



**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
IN THE PHILIPPINES**

**A SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE ASIA FOUNDATION  
TO THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
01 JULY 2007 – 31 DECEMBER 2007**

**(AGREEMENT NO. 492-G-00-03-00026)**

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**  
**Towards Transforming Conflicts into Manageable Disputes**  
Semi-Annual Report 01 July to 31 December 2007

This semi-annual report covers activities from July 1, 2007 to December 31, 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 components of this program address endemic clan conflicts (*rido*) and community conflicts over natural resources (particularly mining) in Mindanao, as well as help accelerate the attainment of a peaceful settlement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and armed groups such as the *Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa sa Mindanao* (RPMM)<sup>1</sup> and (in a component added only in October 2007) the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

## **Highlights**

- In addressing endemic clan conflict, or *rido*, 39 settlements involving 36 deaths and 39 injuries, were arrived at by Foundation partners.
- Case conferences were held to discuss the research into the mining areas of Surigao del Norte; Siocon in Zamboanga del Norte; Sagittarius Mines in Tampakan, South Cotabato; Municipalities within the Samar Island Natural Park in Visayas; and Brooke's Point in Southern Palawan. The output will be the design of conflict management processes for the Mindanao cases.
- Twenty barangays covered in the RPMM peace process were assisted with planning for priority projects (which projects are to be funded by non-USAID sources).
- A new thrust, to help improve the prospects for a peace agreement with the MILF, involved interacting with the Bangsamoro Development Agency, Diocesan Clergy in Mindanao, the Office of the Presidential Assistant for the Peace Process, and other stakeholders.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa sa Mindanao* RPMM (Revolutionary Party of Workers in Mindanao) is a local breakaway faction of the Communist Party of the Philippines which has negotiated a cessation of hostilities with the Philippine government.

## Addressing Endemic Clan Conflict

Through the help of a dedicated team of local partners, the Foundation's conflict management program with the support of USAID is actively engaged in supporting the settlement of feuds across rido-prone provinces in Mindanao (Maguindanao, Shariff Kabunsuan, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Sultan Kudarat, and Sulu). Each of the Foundation's partner organizations that helps settle *rido* has developed different strategies in addressing the conflict. Since the causes of *rido* are contextually varied, our partners are also approaching conflicts in a contextual manner, utilizing an assortment of conflict resolution mechanisms available and working within the communities.

Foundation partners are utilizing the results of the *rido* study in their current interventions and are steadily accumulating experience and generating new ideas with each case they engage. Typically, partners of the Foundation work with high-status individuals (traditional leaders – sultans or datus; religious leaders; government officials; military or police commanders) who are acceptable to both sides. Often much of the logistic work (communications, interaction with the court systems, arrangement for ceremonial celebrations of settlement) is undertaken by the partners to enable the parties themselves, the communities within which they are situated, and the high-status individuals to bring to fruition a particular settlement.

Annexes A and B provide some information about the *rido* that have been settled and the ongoing engagements of our partners. During this quarter 39 *rido* were settled, which involved 36 deaths and 39 wounded. It is anticipated that in the next quarter that at least eight *rido* will be settled, involving 47 deaths and ten injuries. The ongoing wave of settlements is expected to generate momentum as communities and parties involved in *rido* learn the possibilities of settlement.

## Partner Updates and Other Activities

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

- **Reconciliatory Initiatives for Development Opportunities (RIDO, Inc.).** As of this reporting period, RIDO Inc. has settled 19 cases of *rido*. This can be attributed to their use of traditional governance (sultanates and council of elders), clan organizing, and documentation of genealogies. The sultans and other titleholders have demonstrated significant influence in conflict resolution. The collective efforts of the members of the communities, from the elders to the youth groups, have also played an important part in preventing and managing conflicts. RIDO Inc. recently completed a publication detailing their experiences in working with the Foundation and USAID in resolving *rido* in Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur. RIDO Inc. has concluded their grant and has completed their activities.

