concerning women beneficiaries. Although the fact that at least one program was managed by an experienced women's organization, the Bangsamoro Women for Peace and Development Foundation, suggests that women combatants may have not been entirely neglected. Nonetheless, it appears likely that there was no systematic effort to gender sensitize the implementation of EO 125.

In 1997, the Government of the Philippines, through the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), initiated a program that aimed to facilitate and strengthen peace in Mindanao through activities that provided funding for the reintegration of former MNLF combatants—and prospective combatants—into the Philippine economy through the Emergency Livelihood Assistance Project (see Case Study 5: The Emergency Livelihood Assistance Project), funded by USAID (Sanchez 2001). Through the project 13,000 former MNLF fighters and their families received livelihood and technical assistance. ELAP was complemented by another USAID-funded project—Support with Fast Transition (SWIFT). The SWIFT Project included assistance for community development with post-harvest equipment and small infrastructure. SWIFT benefited 10,000 families in 378 communities in MNLF areas (USAID 2002).

Case Study 5: The Emergency Livelihood Assistance Project

The Emergency Livelihood Assistance Project (ELAP) was jointly designed and implemented by the Southern Philippines Council of Peace and Development (SPCPD) and USAID. Under this program, former combatants of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and their families were provided assistance in the form of inputs required for the production of a crop or product (corn, cassava, bananas, tilapia fish, seaweed, and mud crabs) as well as training and technical assistance. The targeted beneficiaries of this livelihood program were 2,200 ex-combatants and their families.

The project was overseen by a management committee, which included representatives from the Bangsamoro Women's Foundation for Peace and Development (BMWF). This organization, with a membership of 18,000 women, consists of the women's committees of the MNLF who worked as nurses, fundraisers, farmers, and community organizers during the conflict.

The involvement of women in the ELAP helped in bringing about a culturally-sensitive and consensus-based approach to program development and implementation. The project was able to draw upon their comparative advantage in farming skills and running agro-businesses, skills they acquired during the long years of conflict. Thanks to its inclusive approach, the ELAP was successful in providing essential agricultural production inputs, marketing assistance, and technical training leading to improved farming techniques for nearly 11,000 former MNLF combatants.

ELAP has had significant community-wide impact in those areas where it is being implemented. Empowered by ELAP, many of the participants have organized themselves into cooperatives or farmer associations, providing less costly services to members by investing in equipment and facilities. Successful farmer associations have not only attracted support from government agencies and donors, but have also provided encouragement by example to non-ELAP beneficiaries to adopt similar technologies and production techniques. Furthermore, as formal groups with increased bargaining power, they are able to command higher market prices for their products. ELAP participants are increasingly evolving into self-reliant entrepreneurs with the capability to make informed decisions that enhance the quality of their lives.

Source: WIDTech (1998) "Assessment of Gender Integration in the USAID/Philippines Strategies Objectives" *Widtech, Washington DC, USA.*

Recommendations

The following recommendations address the issues identified throughout the review. Since the review findings clearly indicate that a multi-sectoral approach is most relevant to address gender issues in the Philippines' conflict and post-conflict settings, the recommendations are not grouped under each issue,

nor are they presented in order of importance. Also, the recommendations are not prescriptive in nature, but rather try to suggest areas that require greater attention or where there is a need to build on existing or ongoing efforts.

- **Explore more effective ways of protecting women and children from any form of danger due to post-conflict situation.** Community mobilization may be an effective way to encourage non-violent ways of protecting the security of women and children, as well as vulnerable men. A more focused study needs to be undertaken to learn how the concept of *zone of peace* or *space of peace* can work more effectively to improve security and the protection of vulnerable populations, especially women and children.
- **Ensure accurate and disaggregated data (age, gender) on displaced people and other population groups affected by armed conflict.** Disaggregated data is essential to facilitate effective planning, design of appropriate interventions, and to target assistance to address the special needs of vulnerable groups, especially of women whose needs and concerns are often taken up under the needs of men and/or of the family as a unit. Standard data collection tools should be redesigned and reporting forms reconfigured. Training on recording and consolidating disaggregated data should be provided to program personnel.
- **Avail and provide access to psychosocial services for those affected by mental and psychosocial trauma and stress.** Women, children and men are affected by trauma and psychosocial stress as a result of violent conflict, which need to be addressed before they can effectively rebuild their lives and communities. More attention should be given to women, especially when the socio-cultural context works against them, i.e., in a basically patriarchal context. Check-lists, such as that developed by UNDP for displaced people in conflict situations, may help ensure service providers identify the needs of affected populations, as well as available resources and service providers.
- **Plan benefit packages for demobilized combatants** according to individual or group needs. This will necessitate prior collection of disaggregated data identifying the sex, age, family situation, background, and capacities of beneficiaries. International experience suggest that in order to gender sensitize a demobilization and reconstruction program, preparation, including data collection, needs to start as early as possible.
- **Provide equal opportunities for livelihood activities** and parallel packages of benefits to female and male demobilized combatants. Benefit packages should be adapted to take into account the different interests, needs and potential of women and men.
- **Allocate time and resources to gather the ideas, sentiments, and opinions of women and men who are affected by armed conflict.** This can be done in the form of assemblies involving both men and women, starting from the *barangay* level to the regional level.
- **Lobby to have women serve on the peace panels** and other peace negotiation instances. International experience shows that when women are represented at the peace table, there is greater likelihood that gender-specific concerns will be addressed in the negotiations and the reconstruction programs that will support peace implementation.
- **Build on opportunities created by the conflict.** The ELAP is a case in point, where the skills of women members of the MNLF were recognized and effectively tapped by the project. Conflicts allow women to venture into new areas in search of livelihoods, and these should provide the basis for post-conflict support efforts.

