



**The Asia Foundation**

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
IN THE PHILIPPINES**

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**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**  
**Towards Transforming Conflicts into Manageable Disputes**  
Semi-Annual Report 01 January to 30 June 2007

This semi-annual report covers activities from January 1, 2007 to June 30, 2007 under the Conflict Management in the Philippines (CMP) Program of The Asia Foundation with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through grant number AID 492-G-00-03-00026.

## **Background**

The USAID-funded Conflict Management in the Philippines Program seeks to transform conflicts into manageable disputes by increasing knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of specific conflicts, enhancing conflict management mechanisms, improving communication channels between government and community groups, and policy-oriented substantive discussions with inputs from key stakeholders. The three components of this program addresses endemic clan conflicts (*rido*) and community conflicts over natural resources in Mindanao, as well as helps in the peace process between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the *Rebolusyonyong Partido ng Manggagawa sa Mindanao* (RPMM).<sup>1</sup>

## **Addressing Endemic Clan Conflict**

After successfully conducting the *rido* study and disseminating its findings, the partners of the Asia Foundation are utilizing the study results and the experience of a previous mediation case in their current interventions to address *rido* in their respective areas. The following section highlights some of the interventions being conducted under this program component.

### **A. Resolution of the Tayuan-Mangansakan *Rido*.**

The beginning of 2007 saw the final resolution of one of most celebrated cases of *rido* in Mindanao. The conflict between the Tayuan-Mangansakan clans is one of the most well-known feuds in North Cotabato and Maguindanao. This feud, which stretches back to the 1980s, has drawn the involvement of the Philippine Armed Forces, local militias, and some elements of the Moro National Liberation Front, resulting in many casualties and displacing thousands of families across four municipalities (Pikit, Aleosan, Midsayap, and Datu Piang).

With the support of The Asia Foundation and USAID, a Cotabato-based organization, the United Youth for Peace and Development (UNYPAD) initiated a series of dialogues between the feuding clans to help settle the conflict. UNYPAD did this by

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<sup>1</sup> The RPMM (Revolutionary Party of Workers in Mindanao) used to be the Mindanao component of the Communist Party of the Philippines until they decided to break away from the Communist Party and negotiate with the government.

conducting an in-depth study about the conflict, organizing and empowering the council of elders of both clans, finding an acceptable mediator, and conducting consultations and information dissemination to grassroots members of both clans.

Throughout the resolution process, UNYPAD faced several obstacles. The families initially doubted the sincerity and capability of the young leadership of UNYPAD in helping resolve the problem. The untimely death of a Tayuan clan council member also affected the dialogues. In addition, the Shariff Aguak incident in June 2006, which killed a Mangansakan leader and triggered a major armed conflict in Maguindanao, further complicated the resolution process.<sup>2</sup> However, through persistence, hard work, and their sincere engagement with the families, UNYPAD was able to overcome these challenges and help the clans reach a final settlement. With the national elections looming, both clans hastened to conduct the final settlement of their conflict before the May elections to lessen the possibility of confrontations and violence during the election period.

On March 11, 2007, a grand *kanduli* (thanksgiving ritual feast) was held in Paidu Pulangi, Pikit by the two clans to culminate the peace settlement, marking the end of their 21 year-old *rido*. The *kanduli* also commemorated the 14<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of Datu Bitol Mangansakan who is a patriarch of the Mangansakan and Tayuan clans.

The *kanduli* was a very emotional event for all the families. During the program, there were many testimonials from family members and important personalities expressing pain, hope, forgiveness, and appreciation. One clan member for instance narrated how painful it was to finally meet the people who murdered his two siblings during the *rido*, but at the same time expressing relief that the feud has finally come to an end. There was also a lot of praises from the families for all the efforts of UNYPAD and similar appreciation for The Asia Foundation and USAID who made this possible. It is worth noting that in the past, there were a number of previous attempts by other parties and family members to settle the conflict but none were successful.

