

**Mitigating Localized Conflict in Mindanao and Sulu through
Rapid Response of Local Non-State Actors**

QUARTERLY REPORT

January 1, 2010 to March 31, 2010

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Submitted by



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I. Project Background

In the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago, violence is a frequent, unpredictable, and often highly localized phenomenon. The region has multiple insurgent movements, including the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Moro National Liberation front (MNLF), New People’s Army (NPA—the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines), and the *Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa sa Mindanao* (Revolutionary Party of Workers in Mindanao or RPMM). The presence of these insurgent groups poses a serious threat to stability in the region, and the heavy military presence in the region is a response to this threat. Although the Muslim separatist conflict dominates the media, research supported by The Asia Foundation shows that clan violence (or *rido*) in Mindanao is actually more pertinent in the daily lives of the people. Small-scale, local conflicts stemming from *rido*, political rivalries, or inter-communal tensions complicate an already volatile environment mixed with separatism, banditry, and military involvement.

One of the major challenges in addressing conflict in the southern Philippines is this constant threat of localized violence, and the lack of state and local capacity to intervene at the critical point of escalation. Violent conflict can erupt when there is an incident or unresolved dispute between local actors – clans, political leaders, military units, police, insurgent groups, and criminal networks – that cannot be resolved or mitigated through existing local mediation or state intervention. When armed conflicts flare up between the military and the major insurgent groups, it is usually between local units and is triggered by a local incident or grievance that may have little to do with the larger state-insurgency conflict.

Peace talks with the MILF have been sporadic for some years now. As witness the events after August 2008, the main threat to peace and stability lie in the rupture of the cessation of hostilities. The first danger, which came to pass in late 2008, was the withdrawal of the international team of monitors due to the lack of progress in the peace talks. The second danger lies in the localized outbreak of hostilities that have been discussed, along with their potential for spreading into a more generalized conflict. The ceasefire mechanisms have been designed to maintain peace between the two mainline forces—MILF and the Armed Forces of the Philippines—and are much less effectual with respect to localized conflicts. Both these dangers can be addressed by the strengthening of community-based mechanisms. Should local communities become more effective in mitigating localized conflicts, they are unlikely to spread into more generalized warfare. And, to the extent that self-reliance in maintaining a cessation of hostilities is generated, reliance on foreign monitors is reduced.

Meanwhile, the aborted signing of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) in August 2008 as a result of a Supreme Court injunction and the subsequent armed

encounters involving three MILF base commands in Central Mindanao, Sarangani, and Lanao del Norte, resulted in the dissolution of the GRP Peace Panel, a hiatus in the peace process, and growing displacement of communities as a result of the hostilities. In the face of renewed peace talks, there is more reason to mitigate localized violence to prevent its escalation, which will hopefully improve the environment for the reconstituted GRP Peace Panel and the MILF to return to the negotiations table.

II. Goal and Objectives

Goal: To mitigate conflict in Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago by enabling local, non-state actors to quickly and effectively intervene in localized conflicts and crises.

Objective 1: To strengthen the capacity of civil society actors and community-based leaders to manage crises and prevent the escalation of localized conflict.

Objective 2: To improve rapid response mechanisms and interventions for outbreaks of hostilities that may occur between armed combatants.

III. Expected Impact

The program will achieve a number of important outputs, notably: the creation of a core group of capable, community-based leaders with the expertise required to effectively mobilize their communities to respond to crises with effective time-sensitive interventions; the creation of a pool-fund system that will allow trained civil society organizations and community leaders to quickly respond to conflicts and more effectively implement existing local conflict resolution mechanisms.

Project activities will also achieve more far-reaching outcomes, as follows:

- Greater community engagement and cooperation with local and central government among citizens of Mindanao;
- Reduced conflict, greater responsiveness among community groups in responding to conflict when it arises, and accelerated development within the region as the intensity and longevity of conflicts is reduced;
- An improved environment for peace and reconciliation in Mindanao;
- Strengthened capacity of the community to respond to and minimize conflict; and
- Facilitation of a more conducive environment for the GRP and MILF to resume the peace talks.

IV. Approach and Strategy

The Asia Foundation's rapid response project is establishing mechanisms for urgently responding to outbreaks of hostilities in the conflict-affected regions of the southern Philippines, through a network of civil society organizations and respected community-based leaders. The project utilizes several multi-pronged and context-specific approaches involving a collaborative

process of assessment, capacity-building, networking, actual conflict interventions, community reconciliation, and evaluation. Specifically, this approach involves:

- Enhancing the wide range of community-based peace initiatives and indigenous, or alternative conflict resolution mechanisms existing on the ground in managing flare-ups;
- Supporting the efforts of various NGO coalitions and civil society groups in Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago in preventing and deescalating conflicts;
- Enhancing cooperation between NGOs skilled and experienced in ceasefire monitoring and more localized civil society groups;
- Utilizing the Foundation's ability to work with local conflict dynamics and mobilize a wealth of networks on the ground;
- Applying the Foundation's experience in successfully mitigating clan feuding (*rido*) in Mindanao and the success of its 2007 and 2008 electoral reform programs in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The Foundation's experience has shown that, in cases where localized violence is prevalent, local civil society organizations and community-based leaders are the most critical actors for monitoring and responding to outbreaks of hostilities. Working in partnership with these key non-state actors has enabled the Foundation's previous projects to achieve high levels of credibility and respect within Mindanao communities. These non-state actors also derive significant benefit from the Foundation's capacity-building programs and are well placed to deliver enhanced conflict mitigation, resolution, and monitoring services to Mindanao citizens.

