

**COMMUNITY DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT:  
PROMISING POSSIBILITIES FOR PEACEBUILDING IN MINDANAO**

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## **Abstract**

This study finds out that CDD programs contributed to physical and economic outcomes that led to various aspects of human security. Projects addressed concerns on conflict such as the lack of basic services, lack of economic opportunities and poor governance. The CDD approach served as connectors that linked people, providing social opportunities for involvement in community affairs and empowering residents to address their development needs. Projects eased tensions and provided an environment conducive for peace. Yet problems were found in the selection of areas, beneficiaries and subprojects. Several projects and Peoples Organizations showed signs of unsustainability. Programs did not contribute to easing the larger political or ideological conflicts in Mindanao. These limitations pose as hindrances to the scaling up of the CDD approach. Recommendations are offered at the end of the paper to help CDD projects fulfill their promise and potential of contributing to peace in Mindanao.

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background of the Study**

##### The Price of the Mindanao Conflict

The last three decades in Philippine history have been marked by episodes of conflict between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and members of the Muslim community in Mindanao. The war in Mindanao has claimed lives, destroyed properties and negatively impacted the local economy. The Department of Defense estimated the cost of war for the period 1970 to 1996 at PhP73 billion (Mindanews, 2006). The Philippine Human Development Report (Human Development Network, 2005), which noted that the Mindanao conflict from 1970 to 2001 cost from PhP5 billion to PhP7.5 billion a year, also confirms this estimate. The 2002 World Bank study on the economic costs of the conflict has an even higher estimate of PhP30 million daily or PhP10 billion each year (Mindanews, 2006). The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center notes that between 2000 and 2006, the armed conflict in the Philippines caused the displacement of nearly two million people. For 2008, Reports from the National Disaster Coordinating Council as of September 2008 reveal that as much as 511,090 individuals have been displaced due to skirmishes in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), as well as in areas in Central and Northern Mindanao (National Disaster Coordinating Council, 2008).

These figures still do not include the cost of war with the Communist Party of the Philippines/New Peoples Army/National Democratic Front (CPP/NPA/NDF), which is

also being waged in areas in Northern Mindanao (specifically the CARAGA region), and in areas in the Davao region.

More than the economic damages, the war has wrought immeasurable social costs: the loss of lives and livelihood, and injuries to both civilians and those actively engaged in the war, as well as internal displacements of entire communities affected by conflict. There has also been incalculable damage to the social relationships among the people of Mindanao. The conflict has deepened feelings of resentment, hatred, and discrimination between Christians and Muslims and towards members of the communist rebel groups, and it has fuelled insecurity among members of communities that are not directly affected by the war.

Communities emerging from conflict are faced with the daunting challenge not only of rebuilding peoples' lives but also of reconstructing institutions that once formed a critical aspect of their socio-cultural and political existence. Government and development partners have extended support to these communities by offering a number of assistance focusing not only on rehabilitating damaged infrastructure. Assistance has also been extended in terms of creating and strengthening institutions that promote greater interaction among people within the community and between communities. As violent conflict results in the destruction of physical assets and social relationships among people, the need to repair and strengthen relationships is seen as a critical component in enhancing social cohesion and improving prospects for peace (Adriano, 2006).

One of the approaches employed in extending assistance to conflict-affected communities to foster social cohesion involves initiating community-driven development (CDD) action. CDD approaches aim to promote social inclusion and greater participation

and accountability among the stakeholders by ensuring that they are actively engaged in the process of providing much-needed assistance to their own communities.

Moreover, the CDD approach has also been adopted in the hope that prospects for peace in conflict-affected communities will be enhanced. An examination of the use of CDD is thus given importance in view of its potential to address the physical and social aspects of violence through an empowering process that supports long term recovery in post conflict situations.

### Developments in relation to peace negotiations

In the past four years, events surrounding the peace negotiations between the GRP and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) caused many peace advocates all over the country to be anxious about the prospects of attaining peace in Mindanao. The central issue revolved around the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD)<sup>1</sup>, which was the most contentious subject of the peace talks. On August 30, 2008, the government announced it was abandoning the MOA and would no longer sign it in any form (Santos, 2008). This led to a resumption of armed conflict and violent attacks in North Cotabato, Sarangani and the Lanao provinces, thus displacing thousands of families once again in Mindanao.