After a brief recitation of the *tarsila* (genealogy) which reminded the families of their relationships and kinship ties, the *kanduli* ended at the gravesite of Datu Bitol, with a moving speech from Commander Johnny Taya (a neutral relative of both clans and a known MNLF cadre) reminding all the families that their *rido* ends at the grave of their elder, and enjoining all of them to strive to support the peace settlement. After a few weeks, the families from the Tayuan side who were displaced to Kudarangan, Midsayap were able to gradually return or visit Paidu Pulangi. The *kanduli* was observed by The Asia Foundation's Country Representative Dr. Steven Rood and officials from the Office of Economic Development and Governance of USAID.

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<sup>2</sup> On June 23, 2006, a bomb exploded in Shariff Aguak allegedly intended for the Maguindanao Governor, killing 7 members of his convoy. This incident sparked a major armed conflict that displaced thousands of families and endangered the peace process between the Government and the MILF. This incident became a litmus test for the Joint CCCH-IMT mechanism and civil society groups. To contain the violence, a buffer zone was jointly established by the GRP and the MILF (Bantay Ceasefire Report 2006).

**B. New Grants Made**

Armed with significant learnings and experience from the process of resolving the Tayuan-Mangansakan conflict, The Asia Foundation awarded four new grants to capable local partners to resolve additional cases of *rido*. Below is a list of new grantees and their projects, the intended outcomes and areas covered by the projects.

NEW GRANTS

Partners/ Project Title	Intended Outcomes	Areas Covered
<b>Community Organizers Multiversity sa Mindanao</b> <i>Effective Management and Resolution of Rido in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, and Shariff Kabunsuan.</i>	*At least 15-20% of unresolved conflict cases settled at the barangay and municipal level;  *5-10% of conflict cases settled for inter-municipal wide conflicts	Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, and Shariff Kabunsuan: Barira, Buldon, Matanog, Kapatagan, Parang, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Balabagan, and South Upi.
<b>Isulanen Peace and Development, Inc.</b> <i>Promoting Community-Level Cultural Dialogues and Conflict Mediation Mechanism in Isulanen Ancestral Lands in Sultan Kudarat Province</i>	* 70% of actual outbreak of <i>ridos</i> among Isulanens being recognized and taken action by the Tribal Council, with 70% of such mediated and resolved with agreement of both conflicting parties  * 70% reduction of identified/reported <i>ridos</i> or tribal conflicts	Sultan Kudarat, parts of Maguindanao, & South Cotabato: <u>Cluster 1:</u> Barangays Lagandang, Kamanga, Laguilayan, Bual, Iliyan <u>Cluster 2:</u> Barangays Dansuli, Mapadtig, kalawag (PC Barracks), barangay Tambak, Kapingkong, Katitisan <u>Cluster 3:</u> Allah Valley area mostly part of South Cotabato <u>Cluster 4:</u> Barangays toward Buluan, Lutayan, Lambayong SKP and Tantangan
<b>Tulung Lupah Sug, Inc.</b> <i>Institutionalization of Mosque-Based Strategic Interventions on Clan Violence and Conflict Management in Sulu.</i>	* Mosque-based facilitators spearhead the training of peace volunteers from the three municipalities on culture of peace and community-based peace building, and contribute to resolution of fifteen <i>rido</i> cases and reduction of conflicts.	Sulu Province: Municipalities of Jolo, Indanan, and Patikul

	* Resolve at least fifteen <i>rido</i> cases and reduce potential conflicts that could escalate into <i>rido</i> .	
<b>Reconciliatory Initiatives for Development Opportunities, Inc.</b> <i>Institutionalize Maranao Traditional Structures for Peace and Development.</i>	*Facilitated resolution of at least 15 conflict cases in the areas of coverage of sultanate of Marawi.  *Strengthened the capacity of the traditional leaders of the <i>Moriatao Sulutan sa Marawi</i> (Descendants of the Sultan of Marawi), in promoting peace and development particularly in the prevention and resolution of conflict.	Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur: In areas covering the sultanate of Marawi including the municipalities of Pantao Ragat, Matuggao, Baloi, Poona Piagapo, Saguiaran, Kapai, Wato Balindong, Mulondo, Buadi Puso Buntong, Tagoloan, Marantao, Piagapo, Lumbaca Unayan and selected areas in the city of Marawi.