- **Community Organizers Multiversity sa Mindanao (CO-M)** addresses *rido* at the barangay, municipal, and inter-municipal levels. In resolving conflicts, CO-M utilized a group of local mediators consisting of both traditional leaders and local government officials. After facilitating the settlement of 12 *rido*, CO-M is nearing the end of their grant. Their biggest settlement is scheduled in January 2008, the *rido* between the Imam-Macapeges clans. The *rido* between the Imam and Macapeges clans started in 2001 due to disputed election results. This well-known feud has resulted in the death of nine relatives and two bystanders, and has wounded 13 others. This *rido* has slowed down the recovery of the municipality of Matanog from the destruction caused in July 2000 ‘all-out’ war, when the Armed Forces of the Philippines overran the area which was part of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front’s Camp Abubakar.
- **Isulanen Peace and Development Inc. (IPDI)**. IDPI is having some difficulty in settling conflicts due to the anonymous nature of violence in their area in Sultan Kudarat province. Because the perpetrators of violence often remain unknown, there is a deep-seated distrust among families who continue to suspect each other. The lesser influence of traditional leaders as a group also contributes to the slower rate of settlements. Despite this, there are upcoming settlements between four families and an inter-clan, inter-community dialogue in Bual, Isulan, Sultan Kudarat in February 2008.
- **Tulong Lupah Sug (TLS)**. In settling *rido*, TLS relies much on the authority and influence of mosque-based traditional leaders in the communities (i.e. the imam, hatib, bilal, panglima, maharadja, etc). Even MNLF leaders who are respected in the community are actively involved in *rido* settlements. One impact observed from this initiative is that it is already fostering a sense of ownership among locals of the settled feuds (such that even the mayor of Patikul was proud that the feuds are being settled in their place). The Patikul and Indanan settlements were witnessed and participated by the families, community members, local government officials, OPAPP, the MNLF, and even by AFP officials assigned in the areas, for instance, the 104th Brigade and 35th IB in Indanan, as well as the 3rd Marine Brigade, MBLT5, and Task Force Comet in Patikul. Such settlements, jointly celebrated, constitute an important nexus for dialogue and mutual learning among the participants—demonstrating to outsiders a different aspect of Sulu culture that affirms the goodness of the local people and at the same time offering the locals a different perspective on the security forces assigned in their communities.
- **Regional Reconciliation and Unification Commission (RRUC)** was created by virtue of Executive Order No. 01, series of 1993 to serve as an advisory and coordinating body of the Regional Government on the resolution of feud-related conflicts. The RRUC collaborates with Foundation partners like CO-Multiversity in the resolution of *rido*, bringing to bear the authority of the Regional Governor and his cabinet. The Asia Foundation provides basic logistical support to the RRUC, such as transportation, communication, and supplies, which helps the RRUC staff to rapidly mobilize to settle *rido*.

- **Other Activities:** Staff of The Asia Foundation were invited to a Roundtable Discussion on Local Conflict Resolution Mechanisms last December 6, 2007 in Davao City. The activity was envisioned to be a venue for programs providing capacity development support to such mechanisms to share their experiences and discuss some concerns and challenges of responsive conflict resolution mechanism at the local level. The discussion initially utilized the framework and key concepts presented in the Rido book. The discussion was hosted by Local Governance Support Program in ARMM (LGSPA) in partnership with GOP-UNMDP ACT for Peace Programme and the National Democratic Institute. Upon the request of LGSPA, several copies of the rido book were distributed during the event.

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

The Asia Foundation supports conflict management in multiple-stakeholder resource conflicts. Since October 2006, the program prioritizes mining-related resource conflicts. The current partners of the Foundation in managing conflicts are the Ateneo School of Government (ASoG) and the Mindanawon Initiatives for Cultural Dialogue (MICD). The MICD is coordinating the research for the three Ateneo Universities in Mindanao, namely: Ateneo de Davao, Ateneo de Zamboanga, and Xavier University.