In 2010, the peace process was considered to be in a bad shape. There was a seven-year impasse in the negotiations with the CPP/NPA/NDF since talks were suspended in 2004. With the MILF, the outbreak of hostilities in 2008 revived high levels of distrust among Muslims and Christian. Moreover, the Final Peace Agreement

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<sup>1</sup> The initialed but unsigned final draft of the Government of the GRP-MILF MOA-AD would have marked a significant milestone in the Mindanao peace process, after 11 years of the GRP-MILF peace negotiations since 1997, including more than three years on the ancestral domain aspect since 2005. The signing of the MOA-AD on 5 August 2008 in Malaysia was stopped by a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) of the Supreme Court (SC), after which there was a resumption of armed hostilities between the GRP and the MILF that began in Central Mindanao.

with the MNLF in 1996, and the respective ceasefire agreements with the CPLA in 1986, and with the RPMP-RPA-ABB in 2000 were not brought to proper closure (Deles, 2012).

Under the administration of Benigno Aquino III, there is an apparent renewed commitment to the peace process, and this commitment has been translated into national policy that is focused on “winning the peace” and “ensuring national security” (Deles 2012).

Through the roller coaster developments of the peace talks, civil society was often called to “maintain the ceasefire and enhance humanitarian, rehabilitation and development work and projects”. Cotabato Archbishop Orlando B. Quevedo called for the “non-derogation of prior agreements on the security and rehabilitation aspects; and consultation and dialogue, information and education, and building of a constituency supportive of the general goals and specific objectives as well as the processes and contents of peace negotiations.” (Santos, 2008).

This exhortation has highlighted the role of community based efforts to keep conflict at bay, and of actively engaging all stakeholders in a broad based peace process. On the other hand, civil society’s call for continuation of development projects is in line with existing community driven projects that started to be implemented in Mindanao, such as the Mindanao Rural Development Program which began in 2000, and the ARMM Social Fund Project which began in 2003.

### **Statement of the Problem**

While there are a number of projects employing the CDD approach that have been implemented in the country since 2000, there is a need to still distill lessons on how CDD has actually contributed to building peace in Mindanao (Adriano, 2006). Existing

publications on CDD in the Philippines are limited to brochures and reports on CDD programs, but there are none which extensively describe and interpret how CDD processes are linked with peacebuilding. Reports or communication materials of CDD programs may include some statements attributing peace to the CDD project, but they do not seek to analyze connections, nor do they dwell lengthily on claims about how CDD has lessened conflict or brought about peace.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This paper thus aims to describe elements of CDD programs and approaches and interpret how they contribute to building the foundations of peace in Mindanao.

In line with this endeavor, the basic question that is addressed in the study looks into experiences of CDD programs: How does the CDD approach contribute to peacebuilding in Mindanao?

Other general questions which are addressed to stakeholders of CDD programs are as follows:

- (1) What aspects or processes of CDD programs bring peace to the members of the community?
- (2) What challenges were faced by the programs that hindered the feeling of peace?
- (3) What good practices of CDD programs can be a source of lessons for future CDD initiatives in order to build peace in the community?
- (4) How can these CDD programs be scaled up in order to contribute to durable peace in Mindanao?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study gains significance in light of the recent events happening in Mindanao – both in terms of existing efforts at peace, as well as in terms of the threat of skirmishes between government forces and communist rebel and Muslim groups in the island. Peace,

after all, is a common interest of most residents of Mindanao, as well as of most Filipinos who truly care for the country.

If CDD approaches are found to be contributory to peacebuilding activities, then this study gains importance in terms of informing various peace stakeholders of the benefits of this approach. These stakeholders include the following: a) the international donor community, which spearheads and supports numerous development programs in Mindanao; b) the government, particularly the agencies and offices such as the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and other agencies such as the National Disaster Coordinating Council that deliver services to conflict affected populations; c) the Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA), which is mandated by both the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to determine, lead and manage relief, rehabilitation and development projects in areas affected by the war; d) other civil society organizations and non government organizations which implement peace and development projects in Mindanao; and e) members of the academe who wish to conduct research on community organizing and community development approaches. This research endeavor will serve to inform development practitioners of good practices that will hopefully enlarge the knowledge base on participatory approaches that result to meaningful and sustainable benefits to communities in need.