The Foundation believes that the only people who can effectively mitigate localized conflict are those that have the credibility and respect within the local community to negotiate with, or on behalf of, the community in times of crisis. When conflict escalates at the local level, there are few local groups or leaders that can intervene to negotiate or mediate between the parties. These local NGOs, community and religious leaders, local government officials, and occasionally members of the security forces stationed in the area are most often the ones that must manage crises related to conflict (e.g. movement of internally displaced persons, relief operations, fact-finding inquiries, dispute resolution) and, at the same time, engage with other state actors or policy-makers to avert escalation of hostilities. The problem is that many of these actors require resources and expertise in order to mobilize communities and respond to crises with targeted, time-sensitive interventions. In many cases, local actors that are very well-placed to mediate between combatants lack the skills or networks to effectively manage disputes and crises.

The rapid response program closes these gaps, leading to a more coordinated response to conflicts and effective conflict mitigation by local actors. This can be primarily achieved by implementing a two-pronged strategy of capacity-building that helps strengthen civil society actors and community-based leaders to manage crises and prevent escalation of localized conflict; and supporting the mobilization of local actors to rapidly respond and intervene during outbreaks of hostilities and other emergencies. While the first strategy is done through the Foundation's usual grant mechanism, the second approach involves a rapid response funding process.

V. Accomplishments

For this reporting period, partners under this project include:

- Bangsamoro Center for Justpeace in the Philippines, Inc.
- Bangsamoro Development Agency
- Bangsamoro Muslim Aid Phils., Inc.
- Basilan Advocates for Peace, Environment, and Sustainable Development Association
- Integral Development Services Philippines, Inc.
- Liguasan Youth Association for Sustainable Development, Inc.
- Magungaya Center for PALMA Inc, United Muslim Professional for Peace and Development Association
- Ulangig Mindanao, Inc.
- United Youth for Peace and Development.

The following activities were implemented from January-March 2010:

Objective 1: To strengthen capacity of civil society actors and community-based leaders to manage crises and prevent the escalation of localized conflict.

Magungaya Center for PALMA, Inc.(MCPI)

In January 19, 2010, the barangay development plans with integration of security frameworks of the targeted barangays covered in the project was launched and presented to various stakeholders in Brgy. Kapinpilan, Midsayap, Cotabato. The activity was attended by community leaders, who are barangay captains or members of the Barangay Council, representatives from the military, and non-government organizations such as the Non-Violent Peace Force that operate in the area.

For this quarter, the Quick Response Team (QRT) formed in the eight¹ Muslim barangays of Midsayap covered under the project, undertook the final round of capacity building activities related to gender sensitivity, basic community organizing, para-legal documentation, early warning and early response trainings. The activities conducted aim to prepare and broaden the coordinative and conflict mitigating skills of the pool of volunteers who are part of the Quick Response Team. The Quick Response Team established in each barangay is expected to respond to security issues such as armed conflict and assist the communities in case of flare-ups based on their respective security frameworks they drafted during the security planning conducted in the previous reporting period.

From March 22-29, a simulation workshop was held to engage and expose the members of the Quick Response Team in actual mediation, arbitration, and documentation of community-based conflicts. While conflict actors that may engage or trigger the incidents of conflict in the area were identified, the QRT's actual experiences while engaging in conflict mediation and mitigation was also shared during the workshop.

¹ Central Labas, Kadingilan, Kapinpilan, Lomopog, Mudseng, Olandang, Sambulawan, and Tumbras

Prior to the activity, tension rose in Brgy. Mudseng on February 6, 2010 due to land issues which involved one local commander and some forces of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Consequently, the QRT members in Brgy. Mudseng were quick to intervene through a series of dialogues and negotiations with the conflicting parties and coordination meetings with the local government, police, and the military about the situation to prevent a possible armed encounter between the two groups which may put the civilians at risk. While the goal is not necessarily to resolve the conflict, the intervention made by the QRT provided an alternative channel of coordination and engagement among key conflict actors such as the local government, MILF local commanders, police, and the military which helped in averting possible armed encounters that may result in a massive displacement in the community.

The table below shows the total number of the volunteers trained by Magungaya Center for PALMA, Inc. under the project per activity:

Table 1: Total No. of Participants Trained by MCPI per Activity
(October 2009-March 2010)

Activity	No. of Participants Trained
Participatory Rural Appraisal-Barangay Development Planning	32
Organizational Development and Management and Disaster Preparedness Planning	213
Integrative Security and Conflict-preparedness Planning	405
Gender Sensitivity /Basic Community Organizing and Paralegal Documentation	181
Early Warning and Early Response Training	221
Conflict Analysis and Management Training	79
Total	1,131

The table below presents the summarized the no. of people trained by Magungaya Center for PALMA, Inc. per barangay covering all capacity building activities conducted:

Table 2. No. of People Trained by MCPI per Barangay

Barangays	No. of Participants Trained
Central Labas	42
Kadingilan	35
Kapinpilan	30
Lomopog	39
Mudseng	41
Olandang	41
Sambulawan	35
Tumbras	40
Total	303

Currently, conflict resolution advocacy through coordinative meetings and community consultations has been conducted to strengthen traditional conflict resolution mechanisms that are in place in the area. Around 97 community and religious leaders attended the local conference related to peace advocacy in Islamic perspective on March 18, 2010 which is only one in a series of barangay-based peace dialogues and conflict identification that will be held in the target barangays in the next reporting period.

