



**Engendering Peace and Development in the  
Land of Promise? *Maranao Women in a  
Mindanao Peacebuilding Program, The  
Philippines***

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## List of Acronyms

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| ACT      | Action for Conflict Transformation                                     |
| BMW      | Bangsamoro Women Foundation  |
| CAB      | Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro                              |
| CoP      | Culture of Peace   |
| CD, CPA  | Community Development, College of Public Affairs                       |
| MSU      | Mindanao State University  |
| DFAT     | Dept. of Foreign Affairs and International Trade-Canada                |
| GPH      | Government of the Philippines  |
| ILO      | International Labour Organization                                      |
| JJWBGSP  | Joint Japan World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program                    |
| LGU      | Local Government Unit  |
| KFDAI    | Kadtabanga Foundation for Peace and Development Advocates Incorporated |
| BLGU     | <i>Barangay</i> Local Government Unit                                  |
| MILF     | Moro Islamic Liberation Front  |
| MNLF     | Moro National Liberation Front   |
| NGO      | Non-governmental organization  |
| OIC      | Organization of Islamic Conference                                     |
| PDA      | Peace and Development Advocates  |
| PDC      | Peace and Development Community  |
| PDTF     | Peace and Development Task Force                                       |
| PO       | Peoples' Organization  |
| SPCPD    | Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development                 |
| ICRW     | International Center for Research on Women                             |
| ISS      | Institute of Social Studies  |
| SJP      | Social Justice Perspectives  |
| UNCHR    | United Nations Commission on Human Rights                              |
| UNDP     | United Nations Development Programme                                   |
| UNESCO   | United Nations for Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization  |
| UNMDP    | United Nations Multi Donor Programme                                   |
| NUNV-CDF | National United Nations Volunteer- Community Development Facilitator   |
| VAWC     | Violence against Women and Children                                    |
| WB       | World Bank   |

## Abstract

This study aims to understand the engendered pattern of power relations in one peacebuilding program, the Peace and Development Community (PDC) in Mindanao, Southern Philippines. PDC is a multilateral donor funded assistance in consonance with 1996 peace agreement of the Government of the Philippines and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). It problematize the theory of intersectionality and inclusivity as contrasting paradigms, and from this starting point investigates Maranao women's positioning, views, experiences and power relations in establishing a PDC in *Barangay* Muntay, Lanao del Norte, Mindanao. The case study is PDC Muntay, a mixed community of Muslims and Christians, where former MNLF rebels integrated themselves into mainstream society, and established a PDC. The case study is interesting from a gender perspective because of the mix of Muslim and Christian, and the inclusive approach adopted. Moreover, in order to examine the visibility, identity and engagement of women in the PDC, a mixed of ethnographical and participatory research methods proved a useful starting point for collecting data. In-depth discussions took place in both formal and informal settings. The question of representation of women in peace building will mainly understood from the point of view of the women themselves, using relevant literature and policy documents. Critiques and analyses on gender, peace and development were sought so that gender models could help understanding and recognising the agency of women, not as others but as co-equal partners in society and in all peace and development efforts.

## Relevance to Development Studies

Social Justice Perspectives (SJP) emphasises human rights, gender, conflict and peace studies and is primarily concerned with equitable, just and sustainable peace, thereby, universalism and relativity are highly contested. In the context of my study, gender intersectionality is looked at in terms of how it is operationalized and perceived in Mindanao. Although gender may be an old issue, the theory and gender jargon are unfamiliar to most local feminists, both in the academe and in NGO. This is due to strong adherence to an inclusivity approach and to gender sensitization in peacebuilding policy and interventions. This study rethinks gender in peacebuilding, not only in the local arena, but by linking this to the wider context, and to theories of peace-building and gender. In pursuit of integration, mainstreaming and institutionalization of gender in development studies, this study is intended to be useful for those interested in integrating gender into the syllabus and curriculum of the Community Development Department, College of Public Affairs in Mindanao State University, Mindanao, Philippines.

## Keywords

*Bangsamoro*, development, ethnography research, gendered peace, inclusivity, intersectionality, Maranao women, *Maratabat*, Mindanao, peace, *peace and development community*, peacebuilding, *peace and development advocates*, reflexivity, Southern Philippines



# Chapter 1

## Introduction: What is Gendered Peace?

*“Gender is not central to an armed conflict [and]...therefore not seen as central to its resolution”* Irene Santiago<sup>1</sup>, Philippines

### 1.1 Introduction

This study is based on a form of feminist ethnographical research. It is a qualitative study, based on an approach that “seeks not only to understand others, but also to allow others to be understood” (Cibangu, 2012:117). It arises from a compelling passion to do research in an inductive way, that will not only test the theory, but develop its own concept and explore meaning and life’s theory (Hammersely and Atkinson, 1983). Behar (2003) once said that the “beauty and mystery of the ethnographer’s quest is to find the unexpected stories, the stories that challenge our theories” (Behar, 2003:16). It is about bringing the ‘tales from the field’, conveying the message that take the reader into a particular social world and convey the feel of an event, relation, situation, place or phenomenon that foreground lived experiences and carnal presence (Willis and Trondaman, 2007:15). Ethnography helps me understand my world, and my circle of influences. According to Rose (1997), ethnography contributes in discovering and creating meaning from the situated knowledges and reflexivity of the researcher and the entirety of research. The reflexivity sets the researcher think of his/her outlook and positionality (Rose, 1997:309).