### **Partner Updates and Other Activities**

- On October 6, a forum titled, “Mining in Mindanao: Roundtable Discussion on Social Responsibility, Community Sustainability, and Empowerment,” was held at the Ateneo de Davao University. Among the discussants were Carolyn Arguillas of *Mindanews*, Cagayan de Oro Archbishop Antonio Ledesma (vice president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines), Atty. Marvic Leonen of Legal Rights and Natural Resources (LRC), and Fr. Peter Walpole Environmental Science for Social Change (ESSC). Due to the lively discussions and insights gained from the forum, it was suggested that two more RTDs be organized in the first quarter of 2008. This time, the organizers will bring in participants from the mining industry, government, and security forces that are open to dialoguing with the other mining stakeholders.
- A meeting between The Asia Foundation and the Chamber of Mines Executive Vice President Nelia Halcon was held on July 19 in Ortigas to discuss possible engagements on conflict management. A lecture on conflict management by Dean Tony La Vina of the Ateneo School of Government was proposed. Dean Tony La Vina served as DENR Undersecretary during the Ramos presidency and was involved in the drafting of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRRs) of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995. The speaking engagement will be after submission of the mining case studies, which will provide valuable information for his lecture.
- A case conference on mining conflicts was held on December 12-13, 2007 at the Ateneo School of Government in Rockwell, Makati. The conference,

titled, “MINESCOPE: A Case Conference on ENR and Mining Conflicts” gathered environment experts and representatives of selected NGOs to discuss the research results of the five case studies of conflict in mining areas conducted by the four Ateneo Universities. The conference also discussed a simultaneous research on the economics of mining in the Philippines being conducted by Dr. Gemelino Bautista of the U.P School of Economics. The five case studies discussed the mining areas of Surigao del Norte; Siocon in Zamboanga del Norte; Sagittarius Mines in Tampakan, South Cotabato; Municipalities within the Samar Island Natural Park in Visayas; and Brooke’s Point in Southern Palawan.

### **Bringing the Research to Closure**

The final research outputs of the Ateneo Universities will be discussed in fora that will invite representatives from the mining industry, as well as NGOs that have signified their interest to engage in mining conflicts. The discussions will help finalize in the design of conflict management interventions in selected mining areas.

- February 13 – Davao Symposium on Results of Stakeholders Analysis by Mindanawon Institute for Cultural Dialogues
- February 19 – National Meeting: Towards a Working National Process (Managing Conflicts in Mining Areas) by Ateneo School of Government
- February 20 – Cagayan de Oro Symposium on Results of Stakeholders Analysis by Mindanawon Institute for Cultural Dialogues
- February 27 – Zamboanga Symposium on Results of Stakeholders Analysis (Mining in Mindanao) by Mindanawon Institute for Cultural Dialogues

### **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 capacities in conflict management and development planning, and help attract development funds from other sources.

### **Partner Updates and Other Activities**

Balay Mindanaw Foundation is collaborating with the Convergence of Zamboanga Del Sur for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Inc. (CONZARRD) in implementing the capacity-building activities for 20 barangays in four municipalities of Zamboanga del Norte, namely: Katipunan, Roxas, Liloy, Labason, and Kalawit.

- From July to August, preparatory meetings among members of the project team were conducted to plan the activities and address issues affecting the implementation of the project. The project team provided briefings for the municipal and barangay government officials and other community leaders to orient them and solicit support and cooperation for the planned activities. There seems to be strong support from the local mayors as evidenced by their

willingness to offer counterpart contribution and to actively participate in the project activities. The project team from CONZARRD facilitated the formation of the peoples' organizations in each barangay. The peoples' organizations formed will be implementing priority projects. Some members from the people's organizations will be selected to comprise the project implementing team and will be responsible for making sure any funds are accounted for and plans are carried out on time.