- The Asia Foundation conducted a Grant Management Seminar for new partners on May 28-30, 2007 in Davao City. The Grant Management Seminar is regularly given to help grantee organizations better understand the grant-making process of the Asia Foundation and the standard provisions of USAID. The seminar included sessions on the project management cycle, standard provisions, internal controls, financial reporting requirements, and the QuickBooks accounting software. Eight staff from four partner organizations under the conflict management program attended the activity. Staff from organizations involved in USAID's Trafficking in Persons program also participated. The organizations under the *rido* component that participated are the following: Mindanawon Initiatives for Cultural Dialogue, Isulanen Peace and Development, Inc., Community Organizers Multiversity, and Reconciliatory Initiatives for Development Opportunities, Inc.
- Taking advantage of the presence of partner organizations during the Grant Management Seminar, a meeting to discuss their various activities focused on *rido* was held on the evening of May 28 in Davao City. The purpose of the meeting was for our conflict management partners to be aware of each others' initiatives and coordinate their efforts in addressing *rido* in their respective areas. The meeting was attended by the four new grantee organizations mentioned above and two representatives from UNYPAD. The participants from UNYPAD presented to the new grantees the details of their success case (Tayuan-Mangansakan conflict) in the hopes that lessons and good practices can be drawn from UNYPAD's experience. A representative from the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) Peace Institutions Development Office was also present during the meeting

for them to be updated about the current efforts of the Foundation and USAID in addressing *rido*.

### C. Partner Updates

This section provides some updates on the activities of our current and potential partners in addressing *rido*.

#### 1. Reconciliatory Initiatives for Development Opportunities (RIDO, Inc.)

- Actual Conflict Resolution.** The Marawi-based RIDO, Inc. facilitated the resolution of 6 *rido* conflicts during the reporting period. All conflicts facilitated were properly documented. Three out of the six conflicts are considered major conflicts (murder, land dispute, and reckless imprudence resulting to homicide).<sup>3</sup> Five of the six conflicts were completely resolved, while in the remaining conflict, a ceasefire agreement was successfully negotiated. Further negotiation still needs to be conducted for a final resolution.

Cases	Date settled	No. of persons during settlement	Venue	Status
Reckless imprudence resulting to homicide	9 April 2007	240 +	Molondo, Lanao del Sur	Completed
Grave threat	16 April 2007	160 +	Marantao, Lanao del Sur	Completed
Land dispute	26 May 2007	80 +	Dulay, Marawi City	Negotiated ceasefire agreement
Extortion and physical injuries	6 June 2007	70 +	Marawi City	Completed
Murder	12 June 2007	120 +	Baloi, Pacalundo, Lanao del Norte	Completed
Project-related conflict	3 <sup>rd</sup> week of May – 3 <sup>rd</sup> week of June 2007.	240 +	Poona Piagapo, Lanao del Norte	Completed.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that the Foundation does not interfere with the work of the judicial system. The interventions of partners help manage the conflict and resolve the *rido*, thereby preventing additional violence.

- ***Clan-based Planning and Orientation.*** On April 22, 2007, a clan based planning and orientation was conducted in Lake Breeze, Bangon, Marawi City with 54 elders of the *Moriatao Sulutan sa Marawi* (Descendants of the Sultan of Marawi). The activity was meant to orient and prepare the stakeholders for the project with The Asia Foundation and USAID.
  
- ***Seminar Workshop on Good Governance in Islam and Candidates Forum.*** These activities were purposely held in anticipation of the upcoming May 2007 elections in the hopes of reducing election-related violence and prevent the occurrence of *rido*. On April 28, 2007, RIDO Inc. in coordination with *Moriatao Sulutan sa Marawi* and the Council of Elders organized a Seminar Workshop on Good Governance in Islam and Candidates Forum. The purpose of the forum was to educate Moro electorates on Islamic Leadership and voter's rights. It was also a venue for mayoral candidates to share their platform of governance. A hundred residents from the town of Saguwaran, Lanao del Sur attended the seminar on Islamic Good Governance. In another related event, a roundtable discussion on the implications of vote buying was held among 25 youth leaders in Marawi City on May 4, 2007. The activity was conducted in partnership with the Young Knowledge Society, a youth organization in Marawi who advocate for peaceful, honest, and clean elections. Significantly, it is said that after the series of activities on good governance and electoral education in Saguwaran, and through the efforts of the council of elders, no election-related violence occurred in Saguwaran for the first time in many years.
  