My objectivity in writing this manuscript can be disputed, and I cannot avoid subjectivity, being both a Maranao and a Muslim woman. As a Maranao Muslim woman, however, I do aspire to be a genuinely free and compassionate believer of truth, justice and equality, whatever my positionality and reflexivity. In the *Qur’an*<sup>2</sup>, the text says, “...You are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should you treat them with harshness (Qur’an, 4:19), there’s no compulsion in religion...” (Qur’an, 2:256). This is not to preach, but to show that between universal and secular views of compassion and religious tolerance there can be a meeting point of peace, of intercultural understanding and peaceful coexistence. Moreover, as Muslim woman are affected by the contestations, framings and cynical views of the geo-political hegemonic lens on identity, space, place of Muslim woman in the society, they assert themselves as neither terrorists nor simply oppressed women, but as actors who wish to be free from outside scrutiny, and from contested representations that misrepresent their realities.

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<sup>1</sup> *Irene Santiago (2011)* is a peace activist and peace scholar from Mindanao, who is chair and CEO of the Mindanao Commission on Women, and convenors for peace in Southern Philippines (cited in Ramsbotham et.al, 2011:308).

<sup>2</sup> *Qur’an* is the holy scripture of the Muslim. The subsequent quoted text is taken from *Surah An-Nisa* (Chapter about the women) in chapter 4, verse 9 and *Surah Al-Baqarah* (Chapter about the Cow) in chapter 2, verse 256 of the Qur’an.

This may sound a feminist standpoint, but based on the ‘strong objectivity’ approach, this can be a method for maximizing our ability to reverse the principle of ‘might makes right’ in the social sciences (Harding, 1995:334). Strong objectivity can help the researcher take heed of challenges of empiricism, of gendered views and of decontextualized solutions that cannot work amidst uncertainty and issues that appear perennial, like poverty and injustice.

Whilst neutrality continues to be a valid goal for researchers, the weight of social justice issues, gendered truths and the needs of the majority of people, means that it is important to reflect upon whatever research domain we are active in. There is always a degree of bias, reflected in the goals of integrity, compassion, and activism. As individual and members of society, we may seek to avoid being lured into unequal gender and power relations within the myriad of hegemony. Rist (1977:42) suggests that the researcher has to be capable of wearing bi-focal or even tri-focal lenses in the quest for an understanding of the social reality about us and the causal relations within it.

The research study aimed to investigate and analyse different models for understanding women’s gendered engagement in one of the ‘peace and development communities’ (PDCs), a peacebuilding program in Southern Philippines. The PDC as a program is explained further in the next section of this chapter. The case of establishing PDC, a donor-driven intervention, is investigated based on the experiences and perspectives of Maranao women and other women, so that the different facets of gendering peace and development can be discovered. The glaring notion of gendering peacebuilding is examined in relation to whether it manages to achieve women’s inclusion; the study aims to discern the overlapping categories of gender intersectionality in all peace and development efforts. Specifically, the study has investigated the following research questions: 1) What are the experiences and perceptions of women in Muntay’s peace and development program (PDC)? How do women’s experiences differ? 2) How have Maranao women understood their role and identity in the PDC peacebuilding program, specifically around the role of women in PDC signage, and women’s cultural and religious identity? 3) What lessons can this study draw about gendered power relations in the PDC peacebuilding program interventions, including with local and donor actors?

This paper is systematically arranged as follows: Chapter 1 comprises the introduction part such as the research rationale, objectives, arguments, contextual background, the research methods used and the challenges and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 highlights the conceptual and analytical framework and the tools of analysis. Chapter 3 and 4 present empirical results and analyse these in relation to the central questions of the study. Chapter 3 talks first about Maranao women’s reflexivity about their role, their culture and their religious identity and the power relations in the PDC peacebuilding program. Chapter 4 presents, synthesizes and analyses women’s experiences, perceptions and engagements in establishing a PDC. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a synthesis and concluding arguments around a pragmatic approach to gendered peace and development interventions.