Incidentally, as of early 2012, the World Bank was preparing documents to support the scaling up of the current Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan - Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS) Program into a National CDD Program. With CDD approaches being adopted on a nation-wide level, this study informs

program implementers of how to improve the current practice and how to avoid instances where implementation may lead to harm in the community.

Moreover, while it may not be said that peace has been achieved in Mindanao, it is also laudable that the present administration is sincere in finding a peaceful solution to the Mindanao conflict. Thus, conducting this research is timely at this point of Mindanao's history, as this study could provide valuable insights for continuing efforts to attain peace in the country.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

This research describes and review experiences of CDD projects implemented in Mindanao where armed conflict continues to stifle sustained growth and development. Since the World Bank is a proponent and supporter of CDD, projects managed or funded by the World Bank, such as the ARMM Social Fund Program (ASFP), the Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP) , the Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan – Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS), and the Mindanao Trust Fund for Reconstruction and Development Program (MTF-RDP) are the subjects of this study. Notably, all four projects are presently on-going.

In addition, this research reviews of the results of an earlier study that examined the experience of the European Commission-funded Department of Agrarian Reform-Support to Agrarian Reform Communities in Central Mindanao (DAR-STARCM), which was concluded in 2008.

It is important to note that this study does not endeavor to make a full blown evaluation of CDD projects in the Philippines; rather, it looks into how CDD implementation led to outcomes that supported peacebuilding in their areas and what

happened to communities assisted by CDD projects. Neither does this study pass judgment on the effectiveness and efficiency of the CDD projects. Moreover, this study does not aim to correlate the outcomes of CDD projects with the attainment of peace, nor does it use CDD to predict peace as an outcome. Rather, it is hoped that this attempt to examine CDD projects may be a source of insights, lessons, innovative practices that can further enhance existing CDD projects and be the basis of recommendations for future peacebuilding initiatives.

Due to the costs and security concerns associated with traveling to the island provinces of Western Mindanao (i.e., Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi) as well as the Zamboanga Peninsula, the geographical areas covered by this study are limited to the mainland provinces of Mindanao. This study is expected to be completed in 2012.

### **Definition of Terms**

Community Driven Development is broadly defined as an approach that “gives control over planning decisions and investment resources to community groups and local governments” (World Bank Website, 2008). The Mindanao Trust Fund Reconstruction and Development Program, which is a multi donor program administered by the World Bank, defines CDD as “giving the people control over decisions, resources, and implementation at the community level” (Bangsamoro Development Agency and Community and Family Services International, Undated).

CDD programs operate on the principles of local empowerment, participatory governance, demand-responsiveness, administrative autonomy, greater downward accountability, and enhanced local capacity. It is a bottom up approach that treats the

poor as assets and partners in the development process and as drivers of their own development who build on their own institutions and resources.

Peacebuilding is a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building and political as well as economic transformation (Johns Hopkins University School for Advanced International Studies, Undated). In this regard, peace, is not just the absence of war or conflict, but it is the sum total of the conditions that ensure human and social well-being in all its dimensions (Quintos Deles, 2012).

Notably, peacebuilding initiatives are not limited to the post conflict environment (Johns Hopkins University School for Advanced International Studies, Undated); it also involves the prevention of conflict. Since the word “peacebuilding” was coined in 1992, it has become a broadly used term connoting activities that go beyond crisis intervention. It is known to involve longer-term development and the building of governance structures and institutions, including building the capacity of civil society groups for peacemaking and peacebuilding. In this regard, it thus becomes difficult to create a clear demarcation of when peacebuilders can rest and say that there is no longer any need to continue their efforts for peace. Through this research, it will be more greatly emphasized that peacebuilding in the current Mindanao milieu will be an on-going process whose results will not be realized overnight.

The definition of scaling up, for purposes of this paper, is taken from the definition used in a World Bank-sponsored study entitled *Critical Issues for Scaling Up CDD in Central Asia*. Scaling up, as used in that study means “both expanding the

prevalence of CDD activities to reach a broader population, as well as deepening the intensity of community involvement and the level of decision-making as a means of increasing overall effectiveness and sustainability” (Peabody, Kuehnast and Rana, 2005). In this definition, one aspect of scaling up refers to reaching out to a greater number of participants and beneficiaries; while the other aspect refers to allowing community members to have a greater say in the use of resources made available to them. The premise of the second aspect of scaling up is that efforts to expand CDD will be more effective and results will be more sustainable if targeted communities participate in decision making and the implementation process of projects.