- ***Training Workshop on Conflict Management.*** On June 23-25, 2007, a training workshop on conflict management was held for 40 Council of Elders of the *Moriatao* in Linamon, Lanao del Norte. The workshop allowed the participants to appreciate the key elements of peace building and conflict resolution. The participants were also able to identify the challenges and opportunities for strengthening local structures and mechanisms in dispute settlement. The topics included in the training-workshop are the following:
  - Input on peace building efforts both at the local and regional levels
  - Barangay Justice System and its legal basis
  - Sharing on the doctrines of Islam on peace building
  - Conflict, its causes and the social transformation of conflict
  - Peaceful approaches in conflict transformation
  - Identification of good practices and mechanisms in resolving disputes in the communities
  - Identification of external factors affecting peace building particularly in resolving conflict
  - Identification of strategies in conflict resolution and peace building to be advocated by the Sultanate of Marawi.

- ***Cultivating A Peace Culture Among Youth.*** On June 9-11, 2007, a Culture of Peace Workshop was conducted to promote peace as the real essence of Islam. This activity was part of the preventive measures in the proliferation of conflict in Lanao areas. Among the important concerns identified by the Council of Elders is the growing apathy among the Maranao youth on their customs and traditions. While the older generation tries to hold on to their traditional practices, this frequently causes misunderstandings with the younger generation. The youth, as future leaders, are considered a very important sector in promoting the Culture of Peace. Young leaders are expected to be the ones to initiate further peace and development activities among the youth within the clan and in relating with other youths from other clans or from other ethnic groups in the future. Some of the topics in the workshop include: Identifying concrete strategies relevant to peace building that are cognizant of the local and wider contexts; identifying and appreciating the role of the youth in preventing and resolving disputes; inputs on the root causes of the conflict in Mindanao and appreciating the tools and approaches to resolving conflict. The workshop was held in Villa Lacida Resort, Linamon, Lanao del Norte, and was attended by 60 youth representatives.
- ***Radio Peace Program.*** This activity is part of the preventive measures of conflict, especially in reducing *rido*. Through the initiatives of RIDO Inc., in cooperation with scholars from Mindanao State University, the radio program tries to promote the culture of peace and basic concepts, particularly on laws concerning family, economic, political and good governance in Islam. The radio program aims to raise the level of awareness of the Maranaos on the principles and teachings of Islam as a religion of peace and fairness. The topics broadcasted included ethics and values in Islam, principles of good governance, child rearing in Islam, the sayings of Islam about usury and other topics related to social, economic and political system in Islam. The radio peace program is conducted once a week at DXSR radio station in Marawi City and covers most of Lanao del Sur. As of the reporting period, eight broadcasts were already made. The radio program has also been helpful in mobilizing stakeholders for the project activities.

## **2. Isulanen Peace and Development Inc. (IPDI)**

- ***Staff Planning and Community Cluster Meetings.*** After the preliminary project planning of the IPDI staff and individual meetings with key stakeholders, a series of four community cluster consultations were conducted from March 17 to April 16, 2007 for community stakeholders in Sultan Kudarat, parts of Maguindanao, and South Cotabato. The community consultations provided a venue for project orientation and for community leaders to discuss the situation and problems confronting their localities and drawing out appropriate recommendations. The meetings also allowed the IPDI to inform the communities about some basic concepts of peace building. A

total of 274 participants were able to attend the four cluster meetings. Female participants comprised around 18.25 percent of the total participants. All participants in the community meetings were leaders in their respective villages.