Consequently, the enduring quest on engendering peace and development efforts start with a notion of the above quoted statement of Santiago and the following exploratory pose:

## 1.2 What is Gendered Peace?

Generally, ‘gender’ is used as a synonym for one’s biological sex or a shorthand reference to women and women’s concerns (Strickland and Duvvury, 2003:5). It is conventionally tied to the human body, male and female, men and women (Duerst-Lahti, 2008). It has ideological context of interdependent categories of masculinity and femininity. Gender is both a structure of beliefs and ideas about ways and power should be arranged according to social constructs associated with sexed bodies, and ideas about how gender and power should be put into action (Duerst-Lahti, 2008:160). For Oyewumi (1997:8), gender is a social construction; that is to say, it is interpreted, mutable and changeable.

Gender is a contested notion, and can imply a zero sum game and long-term structural power imbalance between the sexes. Staudt (2008) argues that development studies initially focused on men not women. It is an exclusionary approach that made and women’s wellbeing and work invisible, especially their unpaid work, interest in public policy, and political voices (Staudt, 2008:137). According to Strickland and Duvvury, the power imbalance in between sexes defines “gender relations and influences women’s access to control and over resources, their visibility and participation in social and political affairs, and their ability to realize their fundamental human rights” (Strickland and Duvvury, 2003:5). For Scott (1989), the “category of gender is useful because it signifies an aspect of all social relationship and relation of power, and the only issue is the slippage between ‘gender’ and ‘women’ and the ways in which gender relations come to be understood” (cited in Cornwall, 2003:1137). While, Kandiyoti (1998) suggests to remain agnostic over the value of gender if it obscures the diversity of social life and the contexts within which social categories have meaning, where addressing gender simply involves gathering and presenting sex-disaggregated data, then, gender-blindness may be replaced with gender blinkeredness (cited in Cornwall, 2003:1338).

Apparently this study will argue that ‘gendering’ is in reality mostly an opportunity for women, rather than men. The implication is that women have an innate need to develop their potentialities in addressing challenges and difficulties. Amidst the archaic alienation, contestation and controversy around the ‘waves of the feminism movement’<sup>3</sup>, there is a cultural and theological lens on gender as well. This was problematized and started from the women’s right to suffrage, equal opportunity in the socio-economic and political endeavours unto a more comprehensive attention to gender intersectionality. The positionality of feminism is that women’s situation is the subject for patriarchal control, and sees women’s normative agency as being to challenge the attitudes of submission, pacification and forbearance that they are expected to sustain, despite violations and injustices against women. According to Cornwall, the “essentialisms about women’s caring roles and naive assumptions about the community come into play, and may echo and reinforce heg-

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<sup>3</sup> *Waves of Feminism* is a phenomenon of “gently swelling, rising and then crashing, waves evoke images of both beauty and power” in the world of feminism (Bailey, 1997:17). The feminist wave movement can be traced in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century on the women’s right to suffrage as the first wave, the second wave begun in 1960s focusing more women and development, and the third wave in 1990s onwards, focusing on gender and development and the recurring rhetorical feminist struggle on women’s equal opportunities and rights.

emonic gender norms, as well as replicate patterns of gendered exclusion that have wider resonance” (Cornwall, 2003:1329).

Nonetheless, gender and feminist analysis has transcended into the wider development arena, as it has succeeded in elevating the cause, explicitly in UN Resolution 1325. Yet still, this resolution is perceived as a “transformatory triumph but in reality [as]...a means of coopting gender dynamics in order to preserve the existing gender status quo” (Puechguirbal, 2010:184). This may imply further revisiting the implications of inclusive programmes. Women’s participation may be highly praised in ‘gendering’ peace and development processes and framework, and yet women themselves may still be pragmatically ignored.

Wadud argued that within the context of Islam, women were intended to “be primordial, cosmologically, eschatologically, spiritually, and morally a full human being” (Wadud, 1999: x). This forms a spiritual and legitimate claim for contesting the unequal treatment women have experienced historically in the context of many Muslim communities and even in the pre-Islamic period. Wadud claimed that the concept of woman in Islam indicates an advanced level of civilization and was established more than 1,400 years ago; she suggests Islam could have been a global motivating force for women’s empowerment (Wadud, 1999: xxi). As stated in the Qur’an, “...for women [have]... rights over men similar to those of men over women” (Qur’an, 2:228). I may agree with her, as a Muslim woman. However, it cannot be denied that there are growing injustices that Muslim women have suffered, from historical dominance, stereotyped identity, social construction and from un-Islamic practices. Muslims, both men and women are viewed differently, as the orientalist and biased constructions of extremism proliferate. This is where the notion of intersectionality is initially argued as far as peace and development interventions are concerned, perhaps because it comes from a situation of competition rather than a post-conflict context like Mindanao—a place where conflicting paradigm and perceptions are highly contested. That made this study unique and more interesting.

