

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN THE PHILIPPINES
Towards Transforming Conflicts into Manageable Disputes

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT
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Submitted by



The Asia Foundation

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This semi-annual report covers activities from January 1, 2010 to June 30, 2010 under the Conflict Management in the Philippines (CMP) Program of The Asia Foundation. The project is supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through grant number AID 492-G-00-03-00026 and formally runs from October 1, 2003 to December 31, 2010. However, most project activities ended last January 2010.

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 conducting 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 (GRP) and armed groups such as the *Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa sa Mindanao* (RPM) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

In October 2008, a new component on addressing election violence in the Philippines was made part of the Foundation's conflict management program. Under this component, the Foundation networked to implement a set of strategies to reduce and manage election-related violence by preventing political disputes from erupting into violence and preventing cases of election-related conflict from escalating into full-scale conflict.

Addressing Endemic Clan Conflict

Building on the experience of the local partners to facilitate, mitigate, and resolve various forms of conflicts, The Asia Foundation through its conflict management program supports initiatives to address the complex problem of clan-feuding in Mindanao.

For this reporting period, Pagduwaa Salamat, or a local feast was held in Jolo, Sulu on February 28, 2010 to celebrate the resolution of 21 *rido* cases in the municipalities of Jolo, Parang, Maimbung, and Talipao in partnership with Sakayan Mindanao, Inc. Around 100 people of which mainly includes the mediators and the families who were directly or indirectly involved in the conflict cases attended the event which culminates in the signing of an agreement that formalized the reconciliation of feuding families. Representatives from the local governments of the three municipalities, barangay

¹ The *Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa sa Mindanao* RPM (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.

officials, representatives from non-government organizations in Sulu as well as from the military headed by Lt. Col. Ben Dolorfino attended the event.

The table below presents the following *rido* cases were resolved by the project partners as of June 2010.

Table 1: Number of Resolved *Rido* Cases
January-June 2010

Province	Resolved <i>Rido</i> Cases	Killed	Injured
Lanao del Sur	3	18	13
Lanao del Norte	8	-	7
Sulu	21	38	18
Total	32	56	38

Table 2: Number of Resolved *Rido* Cases
October 2007- June 2010

Province	Resolved <i>Rido</i> Cases	Killed	Injured
Lanao del Sur	52	79	85
Lanao del Norte	35	18	41
Maguindanao	38	36	20
Sultan Kudarat	2	5	-
Sulu	41	133	52
Total	168	271	198

Publication of the *Rido* Book (New Edition)

Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao

The Foundation also anticipates to publish a new edition of the book, “*Rido: Clan Feuding and Conflict Management in Mindanao*” which will be launched in November 2010. Integration of new cases and concepts on *rido* cases settlements and conflict mitigation on localized violence will be added to the book. As in the initial version of the book, drafts/blueprints that include the contents of the entire book will be submitted to USAID for review and approval prior to the final printing and publishing.

Addressing Community Conflicts over Natural Resources

The Foundation collaborated with Mindanawon Initiatives for Cultural Dialogue to implement a project on dispute resolution through cultural regeneration in the Municipalities of Bayog in Zamboanga del Sur and Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte. The grant supports the conduct of “*buklog*” and the documentation of the process of restoring the community relations among the *Subanon* groups who were once divided because of their varying positions over the issues on mining. *Buklog* is the highest form of Subanon ritual among the indigenous people Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga del Norte. The ritual was previously conducted among the Subanons in Bayog in September 2009 which was an initial important step in restoring the relations of the two conflicting groups² in consonance to their indigenous belief and traditions.

As a culminating activity, a Gampang ritual was held on January 29-30, 2010 that gathered the leaders of the Subanon groups to strengthen and assert Subanon governance over their ancestral domain, particularly in dispute resolution. Video documentation of the peace agreements that was held during the rituals will be distributed to other Subanon communities and local governments to pre-empt outsiders from creating new leaders among the Subanon communities that resulted into a growing factions among the Subanon indigenous groups.

Strengthening the RPMM Peace Process

In 2003, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo issued Presidential Memorandum Order No. 108 which, among others, called on institutionalizing the formal talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and *Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa sa Mindanao* (RPMM). The two principals through their respective Peace Panels signed joint commitments and agreements in the pursuit of the peace talks, which especially consider the participation of communities as fundamental and integral part of the 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 capacity in conflict management and development planning as well as attract development funds from other sources.