- From mid-August to December, workshops were held on site in all 20 barangays located in Zamboanga del Norte. The three-day workshops consisted of sessions on project validation, formation of project implementing teams, and policy formulation. These sessions are intended to guide the community leaders with the basic knowledge and skills to manage their priority projects. The barangays involved have already established mechanisms and schemes for the implementation process. Among the identified livelihood projects were: goat-raising, poultry-raising, fishpond, and mongo production. Such community projects are financed through a different funding source and are expected to serve as examples for other donors (or the government of the Philippines) to follow.
- From October to November, The Asia Foundation held informal meetings with representatives of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process specifically to obtain information on the latest developments regarding planned activities. On October 23, Dr. Steven Rood, Country Representative of The Asia Foundation met with the newly-appointed GRP peace panel chair Undersecretary Nabil Tan. Plans for a joint secretariat meeting are underway for both panels to validate common priorities, address issues, and determine if there is still a need for establishing local coordinating and monitoring teams.

## **GRP-MILF Peace Process**

To accelerate the attainment of a peaceful settlement between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and building on a set of ongoing governance and conflict management activities, USAID amended the conflict management grant in order to improve the environment for a peace agreement between the government and the MILF. Beginning in October 2007, The Asia Foundation aims to:

1. Engage with groups opposed to the peace process to enhance dialogue, explore options, and strengthen the influence of groups supporting the peace process;
2. Strengthen the Bangsamoro institutions that will manage development and relief assistance to conflict-affected regions upon the signing of the final peace agreement.
3. Increase access to information and improve public dialogue on the peace process

The Asia Foundation's current activities in Transparent Accountable Governance (TAG) and in clan conflict provides a wide network of partners on the ground, and the

ability to discuss the peace agreement in a wider context than just the two parties negotiation with each other.

### **Partner Updates and Other Activities**

- In a meeting in October 2007 in Cotabato City, the Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA) expressed the need for a health planning process for them. The Asia Foundation coordinated with USAID's Health Office to clarify issues of overlap among programs. The Foundation expects to hire a consultant in the next quarter to sketch out a planning process to strengthen BDA's capabilities in health management in a post-peace agreement era.
- The Institute for Bangsamoro Studies (IBS) has suggested modalities on bringing in the Aceh (Indonesia) experience to Mindanao. This includes a plan to bring in to a roundtable sharing of experiences the Filipinos who were part of the Aceh Monitoring Mission in 2006 as well as Aceh Governor, former combatant, Yusuf Irawandi with key players in the GRP-MILF Peace Process.
- The Foundation regularly meets with the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) for support in terms of joint advocacy for the peace process. Unfortunately, during the time period negotiations in Kuala Lumpur once again broke down in acrimony, so that any joint activities between the peace panels of the MILF and the government were put on hold.
- The Archdiocesan Council for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Dialogue (ACEID) based in Davao City, has helped propose a series of interfaith dialogues and activities for the purely religious through the Imams-Pastors-Priests Forum (IPPF) in the Lanao and Zamboanga Peninsula areas. Through some funding from DFAT/Australia (which will run out in March 2008), the IPPF has done interfaith dialogues in Davao, Digos, Cotabato and Cagayan de Oro. The Foundation seeks to support the IPPF as a crucial pro-peace constituency of the inter-religious at the grassroots of Mindanao (to parallel the higher-level interaction of the Bishops-Ulama Council).
- To broaden the impact of the work with the IPPF, the Foundation is also working closely with the Diocesan Clergy of Mindanao (DCM). The engagement with the DCM is pursued against the backdrop of a perceived bias among diocesan (secular priests) against Moslems in general, and Islam, in particular. There are roughly some 600 diocesan priests assigned all over the parishes in Mindanao and together, they can create a significant influence over Catholics and their communities; or at the extreme, they can use the pulpit as a platform to express their own personal biases. Some of the activities discussed with the DCM would involve possibly funding support to the DCM itself as a pro-peace constituency.
- The leadership of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) that is currently reviewing implementation of the 1996 Final Peace Agreement (jointly with the government and the Organization of Islamic Conferences) has been in touch with the Foundation, but has not yet proposed any specific engagement.