This study too will not take intersectionality for granted as the best theory. Instead it is viewed as a “theory, as concept, as heuristic device and as strategy for doing feminist analysis” (Davis, 2011:43). It posits vagueness, whether intersectionality should be seen as a “crossroad, as axes of difference...limited to understanding individual experiences, theorizing identity, or whether be taken as property of social structures and cultural discourses” (Crenshaw, 1991; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Staunaes, 2003; cited in Davis, 2011:43). This lack of clarity is one of the things this study was explored through the case selected. At the end, it may enrich or dispute the theory of intersectionality.

### **1.3 Gender in Local Context: The Case of Maranao Women**

The Maranao people derived from the word ‘ranao’ means lake, as they were called people of the lake. The lake known as ‘Lake Lanao’ is the second largest lake in the Philippines and it is situated in Marawi City and Lanao del Sur province. The Maranao is the largest cultural Muslim minority group among the *Bang-*

*samoro*<sup>4</sup> tribes, ethnic affiliations in the Philippines. They occupied two provinces in Mindanao region, the provinces of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur. *Bangsamoro* is the term for unconquered Muslim tribes of Mindanao who resisted western colonizers and asserted their rights for self-determination (Tabay, 2003). The Spanish made an expedition in Marawi in late 18<sup>th</sup> century but Maranao resistance successfully endured and preserved their territory. External domination during the colonization has brought unlikely imagery of *Bangsamoro* in Southern Philippines (see also Bentley, 1983; Tabay, 2003; Hilsdon, 2009; Dwyer and Cagoco-Guiam, 2010; Busran-Lao, 2010).

Maranao are rank-conscious people who will do everything to protect the pride called *Maratabat* attached to their ranks and titles. A Maranao title is a symbol of prestige and authority (Tawano, 1979). The concept of *Maratabat* is a strong and distinct behavioural pride, honor and self-esteem of the Maranao family. It is the driving force in the everyday life of Maranao. *Maratabat* is linked with 'rido' (family disputes), which usually operates from within a family or social group. Arranged marriage, divorce, polygamy and its related activities all offer many opportunities for family honour to be besmirched and for its *maratabat* to be threatened. *Maratabat* compels a person to assert his status, to demand deference and respect (Bentley, 1983:275). Large proportions of disputes are sexual misdemeanors committed against women, when offenses questioning the chastity of women (Bentley, 1983; Hilsdon, 2009:353).

Maranao is a patriarchal society. Puechguirbal (2013:5) defined patriarchy as the power of the fathers, a familial-social, ideological, political system. In Maranao context, men are perceived as providers and accountable of decisions and everyday life within the family and the society at large. Bamgbose (2003) posited that Maranao man is "responsible for the care, protection and needs of women, who are regarded as precious and are thus sequestered in the domestic realm. When men are unable to meet all of their family's financial needs and have trouble fulfilling their productive role, the women has to take breadwinner role, and do farm work as well especially during conflict" (cited in Hilsdon, 2009:353). This shifting role of Maranao women is being contested. It is regarded as 'assisting' or 'helping' their husbands by a Maranao author. For Bamgbose, there it seems a control of discourse regarding the role of Maranao women (cited in Hilsdon, 2009:353). This is somewhat a *maratabat*, where men are expected to be responsible for the welfare of his family.

In Maranao royalty, Maranao women have their own duties and responsibilities. The highest rank of woman called 'Bae-a-labi' is an island onto herself. "She is an all-around personality in the community. She is looked upon by the people as an example. She deals with everybody fairly, irrespective of her relation with anyone concerned and among others it is always her obligation to act as mediator in case of marriage and conflicts" (Tawano, 1979:44). Maranao women are also perceived as weak and submissive. Saber (1979) argued that the characteristics anonymity of the Maranao women before the eyes and minds of outsiders does not mean they occupy a lowly position in comparison with or in contrast to those of the menfolk

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<sup>4</sup> *Bangsamoro* is referred to the 13 Muslim natives in the Philippines, such as: Maranao, Tausug, Maguindanao, Iranun, Yakan, Kalagan, Jamamapun and others.

or the women in other Muslim or non-Muslim communities. When she is an adult, the menfolk consult her on important matters of family and community affairs, more so if she holds a female and is known for her wisdom. When getting married, she is entitled to costly bridal gifts and nuptial ceremonies commensurate with her family social status (Saber, 1979:1).

Likewise, Hilsdon describes Maranao women as the “initiators of the negotiations, mediators in disputes, collect ‘blood money’ (compensation paid to the aggrieved party) and host the kandori [reconciliation feast] after a resolution is reached” (Hilsdon, 2009:353). One important aspect is the Maranao mediation. It is a route to power, it does not only repair wounds in the social fabric, and it also contributes to the reproduction of Maranao rank differentiation from one generation to the next (Bentley, 1983:280).