For this quarter, a booklet entitled, “Building Positive Peace: A Community’s Perspective” will be produced to present the best practices and valuable experiences of peace and development interventions in the context of the GRP-RPMM peace process. The booklet is undergoing editing.

² Bayog Association of Subanon and Pigsalabukan Gukom de Bayog

GRP-MILF Peace Process

To accelerate the attainment of a peaceful settlement between the Government of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), 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. Under this component, the project aims to:

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

University of the Philippines College of Law Development Foundation (UP-CLDF)

Workshops on the options for peace in Mindanao and Public forum with Presidentiables

On December 9, 2008, The Asia Foundation and the UP College of Law (Diliman) organized a meeting of various academic institutions. This meeting led to the creation of a consortium of universities that have tasked themselves to regularly meet and exchange views and information on tackling the Mindanao peace process with the Bangsamoro. The December meeting established the groundwork for a set of subsequent activities in 2009. The University of the Philippines College of Law serves as the secretariat of the consortium of universities created in this project. Participating universities (through their respective designated institutions) are the Mindanao State University (Marawi, Iligan and Tawi-Tawi), Western Mindanao State University, Ateneo de Zamboanga, Ateneo de Davao, Notre Dame University in Cotabato, University of Southern Mindanao, University of the Philippines-Mindanao, Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro, and the Ateneo de Manila School of Governance. The academics held an RTD on the topic on “Reframing the Peace Negotiations with the OPAPP and ARMM” in August 2009. Another RTD, held in October 2009, focused on “Reframing the GRP-MILF Peace Negotiations: Network of Universities on the Mindanao Question”.

The most recent Roundtable Discussion held on January 8, 2010 at Davao City focused on the presentation of policy paper to the presidentiables to secure their commitment to the various recommendations of the academics on Mindanao and the peace process.

Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo)

Mindanao 2020

During the 9th Full Council Meeting of the Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCo) last 06 August 2008 in Malacañang, the Council approved the formulation of the successor Mindanao Plan, dubbed Mindanao 2020 Peace and Development Framework Plan, (Mindanao 2020 for brevity).

The goal of this undertaking is to formulate an encompassing long-term strategic Peace and Development Framework Plan for the period 2010-2040, which not only collects and represents ideas from key interest groups—but, most importantly, comprehends and promotes equilibrium in the interaction of these ideas and interest groups.

The successor framework plan should be “holistic and multi-dimensional, with greater emphasis not only on economic or infrastructure development but on history, culture, peace and security, governance, gender and social development of Mindanao.”

This grant enabled the MEDCo to complete the first phase of the Peace and Development Framework Plan, which culminates in the development of a Mindanao Peace and Development Agenda. The sub-outputs of this phase include: a) Summary of outcomes of the quick survey on Mindanaoans’ concept and definition of peace and development for Mindanao, b) Fact sheet that describes in bullet form relevant information on history, current situation and issues and challenges facing Mindanao, and c) Mindanao peace and development agenda.

To date, MEDCo and the Mindanao 2020 team has drafted two (2) major outputs: 1) the fact sheets showing Mindanao’s socio-economic profile, which served as reference documents for the FGDs, and 2) thematic agenda, that will rightfully form part of the first milestone output of the project which is the *Mindanao 2020 Peace and Development Agenda*. The draft outputs below are based, among others, on the results so far from the 1) Key Informant Interviews, 2) Focus Group Discussions, 3) Quick Survey and existing related literature for Mindanao 2020. The main output of this project is a revised *Mindanao 2020 Peace and Development Agenda* which will be the framework in the formulation of Mindanao 2020 Peace and Development Framework Plan.

As of the February 2010, the team was able to conduct the following activities:

- **Key Informant Interviews (KII)** with the executives of the National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP) involving Commodore Carlos Agustin, Commodore Mariano Sontillanosa, and BGen Fredelino Bautista; Secretary Annabelle Abaya of the OPAPP; Vicente Paterno; Mayor Celso Lobregat of Zamboanga City; Asec. Paulyn Ubial of the DOH; Dean Roel Ravanera Agriculture Dept of Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro; and Chancellor Salazar of MSU-IIT.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGD)** with the following groups/sectors: Regional Development Council Executive Committee in regions 9, 10, and the ARMM; plus FGDs with the Institute of Peace and Development in Mindanao (IPDM), Civil Society Organizations in Zamboanga and various members of the civil society in Kidapawan City.
- **Meetings/Workshops:** Joint Mindanao 2020 SteerCom and ManCom Meetings, and MEDCo’s Workshops on Enhancing the Mindanao Agenda.