United Youth for Peace and Development (UNYPAD)

From January-March 2010, the last set of capacity building activities related on disaster management preparedness with particular focus on armed conflict was completed in select barangays of the Municipalities of Midsayap² and Pigcawayan³ in Cotabato and in Northern Kabuntalan⁴, Maguindanao. Through the workshop, a community disaster preparedness plan was developed in each barangay which was submitted to the Barangay Council for possible integration in the official barangay disaster plan.

In the same quarter, a two-day simulation activity, which is an integration of all the lessons learned from various workshops, was also held to expose the members of the Quick Response Team formed under the project in actual scenarios of conflict. The simulation exercises were organized in three sessions, one barangay in each municipality in order to test and apply the knowledge and skills learned by the members of the Quick Response Team from the trainings.

² Nes, Tugal, Nabalawag

³ Kabpangi, Bulacaon, Matilac

⁴ Labio, Gayonga, Montay

In addition, booklets that featured the profiles of Barangay Gayonga in Northern Kabuntalan, Maguindanao and Barangay Bulucaon in Midsayap, Cotabato, respectively have been produced and will be distributed by April 2010 to peacemakers, peace advocates, the military and other stakeholders. The booklet is the result of the basic community journalism training that enabled selected individuals to be equipped with tools and skills on writing and documentation. The table below summarizes the total number of participants trained per activity since July 2009 to March 2010:

Table 3: No. of Participants Trained by UNYPAD per Activity
(July 2009 – March 2010)

Activity	No. of Participants Trained
Early warning, conflict prevention and ceasefire monitoring	90
Conflict management, mediation, and resolution	90
Basic Human Rights and Community Journalism	92
Community Disaster Preparedness Planning	212
Community Simulation/Field Drilling	79
Total	563

Table 4 shows the total number of participants trained in the barangays covered under the project:

Table 4: No. of People Trained by UNYPAD per Barangay
(July 2009 – March 2010)

Municipality	Barangays	No. of participants trained
Midsayap, Cotabato	Nes	44
	Tugal	44
	Nabalawag	48
Northern Kabuntalan, Maguindanao	Labio	45
	Gayonga	45
	Montay	55
Pigcawayan, Cotabato	Kabpangi	48
	Bulacaon	60
	Matilac	49
	Total	438

Objective 2: To improve rapid response mechanisms and interventions for outbreaks of hostilities that may occur between armed combatants.

Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA)

Mitigating Conflict in Brgy. Bulod, Pikit, Cotabato

In the Municipality of Pikit, Cotabato, the Bangsamoro Development Agency conducted a series of consultations among major stakeholders who include barangays leaders, municipal officials, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) commanders, to mitigate the conflict (Daud Nor vs. Sawali) in Barangay Bulod and prevent a possible eruption of violence in the community. The Barangay Bulod incident in Pikit was one of the flare ups identified during the initial assessment conducted by the Bangsamoro Development Agency in select evacuation centers in Cotabato Province through a project earlier supported by the Foundation under this Conflict Mitigating Program.

In this quarter, separate sessions of community-level meetings were held among the disputing parties to discuss and present the framework developed by the responding team to avoid armed encounters that may result in the displacement of civilians in the locality. Through the project, the draft agreement initially formulated was finalized to include provisions that will realize the security of the civilians that may be affected in case of flare-ups or armed encounters. The Task Force Islakh, a group that was initially formed to supervise the situation of the conflict and that assisted the responding team of the BDA in the negotiation process, has been tapped to continuously monitor the implementation of the agreement.

On January 24, 2010, as a culminating activity, more than 250 people were gathered in a community dialogue to formally present the agreement as concurred by the conflicting groups during the rounds of consultations and negotiations. The activity was attended by barangay officials, traditional and religious leaders, and members of the MILF, of whom some are in alliance of the conflicting groups, women, and the youth in the community. As reported in the previous quarter, the conflict started when a known community leader was killed in April 2009 that resulted in a series of harassments and fighting between the conflicting groups who are members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the area.

Bangsamoro Center for Justpeace in the Philippines, Inc. (BCJP)

Mitigate Conflict in the Municipalities of Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Datu Hoffer, and Shariff Aguak in the Province of Maguindanao

Sometime in January 2010, an alleged armed encounter between the members of civilian volunteer's organization and MILF local commanders took place in Sitio Balanaken, Barangay Kitapok, Datu Saudi Ampatuan in Maguindanao. The conflict escalated to other neighboring towns resulting in the burning of houses in Datu Hoffer town. In the same month, a separate killing of a local town official was also reported in Datu Saudi Ampatuan which according to some civilian reports, the killing was an indication of retaliation from a long standing family feud between the two commanders. Due to increasing tension in the locality and threat to

personal security, civilians were forced to evacuate in Barangay Bagan in the nearby town of Guindulungan.