- **Consider launching a Regional Gender Peace Audit** (such as those organized by International Alert) involving the large number of women's organizations in Mindanao. This mechanism could be used to monitor the implementation of commitments toward peace. The development of an appropriate Tool Kit for the Audit is likewise recommended.⁶
- **Promote partnership between women and men for gender equity.** Actively involve both women and men in the promotion of gender equity in all aspects of socioeconomic and political development. Achieving gender equity requires a focus on both male and female roles, responsibilities, and capabilities. In the short term, it is important to ascertain the challenges within each sector to gender sensitive policy-making, planning, and program design and implementation. The projects already in process could provide increased information and important lessons, and pilot projects may be undertaken to field test assumptions.
- **Complement commitments on paper to gender mainstreaming with provisions for operational application.** Each department, regional and local government unit needs to prepare concrete plans on how gender can be mainstreamed within their respective annual plans and programs.
- **Establish closer and stronger coordination between government units from the national to the local levels, and between government and gender-oriented NGOs, especially on the regional, provincial, and local levels.** Good coordination will result in concerted and therefore more focused efforts to make gender mainstreaming effective.
- **Establish a focal government body to coordinate all projects and programs that provide assistance to post-conflict Mindanao.** In relation to gender-related assistance, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) may identify a counterpart body in Mindanao to do the task in the region.
- **Institutionalize gender and peace education.** Assist the Department of Education (DepEd) in planning and implementing a curriculum review, leading to revision of the elementary school and secondary school curricula aimed at incorporating peace and gender education. Provide appropriate funding to carry out the review and for the redesign process, including production of materials and books, technical assistance, training in curriculum review and design, and institutional support for teacher training. The basic objective would be to reshape gender identities and roles, as well as infuse the culture of peace among future generations of Filipinos.
- **Campaign for community awareness and strengthen media watch and mechanisms of advocacy among advocacy groups—especially NGOs—in relation to the gender and peace component of visual and oral media materials.** Dialogues with such media organizations as the *Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas* (KBP) and the National Press Club (NPC) may be jointly initiated by gender and peace advocacy groups whenever necessary. The dialogues have to be responsibly utilized and tapped to dismantle the concepts of gender bias and conflict among the target audiences on the one hand, and to promote gender equity and peace on the other. Special attention has to be given to print media and television shows that target young audiences.

⁶ International Alert and Women Waging Peace have recently issued a Toolkit for Advocacy and Action (International Alert and Women Waging Peace 2004). The Toolkit is aimed as a resource to enable the strategic engagement of women in national peacebuilding and security processes. It has been developed specifically for women peace activists, advocates and practitioners in conflict-affected and post-conflict countries.

Annex 1: Gender and Peace Focal Persons Interviewed

1. Ms. Cris Adante
Project Officer
2. Ms. Sheila Algabre
Focal Person
3. Ms. Femia Leoporado
Microfinance Supervisor
4. Mrs. Myrna Lim
Executive Director
5. Dr. June Lopez
Project Director
6. Karen Tanada
Executive Director
7. Pastor Zaldy Maniego
Chairman
8. Ms. Nawira Rasdi
Executive Director
9. Ms. Erlinda Roxas
Focal Person for Gender
10. Ms. Celia Santos
Project Coordinator
11. Babu Pampay Usman
Literacy Graduate and Microfinance Beneficiary
12. Mr. Alvin Valerio
Area Manager

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