Young Moro Professionals Network (YMPN)

MySpeak: Peace Building by Moro Professionals

The objective of this activity was to craft collective policy recommendations on the varied dimensions of conflict addressed to the various stakeholders. In this period, a publication, entitled, “The Yuppies, the Elders, The Cause: Conversations Between Moro Young Professionals and Revolutionary Leaders” which present discussions on varied issues covering the peace process and mainstream the views of the Moro leaders involved in the GRP-MILF and GRP-MNLF peace process particularly the local fronts. The booklet was distributed to the justices of the Supreme Court; academe through Philippine Law Schools Association; congressional leaders as well as the 2010 Presidentiables during public forum; and select local government officials.

Addressing Election Violence

The Foundation is implemented a combined set of strategies to reduce and manage election-related violence by preventing political disputes from erupting into violence and preventing cases of election-related conflict from escalating into full-scale conflict. Building on a set of ongoing governance and conflict management activities, the Foundation works with local partners toward this goal by: (1) conducting a series of diagnostic activities that will assess election violence in the country; (2) identifying, developing, supporting, and enhancing networks and coalitions at the national and local level to combat election violence, and; (3) utilizing and enhancing existing formal and informal conflict management mechanisms to prevent and manage election-related conflicts.

For this reporting period, major achievement was a series of presentation of the results of the studies on electoral violence in major hotspot areas in the country—Abra, Nueva Ecija, and the Bicol Region.

Ateneo School of Government

Study on Election-related Violence in Abra

The result of the study *A Vicious Cycle of Violence, Disempowerment and Abuse of Authority: Explaining Election-Related Violence in Abra* was presented on March 3, 2010. In general, the study looks at three possible causal factors that contribute to the prevalence of election-related violence in Abra: institutional, socio-cultural, and power dynamics. It is an action-research that aims to: (1) provide a rapid, outside-looking-in, and evidence-based assessment of the cause-and-effect of electoral violence; and (2) identify and define measures and mechanisms that can be supported or introduced to mitigate the problem of electoral violence.

Among the notable findings includes:

1. Election-related violence happens in Abra because institutions of government are not able to prevent it.

- Based on the research, these “basic” institutions go through the motion of performing their mandate, but the performance does not yield its expected outcome. The Judiciary, for instance, has a dismal record in resolving ERV cases due mainly to lack of witnesses.
- By 2004, 17 out of 32 ERV cases had no witnesses thus no cases could be filed in the local courts. Moreover, 16 of the said cases had unidentified suspects. Of the 15 cases filed in the judicial courts, 9 were dismissed prematurely while the rest are still unresolved. By 2007, of the 13 cases recorded by PNP, only 2 cases were filed in court, 8 cases had unidentified suspects. All are still under investigation and are currently unresolved.

2. The institutions, or a part of them, are captured because of the same politicians’/ political families’ long hold to power.

- Since the early 1920s, the same political families have held key positions in Abra: the Villamors, the Paredeses, the Valeras from the Paredes clan, the Barberos, the Bersamins (from the Villamor and Paredes clans), the Bernoses and the Seareses

3. Some government institutions face constraints in resources and support that affect their capability organizationally.

- Almost all the institutions pointed out the constraints in their resources that negatively affect their performance, given the tall order of preventing election-related violence.

4. The ERV situation in Abra persists because directly or indirectly the national consents. The lack of clear agenda and targets of national government institutions to end ERV in Abra is an indirect consent to the persistence of violence in the province.

- The lack of programmatic and systematic capability-building intervention for some institutions responsible for ERV prevention puts to question any real effort by the national government to end election-related violence in Abra.

5. There are indications that the long hold to power of some politicians and political families involve the use of guns and goons.

- Based on an investigation made by Task Force Abra and the CIDG in 2006, Abra has 10 “partisan armed groups” (PAGs) with 117 members. The long-hold to power, the captured institutions, and the dependent culture allow violence and corruption to exist and persist. Corruption, in turn, reinforces the concentration of political power that easily translates to economic power, completing the vicious cycle of violence, disempowerment and abuse of authority.

The following are the key recommendations from the study:

- Institutional development involving the key agencies responsible for ERV prevention is critical.
- Gradual disarmament towards total disarmament paralleled with advocacy promoting a gun-less Abra society will significantly reduce violence.
- A network of champions at the national level in key institutions supporting local action is pivotal in “guarding” the exercise of power by national leaders as they relate with the local, preventing any form of *padrino* system.
- Filling up the gaps in accountability can ensure that public resources are spent for public good and not for private gain, which increases the stakes in the elections.
- Civic and values education can make a difference in mobilizing public support for ERV prevention.