While a majority of the media networks have centered their coverage on the 23 November massacre proceedings in court, violence also took place in the Municipality of Shariff Aguak after the martial law was lifted in the Maguindanao Province last December 12, 2009. Various reports of robbery, looting, arson, and civilian harassments by unidentified armed groups caused panic and fear among the civilians in the area. Because of this, a series of consultations and dialogues among the civilians, local government officials, military, police, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders was held to address and identify immediate solutions to the issues of *rido* or clan feud between the two parties (CVO and MILF commanders) that displaced thousands of civilians in the town of Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Datu Hoffer, and Mamasapano and the problem of looting and civilian harassments by unidentified armed groups in Shariff Aguak and its neighboring municipalities.

Through the project, BCJP was able to identify some preventive measures to mitigate the violence caused by on-going clan feuds, looting, and civilian harassments in the areas affected by the conflict using a democratic and transparent process of consultation and dialogues among the internally displaced persons, military, police, local governments, the MILF, national government agencies representatives, and civil society organizations. A total of 20 consultations with key stakeholders were held and the results were presented on March 20, 2010 in Cotabato City where more than 50 participants from both local and international non government organizations, regional and local government agencies attended. In addition, the contingent of the International Monitoring Team, officials from the police and military, and the leaders of the internally-displaced people were also present.

As a result of the intervention, some of the accomplishments include the following:

- Prevention of further escalation of violence in other barangays through intensive dialogue with the MILF covering the conflict-affected areas in Maguindanao.
- MILF adoption of policies on civilian protection: neutral stand on security issues, mediation and resolution of conflict at early stage, and outreach activities for the community.
- Bridging the gap between the community and the military, police forces, and local governments on issues related to security and civilian protection.
- Issues of looting, robberies, and harassments among civilian have surfaced that were out of sight prior to the intervention.
- Installation of cameras in strategic areas as safety measure to monitor and prevent illegitimate entry to any private properties in the conflict-affected areas identified.
- Distribution of relief and medical assistance by various international non-government organizations to address the plight of the internally-displaced persons (IDP).

Bangsamoro Muslim Aid Philippines, Inc.

Mitigate Conflict in Barangay Tuka, Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat

In October 2009, a killing incident took place in Barangay Tuka in Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat which was traced allegedly to an existing conflict between two families (Nilong-Bansil) in the area. The feud between the two families is due both to land conflict and political rivalry since both families have showed political interest to lead in the community. Subsequent assaults viewed as retaliatory acts from the feuding families were reported causing mass panic in the community.

Support was provided to Bangsamoro Muslim Aid Phils., Inc. to prevent any possible eruption of large scale armed confrontation between the two families. In this quarter, a responding team was organized to conduct a series of community consultations and dialogue to identify possible solutions to the conflict. The responding team is composed of municipal officials, barangay leaders, and traditional and religious representatives in the community. After the consultations between warring parties and Community Leaders Dialogue held on March 6-7, 2010, the conflicting parties agreed that the case be forwarded to the Council of Elders which governs Islamic laws and principles in handling cases. An Arbitration Committee recognized by the feuding parties was created and currently handles the propositions presented on the case.

On March 21, 2010, representatives from the two families in conflict have met the Council of Elders/ Arbitration Committee and signified their willingness to settle the conflict. As a culminating activity, a peace assembly will be held in April 2010 which includes the presentation and signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between conflicting groups in relation to the conditions that they both agreed in the initial rounds of discussions.

Basilan Advocates for Peace, Environment, and Sustainable Development Association (BAPESDA)

Mitigating Conflict in Hadji Muhtamad and Maluso in the Province of Basilan

After various attempts of mediation and negotiation, the conflict in two neighboring barangays of Sangbay Small and Palahangan in the Municipality of Hadji Muhtamad in Basilan was formally settled on March 9, 2010. The settlement paved way for the reconciliation of the two clans who were rumored to stage a possible gunfight that may result in a massive evacuation and displacement in the community. The intervention also generated attention to the local governments in the municipality to initiate measures that will safeguard the security of civilians in the community in case flare-ups or violence takes place.

Prior to the conduct of the settlement, various rounds of consultations and negotiations were held among key stakeholders such as the military, the police, municipal government, and particularly the leaders of the barangays, who are in relation to the clans involved in the conflict. A responding team was initially formed to establish a neutral group who will conduct exploratory dialogues with the conflicting groups to pacify the tension and eventually identify possible solutions to the feud that are agreeable to both parties.

Similarly, support was also provided to mitigate the conflict in Barangay Tubigan, in the town of Maluso, Basilan. The conflict started when in February 27, 2010, a shooting incident took place that resulted in the deaths of 12 people while injuring eight civilians. According to some reports, the incident is an act of retaliation to the barangay captain and his family by a former member of Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) whose son was killed within that community last December 27, 2009. The residents were alarmed by the incident that it led to a mass evacuation to Barangay Poblacion of the same town. There are alleged reports that other people in the community were now arming themselves in an event of possible retaliation since most of the victims are civilians.

As of this writing, the Basilan Advocates for Peace, Environment, and Sustainable Development Association (BAPESDA) is conducting a series of dialogues and targeted messaging in the community to pacify the residents against possible act of retaliation and prevent the conflict from spilling over to the nearby barangays of Maluso. BAPESDA has been coordinating with relevant stakeholders such as the local government of Maluso, the police, military, non-government organizations, and other relevant stakeholders in its attempt to secure the civilians from any possible armed encounters.