#### 1.4 Mindanao: The Land of Promise in Context

Mindanao is known as the ‘land of promise in the Philippines’, being situated farthest from the capital region and political synagogue from national government for development hardly realized. The conflict in Mindanao is historically and politically constructed. It is embedded in the *Bangsamoro* Muslim ideologies as separate identity since colonization and early 1970s (see also Bentley, 1983; Tabay, 2003; Hilsdon, 2009; Dwyer and Cagoco-Guiam, 2010; Busran-Lao, 2010). Map 1.4 shows the map of Philippines, the location of Mindanao and the research sites.



The marginalization, exclusion and relatively deprivation of Muslim groups in the country led to the establishment and resurgence of a revolutionary movement called Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the 1970s. Whilst, there were series of peace negotiations made between the MNLF and Philippine Government in 1976, 1986 and 1996. The peace agreement was initiated and concluded with the help of Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), Libyan and Malaysian Governments. Yet, it did not address the problem in Mindanao. Since then, a new separate group of MNLF was organized known as Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Recently, the MILF and the new administration of Philippine Govern-

ment has signed and concluded another peace accord, called the ‘Comprehensive Agreement for Bangsamoro (CAB)’<sup>5</sup> last March 27, 2014. This is another peace marking, and another quest after the grand peace signing is the legitimacy and deliberation in the Philippine Congress. This is where power relations and power bargaining in the bureaucracy may play at the end. The challenge and hope is for the peace stakeholders. Mat the past peace agreements may serve a lesson in pursuit for lasting peace in the region.

The peacebuilding was dichotomized with dominance and resistance. Political instability (dictatorship period from 1970s to 1980s), ‘all-out war policy’<sup>6</sup> against Muslim rebels in 2000, extreme inequalities and deprivation continuously affects the region. Gurr (1970) on why men rebel stated that “...mass revolutionary and secessionist movements are likely to develop if discontent is widespread...the result of relative or absolute deteriorations of many conditions of social existence” (Gurr, 1970:343). There are also emerging extremist group in the region known as Abusayyaf, that are narratively linked to Jamaah Islamiyah, Alqaeda and other international terrorist groups. Moreover, the 9/11 incidence intensify the fragile situation in Muslim region that conveyed strong wave of irrationalized hatred against the Muslim. Also, the politicking and unstable situation in the government may contributed on the failure and alleged criminalization of peace talks, the ‘Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD)’<sup>7</sup> in 2008 with MILF. The failure has ensued continuing fight between the military and the MILF. So long these perennial challenges and spoil system exist, a flourishing movement, extremism and revolutionary may threatened the society.

Above all this narrative of conflict and peacebuilding is the presence and the role of *Bangsamoro* women, who considerably play a significant and necessary role. They are seldom heard in the past peace negotiations, however, they greatly influenced the peace making in the grassroots (Hilsdon, 2009). In the outset of peacebuilding, gender issue is always in the least of priority. Women carried the toll and topping the list of victims and problematized in times of war. They are conventionally given less importance in the decision making and peace negotiations (as Santiago has been argued). The past peace agreements with the MNLF since 1970s never allowed women in peace panel.

However, recently, in the history of the peacebuilding in the Philippines, women were given high position that concluded the 2014 CAB peace agreement. The

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<sup>5</sup> *CAB* is the recent concluded peace agreement between the MILF and Philippine Government (GPH) in Mindanao under the new administration, President Benigno Aquino, Jr in 2014.

<sup>6</sup> *All-Out-War Policy* is the policy under the Administration of President Joseph Estrada in the Philippines in 2000. It is a policy of launching an all-out-military offensive act against all the MILF camps and controlled territories in Mindanao.

<sup>7</sup> *MOA-AD* is the working agreement between the MILF and the Government under the Administration of President Gloria Macapagal. The Supreme Court declared the MOA-AD as unconstitutional in 2008. Despite of its failure, it has marked its own contribution by successfully incorporated the most controversial issues and impetus to correct the centuries old injustice committed in Mindanao (Fabros, 2008; Bartrand, 2000).

Government of the Philippines put women as ‘chairperson, consultant and peace panel members’ as they led the 40-year journey to peace. Director Herbolzheimer, member of the International Contact Group (ICG) said that GPH-MILF peace process is “one of the most gender-sensitive in the world” (Arguillas, 2014). Although, there may be a further study on how ‘gendering’ and inclusivity of the peace process practice as insinuated the success of the recent peace accord in the Southern Philippines.