Study on Election-related Violence in Nueva Ecija

The province of Nueva Ecija has been a consistent election hotspot for the past three elections starting from 2001. It was first placed under COMELEC Control in the 2004 elections and retained the same status in the 2007 elections, with 17 out of its 32 towns declared as election hotspots. It was again included in the list of hotspot provinces by the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Commission on Election (COMELEC) for the 2010 elections.

Nueva Ecija has a history of election-related violence (ERV) involving its political elites. The political history of the province saw the long-standing rivalry between Eduardo “Tatang” Joson and Honorato Perez that started in the 1980s. Their rivalry spurred cases of election-related violence in the province until after the death of Tatang Joson in August 1992.

The Ateneo School of Government presented the results of the study on election-related violence in Nueva Ecija on April 28, 2010. Highlights of the study include:

1. The co-existence of ERV involving political rivalry with two other types involving state and non-state actors complicates the situation of election-related violence in Nueva Ecija.

- The presence of other elements other than political rivals and the violence they inflict, whether election-related or not, saturate the province with various forms of violence which makes it hard for the stakeholders and the general public to distinguish what is election-related and what is not; hence, ERV often overlaps with the larger concept of political violence.

2. The decentralized form of violence adds to the complexity of the situation in Nueva Ecija.

- After the 1992 end of the Perez-Joson conflict, violence still exists but has taken a different form in a more intensified electoral competition, alongside with the emergence of new power players and the diffusion of power to many dominant political elites. Violence became decentralized. Violence became dispersed and expanded to include actors other than the politicians directly involved in the electoral race – a condition that is very different compared to when power in the province was monopolized by one political family. Violence became sporadic with most victims and perpetrators coming from the supporters of various political elites and with no single common end or motivation.

3. The continuing insurgency in the province and the state's counter-response to it are part of the dynamics that is likely to breed election-related violence perpetuated by both state-actors and the insurgents.

As a response to the change in political terrain, the insurgents engage the elections in several ways in which they can assert their control over certain areas and penetrate the electoral field. Recently, there have been documented incidences where the insurgents are said to be intensifying their *Permit to Campaign* and *Permit to Win* in some towns and municipalities in Nueva Ecija.

The key recommendations from the study includes: (1) creation of multi-stakeholder groups; (2) sectoral organizing and political education; (3) addressing the issues on loose firearms and partisan armed groups, and (4) strengthening civil society response that watches the abuses of both state and non-state during elections.

Coalition for Bicol Development

Study on Election-Related Violence in Bicol Region

The study was conducted in response to the need to strengthen advocacy efforts and increase understanding on the problem of election-related violence in Bicol. Based on the PNP statistics, Bicol was the second region next to ARMM with the highest number of incidents on election-related violence (ERV) during the 2004 and 2007 national and local elections. Masbate, one of its provinces was also consistently categorized as an election hotspot by COMELEC and PNP

Specifically, this study aimed to: estimate the incidence of ERV in the region; identify perceived causes of ERVIS; and identify possible intervention efforts to minimize, if not eliminate, ERVIS

The results of the study show that Masbate had the highest incidence of election-related violence (4.3%), mostly in the forms of robbery/burglary, ambush/shooting, rumble/melee, and harassment/intimidation. Next to Masbate was Camarines Sur at

2.3%, mostly physical assault/stabbing, rumble/melee and ambush/shooting. Albay and Catanduanes had 0.66% each, Camarines Norte and Sorsogon 0.33% each.

In the 2004 elections, more than 50% of the incidents that took place in Bicol occurred in Masbate and that Masbate was always in the police election watchlist. Accordingly, two of its town, Claveria and Cawayan which are noted for the presence of New Peoples' Army, were in the list in the 2001 and 2004 local and national elections.

The presence of the New People's Army (NPA), the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), exacerbate the problem of election violence. During elections, NPAs conduct ambushes on police and military patrols, assassinate local candidates who participated in the counter-insurgency campaign, extort permit to campaign (PTC) fees from candidates and sometimes snatch ballots to ensure victory for their candidates.