Integral Development Services (IDS)

Mitigate Conflict in the Province of Maguindanao

While martial law was lifted in the Maguindanao last December 2009, the state of emergency remains in place as various cases of rebellion and murder charges were filed against local politicians, militias, and other civilians who were said to be involved in the massacre. In addition, violence such as looting, robbery, burning of houses and civilian harassment was also reported while the Commission on Elections has filed disqualification cases against some political candidates in the area, which may contribute to the growing tension experienced at the community. Through these current hostilities, support was provided to the Integral Development Services, Inc. to mitigate and prevent an escalation of violence in other areas with particular focus on how to secure the community in an event of conflict or escalation of violence.

On March 4, 2010, a participatory public safety planning was conducted in Cotabato City for District 1 of Maguindanao which covers the municipalities of Barira, Buldon, Matanog, Parang, Upi, and Sultan Kudarat. Participants to the activity include the members of the Municipal Peace Order Council, religious and informal leaders who will be involved in monitoring and managing peace local conflicts in the covered areas. The activity specifically aimed to: a) assess the current peace and order reality in the province of Maguindanao; (b) collectively map out existing and impending conflicts in their respective municipalities highlighting potential election related conflicts; (c) develop a public safety plan to serve as a guide for the community during conflicts or emergencies; (d) establish a mechanism to monitor peace and order situation and manage local conflicts.

A parallel training was also conducted simultaneously in Tacurong City for the District 2 of Maguindanao to cover the municipalities of Ampatuan, Buluan, Datu Abdullah Sangki, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Guindulungan, Paglas, Sultan sa Barongis, SK Pendatun, Talayan, and Talitay.

Prior to the conduct of the training, a list of political candidates who filed for candidacy for the 2010 elections and the barangays vulnerable to conflict or violence was gathered. Currently, consolidation of the results of the public safety planning has been held, which will be presented to the Municipal Peace and Order Council in each municipality for adoption and support.

The main output of this intervention is to develop and provide a public safety plan to the communities covered in the project to encourage and guide the civilians in coordinating with proper authorities during flare-ups. Names and contact numbers of lawful authorities and responding agencies such as the police, media, Council of Elders, military, Bantay Ceasefire, and other local mechanisms which are helpful to address violence will be made available in case of atrocities to establish physical presence during conflicts or emergencies.

Liguasan Youth Association for Sustainable Development, Inc. (LYASD)

Mitigating Conflict in Pandag, Paglat, and SK Pendatun in Maguindanao

Since August 2009 and consequently after the November 23 Massacre that took place in the town of Ampatuan, the violence has further escalated in the towns of Buluan, Pandag, Paglat, and SK Pendatun in Maguindanao. Skirmishes among the supporters of the local political clans took place which resulted in the displacement of more than 4,000 people. In December 2009, support was provided to Liguasan Youth Association for Sustainable Development, Inc. to peacefully intervene and pacify the tension between the opposing political clans and their supporters as reported in the last quarter. Through the support, a total of 60 political supporters from various factions were trained on Bridging Leadership, Planning, and Negotiation which was previously held in SK Pendatun, Maguindanao last December 2009. These political supporters were tapped as local peace coordinators who will take the lead in localized mediation among the local stakeholders and the conflicting groups in case violence permeates the identified areas.

As a culminating activity under the grant, a General Assembly was held on January 30, 2010 at SK Pendatun in Maguindanao Province which was attended by more than 200 people from the community. The activity allowed local politicians from different political parties, their respective supporters and followers to reach an agreement not to engage in any armed confrontation or violence particularly in the coming elections. Through the local peace coordinators established in each area, local peace negotiations were earlier held to ensure the commitment of various political parties to support the initiative.

Ulangig Mindanao, Inc. (UMI)

Mitigate Conflict in the Municipality of Parang, Sulu

A grant was provided to Ulangig Mindanao, Inc. to mitigate the conflict among two political families (Sampang-Maas Edjing) in Barangays Silangkan and Piyahan in Parang, Sulu. Since 2005, the two families have been engaged in an election-related conflict which now creates tensions in the community as the elections approaches. While the two families support big political parties in the province, the Sampang-Maas Edjing conflict is anticipated to ignite flare-ups during elections if not resolved.

The Silangkan-Piyahan case is one of the conflicts identified and prioritized during the assessment conducted by Ulangig Mindanao in the area through its Task Force Kahanungan, a multi-sectoral group formed to mitigate and respond to any incidents that may potentially impact or result to violence in the upcoming elections. Currently, a series of consultations to the conflicting parties and relevant stakeholders in the area is being conducted by the members of the Task Force in an attempt to prevent any possible eruption of violence in the coming elections which may escalate in the neighboring towns of Parang.

United Muslim Professional for Peace and Development Association (UMPPADA)
Mitigating Conflict in Malapatan Sarangani Province and Surallah, South Cotabato

In December 2009, a grant was provided to the United Muslim Professional for Peace and Development Association (UMPPADA) to organize a responding team and conduct a series of comprehensive community dialogues and focus group discussions in Upper Sepaka, Surallah, South Cotabato. The intervention is to respond to the conflict which is expected to grow and develop into an inter-ethnic clashes between the *Blaans*, *Ilonggos*, and the *Maguindanaons* in the area, if not resolved. In the last quarter, separate discussions among conflicting groups were held to gather comprehensive data on the background of the conflict and to identify key actors and influential leaders to lead each community in the negotiation and eventual resolution of the conflict.