## 1.5 Peace and Development Community in Context

The PDC concept was developed and constructed as the peacebuilding strategy of the Government of the Philippines-United Nations Multi Donor Programme (GPH-UNMDP). It is the basic social unit upon which the whole peace and development framework of the peace-building programme is founded. It has become a ‘peace and development nexus’, convergence zone of donor assistance in strengthening the foundations of lasting peace and development in Southern Philippines (see appendix 6 for more details about PDC). According to ‘Action for Conflict Transformation (ACT) for peace programme’<sup>8</sup>, a “substantial transformation of 278 conflict-affected communities...as a result of peace-oriented change at the personal, relational, structural and cultural levels” (ACT for peace programme, 2013:2).

Given the gigantic assistance and good figures, we can say a compelling and remarkable aid practice in the peacebuilding history. However, some are sceptical on the success of PDCs, arguing on inadequacy, inaccessibility and threat are still persevering in other communities, which was declared as PDCs. In the 2000 ‘all-out war’ (mentioned earlier), *Barangay* Muntay became a refuge community while other communities became a battle field and militarized. The MNLF leadership through the ‘Peace and Development Advocates’ (PDAs) provided assistance to the displaced families from all over the province. PDAs are former combatants, of men and women, now a peacemaker and peacebuilder (Usop, 2012). There are 10 PDCs declared in the Province of Lanao del Norte in 2000 (see appendix 6).

The PDC is perceived to be one of the best success stories in peacebuilding in Southern Philippines, as it produced an organized and league of PDAs in Mindanao called Kadtabanga Foundation for Peace and Development Advocates Incorporated (KFPDAI). For Usop, the KFPDAI is a model of peacebuilding initiatives. It is a peacebuilding exemplar whose experiences in the field of community peace-building is worth emulating because it follows all the prescriptions of peaceful processes and means. KFPDAI aimed for lasting peace and sustainable development in the region. Its peace advocacy is to provide educational campaign to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and research on traditional peacemaking practices in the community and conduct training on culture of peace (Usop, 2012:224).

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<sup>8</sup> *ACT for Peace Programme* is the final phase of GPH-UNMDP peacebuilding programme. It described and enhanced the development phase of PDCs from one stage to another as cyclical rather than linear. This phase emphasized that peace building involved the establishment and strengthening of horizontal and vertical relationships in order to build and enhance social capital necessary for sustained peace and development.



However, it has never questioned the gender and power relations in the community and the other actors in peacebuilding such local and donor intervenors. The community as actors composed of many parts, that may make, break and sustain the peace and development efforts. Hence, this problem is one of the areas that I felt missing while studying the PDC interventions. This study explored how do women understood their role in the peacebuilding program and how they perceived the power relations in the PDC?

The study is conducted at *Barangay*<sup>9</sup> Muntay. It is situated along coastal area of the Municipality of Kolambugan in the province of Lanao del Norte. The *Barangay* was declared as PDC by the MNLF leaders from the interior *Barangay* Pendulunan, Municipality of Munai in the same province. This is the commitment of MNLF leadership on the 1996 peace agreement. MNLF bought a piece of land in *Barangay* Muntay and established a village from their camps to be mainstreamed in the society. The PDC Muntay was established in 1998 when the MNLF identified areas for peace and development interventions. This initiative led the PDC peacebuilding programme to shift from exclusive access of MNLF families and members of peace and development efforts to inclusive approach, by engaging the entire community and stakeholder's access to peace and development interventions.

## 1.6 Research Methods Used

The ethnographic research methods used as follows, first, *participant observation*, I conducted 1 week of immersion in the PDC. The purpose is to conduct ocular observation, revisit the place and rebuild rapport and connections prior to the in-depth interview and focus group discussion. I closely interact with potential key informants as I seek consent and make appointment for the interview proper. Second, *key informant interview*, it is an interview given emphasis on the target respondents. It is usually and purposely picked with a reason and with arguments on why we chose them. Third, *focus group discussion*, it is a small group discussion guided by a facilitator. It is used to learn more about opinion on designed or predetermined topic and then guide future action, such as in-depth of opinion/discussion on women's experiences and engagement in peacebuilding.

The actual data collection is accompanied with photo documentation. With the help of gatekeeper, I was able to get personal photos from the key informants (see appendix 3 and 4). There are 12 key informants targeted and engaged in this study, these women have experienced in peacebuilding, directly and indirectly participated and recipient of peace and development projects. The composition of key informants and FGD participants are mixed of Muslim and Christian women from the *barangay*. I also conducted an informal discussion with some men encountered during the field work and some women, from the academe and NGO that are actively engage in gender justice and women's empowerment in further analysis of gendering and intersectionality.

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<sup>9</sup> *Barangay* is the lowest level of political and governmental subdivision in the Philippines. Every *barangay* is under the administrative supervision of cities and municipalities.