As a result of the consultations, three major problems were validated: peace and security (in particular unsolved killings due to *rido*), landlessness (due to the 1970s war), and lack of basic social services most notably education.

Curiously, it must be pointed that while the *rido* study of the Foundation did not consider Sultan Kudarat as one of the top *rido*-prone provinces, it is the area where people with *rido* evacuate to, thus bringing with them their conflicts and creating new problems with their transfer. Considering the fluidity of the populace in *rido*-prone areas and the interconnectedness of such conflicts, it is also necessary to work with migrants involved in the conflict and in adjacent areas (such as Sultan Kudarat) to resolve *rido* in the ARMM provinces.

- ***Inter Cluster Assembly and Formation of the Isulanen Council of Elders.*** A three-day inter-cluster assembly was conducted on April 22-24, 2007 in Tacurong City. During the assembly, a provincial organization of the Isulanen community elders and leaders were formed to chart a working mechanism and a general plan of action that would address the problems of violent conflicts in the target areas. During the assembly, the community leaders also reviewed their traditional conflict resolution mechanisms to determine its effectiveness in the present situation. The overall situation of the peace was also discussed by representatives from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). The MILF speaker was Jun Mantawil, chairman of MILF peace panel secretariat. The MNLF speaker was Alfatah Imam, vice chairman for political affairs of the Central Kutawato State Revolutionary Committee. At the end of the lecture, the speakers concluded that all parties in the peace process are hopeful that a viable and acceptable resolution to the armed conflict in Bangsamoro land could be reached.
- ***Tarsila (Genealogy) Documentation.*** IPDI has spearheaded the documentation of genealogies of the different target cluster communities. Based on the findings of the coordinated *rido* study and as experienced with the Tayuan-Mangansakan *rido*, local leaders and mediators often study kinship lines of feuding clans to determine neutral third parties who are related to the clans, and utilize them as mediators. In communities where kinship ties are strong, a comprehensive documentation of genealogies is a logical strategy so that in case conflict occurs, it is easier for locals to assess the lines of descent and quickly find neutral relatives of conflicting parties that can act as mediators.
- ***Actual Mediation and Dialogues.*** IPDI through the newly organized local coordinating bodies are currently attempting to resolve identified conflicts in their localities. Initially, long-running feuds are particularly targeted in the

barangays of Camanga, Bual, Kangkong and Lagendang in the municipality of Isulan.

### 3. Tulung Lupah Sug (TLS)

- From June 4 - 6, Tulung Lupah Sug (a Sulu-based NGO),<sup>4</sup> conducted a “Round Table Discussion on the Institutionalization of Mosque-Based Interventions on Clan Violence and Conflict Management in Sulu”. The event gathered 24 mosque-based traditional leaders from Jolo, Patikul, and Indanan and formally oriented them about the project. A planning session was also held to schedule activities and develop a training design on conflict management and peace-building. The activity was also attended by the TLS training team, invited resource persons, selected members of Sulu civil society organizations and some staff of The Asia Foundation.
- From June 18 - 24, a series of training activities on the institutionalization of the mosque-base strategic interventions, conflict management, culture of peace, and peace building was consecutively held in the municipalities of Jolo, Indanan, and Patikul. The trainings included a total of 120 participants composed of mosque-based traditional leaders, community-based trainers, and volunteer peace workers who can play a major supporting role in preventing as well as resolving *rido*-related conflicts. After the trainings, each municipality prioritized five *rido* cases to be resolved. Community dialogues in each of the three municipalities are currently being held towards the subsequent negotiation and resolution of *rido* cases.
- Tulung Lupah Sug was also able to orient and get the support of the new Sulu governor, Hadji Sakur Tan in the project. As a result of this meeting, the governor mentioned plans to revive the Provincial Reconciliation and Unification Committee. The governor also mentioned that he is willing to end his own feud with another family with the help of Tulung Lupah Sug. Unfortunately, the ongoing operations in Sulu being conducted by the Philippine armed forces against armed elements said to be members of the Abu Sayyaf are affecting project implementation.
- The following cases are currently being negotiated by TLS and the traditional leaders in each municipality