On March 11, 2010, around 200 people in the community attended the General Assembly in Upper Sepaka, Surallah, South Cotabato. The activity presented the stipulations of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that were agreed by the leaders of the three ethnic groups who are in conflict with each other (Ilonggos, Maguindanaons, and the B'laans) which culminated in the signing of the agreement by the leaders of each ethnic group. Through intensive dialogues and negotiations among concerned parties, the rapid response intervention provided a venue among local ethnic leaders to discuss and present their sentiments with regards to the conflict. Intermediate solutions to the problem were identified by the leaders which were integrated in the MOU.

In addition to the barangay officials, also in attendance during the event include some representatives from various non-government organization as well as traditional and religious leaders in the community including one representative from the Municipal Government of Surallah. The conflict in Upper Sepaka has resulted in further displacement following the death of a barangay captain and other prior unsolved incidents of killings in the community. While the signing of the MOU does not necessarily assure the reconciliation among the ethnic groups due to the history and the nature of the conflict involved, the intrusion of the responding team to mitigate the conflict have prevented the escalation of violence in other neighboring barangays.

Separate support was also provided to UMPPADA to mitigate the conflict in Malapatan, Sarangani Province. Similar to the case in Upper Sepaka, Surallah, the conflict in Lun Masla and Tuyan in Malapatan, Sarangani Province has resulted in a series of killings between *Blaans* and

Maguindanaons due to indifference and mistrust among the two ethnic groups. As of this reporting period, the responding team organized by UMPPADA is still in the process of mediating and negotiating with conflicting parties in order to sort out some conditions and agreements that will be integrated in the Memorandum of Understanding. In the next quarter, a General Assembly or *Diyandi* will be held to present the results of the agreements which will be signed by the leaders of each ethnic group who are involved or directly affected by the conflict.

United Youth for Peace and Development

Mitigate Conflict in Brgy. Gayonga, Northern Kabuntalan, Maguindanao

In Barangay Gayonga, Northern Kabuntalan, Maguindanao, a shooting incident that took place in January 2010 is perceived to result in an inter-ethnic violence between Muslims and Christians in the community. The Muslims and Christian residents in the locality are alarmed that the conflict might escalate to a higher form of violence since the incident resulted to the death of a Muslim in a Christian-dominated barangay. Currently, there are rumors spreading that the victim's family is staging a retaliatory move against the Christian in the community.

In this particular initiative, UNYPAD has mobilized the Quick Response Team in the community to conduct the series of dialogues and targeted messaging between the Christian and Muslim civilians in Barangay Gayonga in Northern Kabuntalan in order to refute inflammatory rumors of a possible attack and prevent the escalation of violence in the area. The formation of the Quick Response Team was earlier supported by the Foundation through this project and is tasked to facilitate and resolve any security issues that caused tensions or conflicts in the area that may result to violence or internal displacement. As of this period of reporting, separate dialogues and negotiations with the Christian and Muslim leaders in the community were already conducted. A Muslim-Christian Community Peace Celebration that will mark the resolution of the conflict will take place in April 2010.

VI. Plans for the Next Quarter

In the next quarter, a series of rapid response initiatives will be supported due to anticipated risk of violence brought about by the upcoming national elections especially in areas that are considered election hotspots. A proposal by Ulangig Mindanao, Inc. to conduct activities that will empower the ulama and other traditional and religious leaders in Sulu will be discussed and implemented as previously reported in the FY10 work plan submitted to USAID. Capacity building activities in some select barangays in the province of Cotabato will also be supported to prepare the communities during emergencies such as armed conflict.

In addition, support will also be provided to Liguasan Youth Association for Sustainable Development, Inc. (LYASD) to mitigate conflict in selected areas in Maguindanao. As a follow through to the conflict mitigation intervention that was completed and supported by the project, the support will allow the LYASD to reactivate the local peace negotiators in the municipalities of Paglat, Pandag, and SK Pendatun. The local peace negotiators composed of community, traditional, and religious leaders was organized and trained to conduct a localized mediation and

negotiations in the conflict-affected municipalities to prevent further outbreak of skirmishes particularly during elections time.

Finally, a learning forum for the project partners under this Conflict Mitigating Program will be organized by the Foundation in the next quarter to allow them to discuss their experience and compare their respective strategies in implementing rapid response interventions as well as increase their networking opportunities.