## Media Highlights

The launching of the publication entitled, “Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao,” in October 2007 generated a lot of favorable media mileage for the Foundation and the USAID. The press release about the book was picked up by news providers such as Reuters, Associated Press, and Agence France Presse. The book was featured many times in print and online by local and international newspapers such as the New York Times, Philippine Star, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Irrawady, Manila Times, Cebu Daily News, Kyodo News International, Business World, and International Herald Tribune. Copies of the stories are included as Annex C.

## Next Steps

With respect to managing *rido* conflicts, the Foundation plans to convene *rido* partners and OPAPP representatives in a forum to share experiences in settlements and generate more innovative ideas for more collaborative and institutionalized *rido* management. In particular, the momentum generated by *rido* settlements can be built upon to obtain wider results. Individual partners, such as CO-Multiversity and RIDO, Inc., have ideas to move forward with new techniques (such as more direct involvement of mayors).

In managing conflict with respect to mining, the first step is to increase the scope of interests involved in dialogue. The lecture of the Ateneo School of Government Dean, Antonio La Vina, with the Chamber of Mines will be scheduled in March. Certain community relations managers of mining companies who are open to dialogue with communities can be consulted. And finally, community interventions to address mining conflicts, based on the results of the case studies, will be instituted with entities such as universities or NGOs.

In the peace process between the government of the Philippines and the RPMM, Foundation partners will monitor activities in 20 barangays that received training and funds for implementing priority projects to determine the results and impact of these projects. The Foundation will continue to coordinate with OPAPP on developments related to the GRP-RPMM Peace Process and a possible donor forum for additional community projects, and support additional demand-driven trainings for RPMM communities.

With regard to the MILF peace process, the Foundation intends to engage two specialized consultants: one health consultant to sketch out a health planning process that the Bangsamoro Development Agency might undertake in anticipation of a peace agreement, and the other to work with the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies to sketch out what activities might lead to stronger political parties representing Philippine Muslims by engaging in electoral politics in Mindanao. The Foundation will also map out a set of engagements with local government leaders (in coordination with

other entities such as the U.S. Embassy) to understand their attitudes towards any peace agreement. A particular engagement is support for an Institute of Bangsamoro Studies Consultation-Workshop with 100 community leaders for the Liguasan Marsh to be held in February 2008 in Pikit, Cotabato Province.

**ANNEX A: Summary of Settlement Initiatives by Local Partners  
(October –December 2007)**

Local Partners	Area	Settled	Killed	Injured
Reconciliatory Initiatives for Development Opportunities (RIDO Inc.)	Lanao del Norte & Lanao del Sur: Municipality of Pantao Ragat, Matuggao, Baloi, Poona Piagapo, Saguiaran, Kapai, Wato Balindong, Mulondo, Buadi Puso Buntong, Tagoloan, Marantao, Piagapo, Lumbaca Unayan and the selected areas in the city of Marawi.	19	20	28
CO-Multiversity	Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, and Shariff Kabunsuan: Barira, Buldon, Matanog, Kapatagan, Parang, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Balabagan, and South Upi.	12	10	3
Tulong Lupah Sug (TLS)	Sulu Province: Patikul and Indanan	4	3	3
Regional Reconciliation & Unification Commission (RRUC)	Shariff Kabunsuan, Lanao del Sur, and Sulu.	4	3	5
Isulanen Peace and Development, Inc. (IPDI)	Sultan Kudarat: Isulan, Esperanza, Bagumbayan, Tacurong City	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>39</b>

**ANNEX B: Upcoming Settlements Scheduled (January and February 2008)**

NGO	Conflict	Area	Killed	Injured
Tulong Lupah Sug	Land (coconut plantation)	Indanan, Sulu	17	
	Illegal detention of woman	Indanan, Sulu	4	1
	Murder	Indanan, Sulu	1	
	Land	Patikul, Sulu	2	1
	Land	Patikul, Sulu	3	
	Land (boundary conflict)	Patikul, Sulu	3	
CO-Multiversity	Political rivalry (2001 elections)	Shariff Kabunsuan	13	7
IPDI	Land	Sultan Kudarat	4	1
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>47</b>	<b>10</b>

## **ANNEX C: Copies of Print Media Coverage**