#### Rido Cases Being Negotiated by TLS

Case	Parties Involved*	Status of <i>Rido</i>	Place
Land conflict &	3 clans	Deaths: 5 Wounded: 4	Indanan

<sup>4</sup> *Tulung Lupah Sug* means “Help Sulu”.

murder		Duration of feud: 10 years - A ranking MNLF commander is involved	
Unresolved debt & murder	3 clans	Deaths = 10 Duration of feud since 1991	Patikul
Unresolved debt & murder	3 clans	Deaths: 1 Duration: 1 year	Jolo

\* Names of feuding clans are withheld pending permission.

#### 4. Community Organizers Multiversity sa Mindanao (CO-M)

- During the months of April and May, a baseline validation was conducted by CO-M staff that mainly dealt with the systems and processes of existing conflict resolution mechanisms of the partner local governments namely: South Upi in Maguindanao province; Upi, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Parang, Matanog, Barira, and Buldon in Shariff Kabunsuan; and Kapatagan and Balabagan in Lanao del Sur. The data, which was subsequently validated in a local peace mediators forum in Cagayan de Oro, also included a list of reported and settled cases from the barangay, municipal and inter-municipal level, as well as the process and terms of settlements. These data are currently being used as basis for intervention and later on for project evaluation. In addition, results of the validation prove that traditional and religious leaders consistently serve at the frontlines in settling conflict in the localities. They comprise the various conflict resolving bodies as shown below:

Municipality/ Local Government	Conflict Resolving Body
1. South Upi, Maguindanao	Bleye K'tab
2. Datu Odin Sinsuat, Shariff Kabunsuan	Council of Elders
3. Parang, Shariff Kabunsuan	Council of Elders
4. Matanog, Shariff Kabunsuan	Tumanor Peace Council
5. Barira, Shariff Kabunsuan	Joint Ulama & Municipal Peace & Order Council (JUMPOC)
6. Buldon, Shariff Kabunsuan	Council of Elders
7. Kapatagan, Lanao del Sur	Municipal Peace Committee
8. Balabagan, Lanao del Sur	Council of Elders

- On May 21-25, 2007, a Local Peace Mediators' Forum was held in Cagayan de Oro City. Local Peace Mediators (LPM) refers to the group of traditional and religious leaders, elders, and prominent personalities who are involved in conflict resolution in their localities such as members of the conflict resolving

bodies of the local governments (but not limited to them). The major output of the Cagayan Peace Mediators' Forum was the organizing of the local peace mediators which they named Alliance of Local Mediators in Mindanao (ALMIM). The vision, mission, and role of the alliance were drafted during the forum. The organizing group also identified ALMIM's priority agenda: (a) resolving the unresolved conflict cases; (b) internal strengthening of the newly formed mediators' organization; (c) addressing land conflicts being the major cause of *rido* in their areas. Out of the 48 expected participants, 32 attended. Since Balabagan and Parang Council of Elders (CoEs) were not able to attend the Cagayan forum due to post election responsibilities, a special re-echo forum was conducted for these two local governments at Hill Park in Midsayap, Cotabato.

With the facilitation of STRIDES (Surveys, Training, Research Development Services, Inc.) the framework for the effective management and resolution of *rido* was formulated in the Cagayan forum through a participatory process. Ms. Tumbaga explained what a framework is and its use to a development project. The framework highlighted the key players of conflict resolution, the Council of Elders and their status and power relation with the locally elected officials. The prevention component in the framework shall be further spelled out by the community to be able to establish a peace promoting conflict preparedness program, and design an early warning mechanism for conflict prevention.

The Cagayan de Oro forum was also a capacity-building opportunity for the mediators. During the forum, a rich and interesting discussion on *Islamic, Customary Laws and Conflict Resolution* was given by the Director of the Institute for Bangsamoro Studies. In addition, a representative from the Regional Reconciliation and Unification Commission (RRUC) was also invited to lecture the group. The Commissioner gave an orientation about the RRUC and imparted lessons from their experiences in settling *rido*. Linkage with RRUC was found to be helpful in facilitating *rido* resolutions. Therefore the ALMIM and RRUC have agreed to collaborate in resolving the *rido* between the Imam and Macapequez family in Matanog. The joining of the RRUC Commissioner in the ALMIM meeting on August is another opportunity for collaborative action towards conflict resolution.