Also, the recent data from the Diocese of Masbate showed the alarming political conflict among the economically and/or politically powerful politicians from the provincial to the municipal level. This alarming conflict is shown by the frequency of occurrence of violence and the nature of incidents in the table below:

Period	Nature of Incident	Victim/s
January 2009	Ambush	Gov. Kho
February 2009	Ambush	V. Mayor De Jesus of Milagros
May 2009	Sprayed Guns	Cong. Lanete
June 2009	Murder	Councilor Sivilleno (Placer)
November 2009	Attempted murder	Board member Jesus L. Chiu
December 2009	Ambush	Aka. Ricky Supporter of Mayor .Magbalon of Milagros
	Murder	Aka. Ka. Marlon Political leader of Cong. Lanete
January 2010	Murder	Brgy. Capt. Ali Arransado of Brgy. Guadalupe, Esperanza
	Ambush	Police of placer
	Murder	Brgy. Captain Danilo Amor
	Ambush	Phil. Army – Cogon, Mobo
	Ransacked	Vice-Mayor of Claveria

Based on the said findings, the study puts forward the following recommendations: (1) Creation of a regional tripartite body comprising the civil society, government, and the academic sector; (2) supporting the national advocacy for the passage of Anti-Dynasty Bill; (3) supporting the national advocacy for the peace process between the National Government and Communist Party of the Philippines, and supporting voters' education emphasizing human rights and the rule of law.

Insights

The recent research and studies conducted on election-related violence (ERV) certainly contributed to a greater understanding of the complexity of the causes and effects of election violence. Data culled from the reports were further used to enhance reporting on the ERV situation; sustain monitoring of incidents on election-related violence; heighten awareness; broaden support and promote the advocacy against election violence; and deter further violence.

It is also important to note that targeted activities implemented by the Foundation in terms of addressing election-related violence in the May 2010 elections build on the results of the studies. The Foundation has supported a number of multi-stakeholder formations that aimed to address election violence at the local level. It has also facilitated coordination between government and civil society initiatives as well as national and local interventions to election-related violence.

The results of the study also point to deep-rooted factors such as presence of partisan armed groups, proliferation of loose firearms, presence of well-entrenched political families and elites which all contribute to election violence. Clearly, there is a need for a sustained effort and long-term actions that will help to address all the critical causes and effects of ERV.

**THE ASIA FOUNDATION
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANTS PER ACTIVITY

(January 2010-June 2010)

Date	Event (Training/ Workshop/ Conference/ Large Meeting)	Grantee	Venue	Profile of Participants (e.g. government. CSO, business)	Number of Participants			
					Male	Female	Muslim	Christian
January 8	7 th RoundTable Discussion on “Reframing the GRP- MILF Peace Negotiations”	UP College of Law Development Foundation	School of Management Bldg, UP Mindanao, Anda, Davao City	Academe/LGU	16	7	4	19
January 11	Writeshop for Mindanao 2020 Peace and Development Agenda	MEDCo	MEDCo Office, Davao City	MEDCo Secretariat	35	40	3	72
January 15	Joint Min2020 SteerCom and Mancom Meeting	MEDCo	MEDCo Office, Davao City	Government, CSO, business	13	12	5	20
January 16	FGD with Kidapawan stakeholders	MEDCo	Spotswoods Methodist Center, Kidapawan City	CSOs and IPs	10	10	2	18
January 25	FGD with representatives from National ULAMA Summit	MEDCo	Waterfront Insular Hotel, Davao City	CSOs	6		6	
February 5	FGD with RDC 10 ExeCom	MEDCo	Grand Caprice Restaurant, Limketkai	Government , CSO, business	23	20	2	41

Date	Event (Training/ Workshop/ Conference/ Large Meeting)	Grantee	Venue	Profile of Participants (e.g. government. CSO, business)	Number of Participants			
					Male	Female	Muslim	Christian
			Center, Cagayan de Oro City					
February 5	KII with Dean Roel Ravanera of Xavier University, Cagayan de Oro City, Agriculture Department	MEDCo	Dean's Office, Xavier University, Cagayan de Oro City	Academe	2	5		7
February 6	FGD with Iligan stakeholders/IPDM	MEDCo	MSU-IIT Board Room, Iligan City	Peace,academe, security, religious, CSO	18	22	9	
February 6	KII with MSU-IIT Chancellor Marcelo Salazar, Iligan City	MEDCo	MSU-IIT Board Room, Iligan City	Academe	3	2		5
February 18	FGD with ARMM Stakeholders	MinDA	Office of the Regional Government Compound, Conference Room, Cotabato City	Government, CSOs	32	28	69	15
February 28	Pagduwaa Salamat (kanduli)	Sakayan Mindanao, Inc.	Jolo, Sulu	Traditional and religious sector, civil society, military non-government organizations, local government and barangay officials	80	45	125	-