## 1.7 Challenges and Limitations of the Study

As I have mentioned in the introduction, I encountered difficulty of positioning myself while writing and conducting the study as well. I am both an insider and outsider of the place. I consider myself an insider because I have blood relations with the residents in the community and I also live nearby in the next Municipality. An outsider because I served and worked as National United Nations Volunteer (NUNV), as community development facilitator and helped facilitate in the declaration of the community, like the *Barangay* Muntay as PDC. I was formerly perceived as project provider being connected with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) peacebuilding based in Mindanao. Mullings (1999) advised that in “a moment when perceptions of researcher positionality begin to evoke stereotypes that influence the opinions and feelings expressed by respondents that a researcher should seek to create spaces that foster trust and co-operation” (Mullings, 1999:349). Hence, it is important to have low profile, I plead for support emphasizing my position as graduate researcher, not as privilege one, and not having a hierarchical position. It helped me maintain the rapport and trust that I had with the community residents.

This study is concerned more on the experiences, engagements and perceptions of Maranao and other women in PDC in *Barangay* Muntay, one of the declared PDCs in the Province of Lanao del Norte. It mainly focuses on the contextual relevance of gender and power relations, particularly on the engagement, identity and influence of women in the community. Moreover, for the purpose of this study, the concept of ‘gendering’ gives more emphasis on women engagement in the PDC peacebuilding programme. However, it does not neglect other sexes such as the marginalized men.

# Chapter 2

## Analytical and Conceptual Framework

### 2.1 Introduction: Conceptual Peace Framework

This section will provide different theoretical perspectives on the paradox position of women on the peace and development programme. How is peace gendered? How is development gendered? This is to further understand the perceptions and nature of women in peacebuilding programme. It further explains the research framework as it serve as toolkit in the conducting, categorizing, analysing the entire research inquiry on gender and peacebuilding in the PDC.

Figure 2.1 is the conceptual framework, I used the peace symbol, as a tool in illustrating the analysis and discourse of gendering peace and development and its theoretical dimensions. The most visible components and concerned of building a gendered, peaceful and progressive community is entwined in four components as reflected in the framework: The community, peace and development interventions, academic field or theoretical perspectives and the missing link. The latter may significantly challenge the academic realm in the production of knowledge as it interpret and analyze the social changing phenomenon in the gender intersectionality and power relations in peacebuilding. This is a continuing endurance in coherence and pursuit of adequate information, relevance and reform such as gendering peace and development in local and wider context. As it has continually argue on the endemic alienation, invisibility, and representation of women in community development, peacebuilding and geo-political strata.

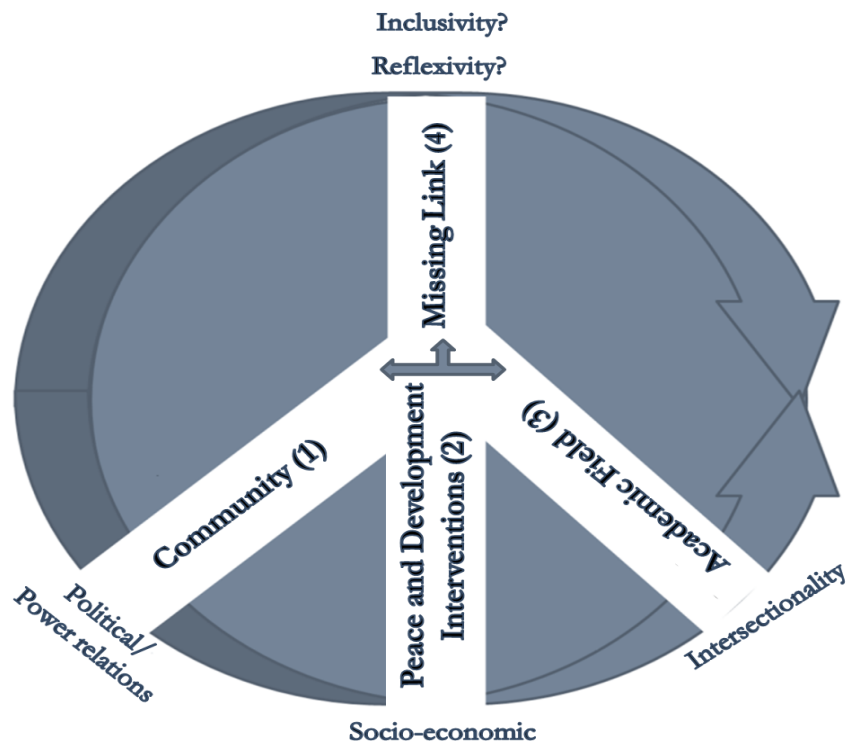


Figure 2.1 Conceptual peace framework

## 2.2 Community and Power Relations

Let me first deal on the first component of the peacesymbol of the framework. The *Community*, it is refers to people and its geographical location, who have common interests, actual or potentially linked together by certain bonds. It is consisting of persons in social interaction within a geographical area and having one or more additional ties. The People who live close to one another, who interact with one another frequently, and who feed that they have some common traits or values that they share with one another. Community is regarded as the second most important human group, and represents an extension of the family. Community viewed as geographic and or functional in nature. A geographic community classically refers to people in a specific geographic area as the village, sitio, *barangay*, district, municipality, city, province or the worlds. A functional community is composed of the people who hold common values, share common interest. It serves as social training which begins in the family. Community has a system of production, distribution and consumption, a system of socialization, system of social control, system of social participation and system of mutual support (Hunt.et.al, 1997).