5. **Regional Reconciliation and Unification Commission (RRUC).** During the Cagayan de Oro forum conducted by CO-M, The Asia Foundation staff was able to explore possible areas of engagement with the RRUC. The RRUC is a mandated commission under the Office of the Regional Governor of ARMM, tasked to design strategies and mechanisms to settle conflicts through peaceful means within the area of ARMM. In a more recent follow up meeting in Cotabato City with RRUC Chairman Mr. Amado Ganoy, the Foundation and the RRUC agreed to collaborate on four high-profile feuds prioritized by the commission. The feuds that are aimed for resolution are located in Maguindanao, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, Shariff Kabunsuan, and Sulu.

## **Addressing Community Conflicts over Natural Resources**

Conflicts over natural resources are prevalent in many communities throughout the Philippines. Such conflicts not only divide and disrupt communities, but they can also lead to violent confrontations with the government. These conflicts hamper productivity, investment, economic growth, and may in some cases lead to armed insurgency. In response, The Asia Foundation supports conflict management in multiple-stakeholder resource conflicts and helps strengthen the capacities of the national government's resource management departments. Since October 2006, the program prioritizes mining-related resource conflicts.

- The Ateneo School of Government (ASoG) has been working on three case studies and a national review on mining conflicts. The results of this national review is considered crucial to the conduct of the actual intervention activities and will be published in a policy-friendly manner highlighting the best practices and the lessons learned from experiences nationwide. Three sites will be selected for the intervention activities. A strategic planning activity was held on January 31 wherein the project team met to discuss the project, its objectives, activities, and expected outputs. The project team has been gathering materials and putting together a bibliography on conflict management, in preparation for drafting a framework for the case studies. The school's initiative is part of its reforming environmental and natural resources and mining governance program and will be co-supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- During the period from January to April 2007, the ASoG project team met with 13 civil society organizations engaged in the mining issue, as part of their confidence-building and consultation process. Consultations with all the organizations were completed by the end of April. As a result of the consultations and the ongoing review of literature, the project team has short-listed the possible case study areas. The list takes into consideration various factors such as the presence of indigenous peoples, importance to biodiversity, existing relations with the local government units and civil society organizations, and the perceived openness of the respective mining companies to consensus-building initiatives. The project team will come up with a more definite list of mining case studies after completing the last of the consultations. In the meantime, the preliminary sites short listed as case studies are as follows: (1) Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte; (2) Tampakan, South Cotabato; (3) Surigao; (4) Mindoro; (5) Palawan; and (6) Samar.
- The Mindanawon Initiatives for Cultural Dialogue (Mindanawon) is undertaking a study that will help the three Jesuit Universities in Mindanao better understand the complexities in mining and eventually help them to identify their areas of engagement in the ongoing mineral development in Mindanao. A three-day orientation workshop and write shop was conducted on February 7-9 in Ateneo de Davao University, for the preparatory stage of the stakeholders analysis. The conceptual framework for the scoping and inventory of development and legal frameworks that govern the

development of Mindanao's mineral resources was the write shop's major output. The research team met again on March 31 to April 3 for an analysis workshop on the data gathered in the initial phase of the project. The results of Mindanawon and ASoG studies will eventually help identify critical areas for future programming.