Attachment A: Activity Log

**THE ASIA FOUNDATION
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
Mitigating Localized Conflict in Mindanao and Sulu
through Rapid Response of Non-State Actors**

BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANTS PER ACTIVITY

(1 January- March 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/IP
January 3-5	Security Planning/Kapinpilan Midsayap, Cotabato	Magungaya Center for PALMA Inc.	Kapinpilan ZHOPAD Bldg., Kapinpilan, Midsayap, Cotabato	QRT's, community leaders, MILF and MNLF commanders	27	2	27	2
January 4-6	Community Disaster Preparedness Planning	UNYPAD	Brgy. Montay, Northern Kabuntalan, Maguindanao	QRT-Northern Kabuntalan, Barangay Council, BHW, and Community	19	5	24	0
January 6	Area Assessment	Magungaya Center for PALMA Inc.	Mudseng, Midsayap, Cotabato	Magungaya Project Staff	79	5	84	0
January 7	Meeting with major actors and stakeholders	Bangsamoro Development Agency	Markadz Tori, Poblacion Pikit, North Cotabato	Municipal government, MILF, community leaders, barangay officials, conflicting	48	5	53	0

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Date	Event (Training/ Workshop/ Conference/ Large Meeting)	Grantee	Venue	Profile of Participants (e.g. government. CSO, business)	Number of Participants			
					Male	Female	Muslim	Christian/IP
				parties representatives, women				
January 10	Community-level meeting	Bangsamoro Development Agency	Barangay Bulod, Pikit North Cotabato	Community members, barangay leaders, families of the conflicting group (George Sawali)	88	18	106	0
January 10-13	Early Warning and Early Response Training	Magungaya Center for PALMA Inc.	Midsayap, Cotabato	QRT's, community leaders,	183	44	215	12
January 14	Basic CO and Para-legal Documentation/Gender Sensitivity Training	Magungaya Center for PALMA Inc.	Magungaya Training Center, Midsayap, Cotabato	QRT's	78	20	93	5
January 15	Community level meeting	Bangsamoro Development Agency	Talitay, Pikit, North Cotabato	Community leaders, supporters of Daud Nor group, women, teacher, students	90	30	120	0
January 14-16	Community Disaster Preparedness Planning	UNYPAD	Brgy. Paulino Labio, Northern Kabuntalan, Maguindanao	QRT-Northern Kabuntalan, Barangay Council, BHW, and Community	11	11	8	14
January 19	Pledging Session and first	Magungaya	Kapinpilan,	QRT's				

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Date	Event (Training/ Workshop/ Conference/ Large Meeting)	Grantee	Venue	Profile of Participants (e.g. government. CSO, business)	Number of Participants			
					Male	Female	Muslim	Christian/IP
	convention of QRT	Center for PALMA Inc.	Midsayap, Cotabato		113	42	155	0
January 24	2 nd cluster of Disaster Management Training	Magungaya Center for PALMA Inc.	Tumbras, Midsayap, Cotabato	QRT's, community leaders, MILF and MNLF commanders	81	13	91	3
January 24	Community Dialogue	Bangsamoro Development Agency	Sitio Balibel, Bulol, Pikit, North Cotabato	Community leaders, MILF, barangay officials, local government, teacher, student	207	69	276	0
January 26-28	Community Disaster Preparedness Planning	UNYPAD	Brgy. Cabpangi, Pigcawayan, North Cotabato	QRT-Northern Kabuntalan, Barangay Council, BHW, and Community	13	12	25	0
January 29	Monthly Staff meeting	UNYPAD	UNYPAD National Office function hall, Datu Liwa Candao St., Shariff Kabunsuan, R.H. no. 3, Cotabato City	UNYPAD Project Staff	5	5	10	0
January 30	General Assembly	Liguasan Youth Association and Sustainable Development, Inc.	YLDC, Lower Idtig, SK. Pendatun, Maguindanao.	Community leaders, political supporters, peace coordinators	187	33	220	0
February 1-3	Field visit for the Community Feature	UNYPAD	Barangay Gayonga, Nabalawag and	UNYPAD Project Staff and	8	2	7	3

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Date	Event (Training/ Workshop/ Conference/ Large Meeting)	Grantee	Venue	Profile of Participants (e.g. government. CSO, business)	Number of Participants			
					Male	Female	Muslim	Christian/IP
	Special Booklet photo documentation at the three target municipalities		Bulucaon	community Photographers				
February 10-12	Community Disaster Preparedness Planning	UNYPAD	Brgy. Matilac, Pigcawayan, North Cotabato	QRT-Northern Kabuntalan, Barangay Council, BHW, and Community	16	10	26	0
February 12,	Area assessment	Magungaya Center for PALMA, Inc.	Kapinpilan Midsayap, Cotabato	QRT's	29	1	30	0
February 17-19	Community Disaster Preparedness Planning	UNYPAD	Brgy Bulucaon, Pigcawayan, North Cotabato	QRT-Northern Kabuntalan, Barangay Council, BHW, and Community	17	10	17	10
February 19	Initial Meetings and Coordination with the Barangay Local Government Unit	Bangsamoro Muslim Aid Phils., Inc.	Brgy. Tuka, Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat	BLGU, Traditional and Muslim Religious Leaders	20	0	18	2
February 20	Dialogue with religious sector	Magungaya Center for PALMA, Inc	Hill Park Inn & Restaurant, Midsayap, Cotabato	QRT's, community leaders, MILF and MNLF commanders	15	6	18	3
February 20	SWMDC Meeting	Magungaya Center for PALMA Inc.	Magungaya Training Center, Midsayap, Cotabato	QRT, Project Staff	13	5	14	4
February 24	2 nd Meeting with the Barangay Council,	Bangsamoro Muslim Aid	Brgy. Daguma, Bagumbayan,	BLGU, Traditional and	20	0	0	20