- The Conflict Management project supported the participation of the Ateneo School of Government, Ateneo de Davao University, and Tanggol Kalikasan in attending the 7<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Mining Conference and Exhibition held on June 5-7, 2007 in Makati. The conference gathered key policy makers and CEOs of mining companies in the Asia Pacific region to chart a road map on the future growth and development of the mining sector, enhancing trade and investments, and strengthening cooperation in the rational utilization of mineral resource in the region. Though there was initial apprehension by industry players because of the involvement of Foundation partners perceived to be anti-mining, the participation of Foundation partners to the event has proven to be fruitful as it provided a very good opportunity for them to dialogue with stakeholders from the mining industry.
- A training-workshop on conflict mapping was conducted from June 18-20, 2007 at the Institute of Social Order, Social Development Complex at the Ateneo de Manila University. The workshop was facilitated by Mediators' Network (MEDNET) and attended by five researchers from Mindanawon, two researchers from the Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC), members of the project team, some members of the research unit, and representatives of The Asia Foundation and UNDP. The project team is working closely with the local partners in preparation for the case studies. Apart from monitoring the progress of the research and ensuring that it is proceeding in accordance with the research framework and work plan agreed upon, the project team is assisting in supplementary data gathering, rendering legal opinions, and providing referrals to environmental and other experts.

### **Strengthening the RPMM Peace Process**

To strengthen the RPMM peace process, the Foundation helps facilitate engagement of local governments with grassroots communities and civil society organizations to build their capacities in conflict management and development planning, and help attract development funds from other sources.

- A joint secretariat meeting was held on February 12-13 in Cagayan de Oro City. The meeting served as a venue to discuss the draft manual of operations of the Local Coordinating and Monitoring Teams (LCMT) for the GRP-RPMM Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities. The draft consisted of the LCMT's mandate, organizational structure, functions, etc. Suggestions to improve the draft manual were put forward by the RPMM panel such as the monitoring of development projects to be included as part of the role of the LCMTs. The LCMTs will conduct actual conflict resolution as the need arises. The LCMT will be initially established in Lanao del Norte and Maguindanao.

- The project is supporting Balay Mindanaw Foundation, Inc. (BMFI) in carrying out community-level activities to complement the GRP-RPMM Peace Process. As a result of the local consultations in 20 barangays in Zamboanga del Norte in November 2006, priority projects have been identified.<sup>5</sup> BMFI will be working closely with the Convergence of Zamboanga Del Sur for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Inc. (CONZARRD) in the administration of the community projects. The project is set to begin this July.

## Media Highlights

In February 2007, two articles which referred to the results of the *rido* study were published online in these websites: U.S. Department of State (<http://usinfo.state.gov>) and Balay Mindanaw Foundation (<http://www.balaymindanaw.org>). On March 30, 2007 an article titled, “Making Peace Between Warring Clans” was published in The Moro Times, a monthly supplement of The Manila Times. The article cited the support of The Asia Foundation and USAID to United Youth for Peace and Development in initiating a series of dialogues between feuding clans that eventually led to the resolution of the conflict. Both The Asia Foundation and USAID were also acknowledged in an article titled “RIDO to Resolve Clan Feuds” on the June 30-July 1, 2007 issue of the Mindanao Gold Star Daily. The article highlights the project being implemented by the Reconciliatory Initiatives for Development Opportunities, Inc. (RIDO) in Marawi City. Meanwhile, the Executive Director of Sulu-based Tulung Lupah Sug, cited the support of The Asia Foundation and USAID in the conduct of conflict management trainings in Sulu during live radio interviews held on June 20 and 23, 2007 over Radio DXMM Jolo.

## Next Steps

- Continue to look for opportunities so that the mining industry, anti-mining groups, and other stakeholders can regularly dialogue and engage each other. One such example is the upcoming lecture by the Ateneo School of Government Dean Antonio La Vina with the Chamber of Mines on October 18, 2007.
- Support the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) in convening an orientation workshop for the Local Coordinating and Monitoring Teams (LCMT) in the coming weeks.
- Provide technical assistance to the Regional Reconciliation and Unification Commission (RRUC).
- Continue to find ways to bridge best practices and lessons from the field into institutions, policies, and actions in a strategic manner.
- Search for new funding for more activities of partners.
- Upcoming October 24 book launch and video documentary launch on *rido* highlighting the current initiatives and success cases of the Conflict Management Program.

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to the support from the project, The Asia Foundation has allocated from its own internal resources for each RPMM barangay to receive \$2,000 in order for them to implement their priority community projects.