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Date	Event (Training/ Workshop/ Conference/ Large Meeting)	Grantee	Venue	Profile of Participants (e.g. government. CSO, business)	Number of Participants			
					Male	Female	Muslim	Christian/IP
	Traditional Leaders, RTC	Phils., Inc.	Sultan Kudarat	Muslim Religious Leaders				
February 25-26	Meeting with the traditional leaders	Bangsamoro Muslim Aid Phils., Inc.	Bgry. Daguma, Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat	BLGU, MRL, Traditional Leaders, QRT	20	0	20	0
February 25-26	Disaster Management Training	Magungaya Center for PALMA, Inc.	Magungaya Training Center, Midsayap, Cotabato	QRT's	79	12	88	3
February 26	Monthly Staff meeting	UNYPAD	UNYPAD National Office function hall, Datu Liwa Candao St., Shariff Kabunsuan, R.H. no. 3, Cotabato City	UNYPAD Project Staff	5	5	10	0
March 2-4	Focus Group Discussion	Bangsamoro Muslim Aid Phils., Inc.	Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat	Nilong Family Bansil Family Responding Team Facilitators & Documenter, Muslim Religious Leaders BLGU	25	5	30	0
March 4	Public Safety Planning (District I)	Integral Development Services	Cotabato City	Members of the Municipal Peace Order Council, religious and informal leaders,	44	16	0	60

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Date	Event (Training/ Workshop/ Conference/ Large Meeting)	Grantee	Venue	Profile of Participants (e.g. government. CSO, business)	Number of Participants			
					Male	Female	Muslim	Christian/IP
				barangay leaders				
March 4	Public Safety Planning (District II)	Integral Development Services	Tacurong City	Members of the Municipal Peace Order Council, religious and informal leaders, barangay leaders	47	13	0	60
March 6-7	Community Leaders Dialogue	Bangsamoro Muslim Aid Phils., Inc.	Alamada Compound, Kalawag II, Isulan, Sultan Kudarat	BLGU, Muslim Religious Leaders, Traditional Leaders, PNP	32	11	43	11
					3	0	3	0
March 11	General Assembly	UMPPADA	Upper Sepaka, Surallah, South Cotabato	Traditional leaders, community leaders, barangay officials, teachers, IP leaders, NGO representatives	212	48	169	91
March 12	1 st Dialogue, Tubigan Rapid Response	BAPESDA, INC.	Barangay Hall, Brgy. Tubigan, Maluso, Basilan	Residents, CSO's, Government	92	57	77	72
March 12-13	Community Simulation/Field Drilling	UNYPAD	Sitio Marguez, Bulucaon,	QRT of Barangays	25	7	26	6

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Date	Event (Training/ Workshop/ Conference/ Large Meeting)	Grantee	Venue	Profile of Participants (e.g. government. CSO, business)	Number of Participants			
					Male	Female	Muslim	Christian/IP
			Pigcawayan, North	Matilac; Cabpangi; and Bulucaon, Pigcawayan, North Cotabato				
March 15	Meeting with Vice Mayor and Barangay Captain of Piyahan	Ulangig Mindanao, Inc.	Vice Mayor's Residence, Jolo, Sulu	UMI BOT members/TFK and LGU's	7	0	7	0
March 17	Meeting with Vice Mayor and Barangay Captain of Silangkan	Ulangig Mindanao, Inc.	Parang, Sulu	UMI BOT members/TFK and LGU's	15	2	17	0
March 18	Local Conference on peace advocacy in Islamic perspective	Magungaya Center for PALMA, Inc	Magungaya Training Center, Midsayap, Cotabato	QRT's, religious sector	86	11	97	0
March 18	2 nd Dialogue, Tubigan Rapid Response	BAPESDA, INC.	Barangay Hall, Brgy. Tubigan, Maluso, Basilan Province	Residents, CSO's, Government	65	41	48	58
March 21	Inter-Community Leaders Dialogue	Bangsamoro Muslim Aid Phils., Inc.	Isla Adelina, Pablucó, Isulan Sultan Kudarat	BLGU, MRL, LGU, Traditional Leaders, Nilong and Bansil Family	77	18	97	2
March 20-21	Community Simulation/Field Drilling	UNYPAD	Barangay Nes, Midsayap, North Cotabato	QRT of Barangays Matilac; Cabpangi; and Bulucaon, Pigcawayan, North Cotabato	20	7	22	5
March 22-29	Simulation Workshop	Magungaya	Midsayap,	QRT's, religious	156	45	198	3

Date	Event (Training/ Workshop/ Conference/ Large Meeting)	Grantee	Venue	Profile of Participants (e.g. government. CSO, business)	Number of Participants			
					Male	Female	Muslim	Christian/IP
		Center for PALMA Inc.	Cotabato	sector, community leaders				
March 29-30	Community Simulation/Field Drilling	UNYPAD	Barangay Gayonga, Northern Kabuntalan, Maguindanao	QRT of Barangays Matilac; Cabpangi; and Bulucaon, Pigcawayan, North Cotabato	15	5	10	10
Mach 30	Meeting with Mayor and Vice Mayor	Ulangig Mindanao, Inc.	Mayor's Residence, Parang, Sulu	UMI BOT members/TFK and LGU's	20	7	27	0
March 31	General Assessment	UNYPAD	Cotabato City	UNYPAD Project Staff	7	4	11	0