Community as society can be viewed in the theories of sociology, as ‘functional and conflict’ models of society. The functional model promotes the different parts of society as intrinsically linked with each other. The institutions of society are seen as distinct in structure but united in their contribution to the proper functioning of society as whole (Hunt.et.al, 1997:11). For example, in the extended family, every member play a significant role in building home and supporting mechanism both in inequities and well-being of each member of the society. The conflict model conceived the society as composed of groups which are in conflict over scarce and socially-valued resources. The institutions work to the advantage of certain socially powerful groups (Hunt.et.al, 1997:12). This may entails that power relations and governance as institution has a bearing in the establishment of a peaceful and developed community.

The concept of power relations is exercised in the community, where politics and bureaucracy put in place. In the case of the Philippines, it has a very strong adherence to partisanship—where favors usually weighed to those who held the position, its cronies and supporters rather than on the indigent constituents. Power relations may deviate and regulate a situation in service to few or the many. It has a zero-sum concept of winning and losing, as result of nonconformity of powerful and powerless, the ‘have and have nots’. Power can also viewed as a means of binding force and cohesive force of people against tyranny such as peoples’ power revolution and organization. It can be earned, possessed and shared by few and amassed of people.

In the context of women, the concept of identity is equally significant in understanding the power relations, where woman as repeatedly said, in nutshell of subordination and invisibility. Miller (2001) argues that “gender has been conceived as the sexual division of power, and any major shift in power is likely to include corresponding changes in gender relations” (cited in Strickland and Duvvury, 2003:5). The women identity will be defined as self-determined actors. Hall (1996) defined identity as “concept-operating ‘under erasure’ in the internal between reversal and emergence; an idea which cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all” (Hall, 1996:2). In this milieu, the community is occupied with myriad of power relations. This is where all

actors from various entity and ordinary constituents have the equal rights but may differ in their influence based on the dynamics of the actors' space, place and identity in the community.

### 2.3 Peace and Development Interventions

Second component is the *peace and development interventions*. The establishment of 'peace and development community' involves wide range of development assistance. These are various forms of humanitarian relief, tangible and intangible interventions with the helped of UN Multi Donor Programme (UNMDP)<sup>10</sup>.

The peace and development interventions are guided by the following principles: *peace-oriented interventions*, refers to the initiatives that are acknowledged to be consistent with generally accepted tenets of peace efforts; *rights-based approach to local governance and development management*, posits that the human rights framework is applied systematically and methodically to development and governance processes; *participatory*, refers to meaningful involvement and engagement of stakeholders in important development undertaking; *demand-driven*, the conscious approach of service providers to identify, design, respond and serves the expressed needs of the communities or partners; *flexibility*, program implementation that takes off from concrete and current conditions and actual capacities and concerns of participants and stakeholders; *culture-sensitive*, the principle that respects for local practices, beliefs and traditions; *gender-responsive* applies to both women and men that are affected by conflict; *convergence*, pooling of initiatives and resources to achieve a common set of objectives; *mainstreaming*, bringing of purposeful peripheral, individual, ethnic, or specific group into the mainstream development efforts; and *institutionalization*, expresses in terms of regularizing and integrating the changes in policy, procedures, processes, roles and behavior of individuals and groups to enhance accountability and to optimize application/utilization (ACT for Peace Programme 2000).

These enormous peace and development assistance and alluring paradigm principle of PDC development of UNMDP may suggest a panacea and development change in the locality. However, the existing dynamics of political difference and power relations may promote or deter the growth of the community. What is lacking maybe is carrying and translating this in the community. This is also questioning the engagement of women, as they perceived to be visible only in the implementation process (Cornwall, 2003). Such selective and exclusion of women in the cycle of interventions may continually recur the challenges affecting the community.

The power relations and dynamics in development interventions is perceived to be structural and controlled. It generates critique as it constructs a new frontier of hegemony and new world power's mode of local, national and global governmentality (Gibson-Graham, 2004). This implies a critical notion on the different facets

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<sup>10</sup> *UNMDP* is referred to multilateral donor interventions from various agencies of United Nations and vast contributions from other international agencies and developed countries. These agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, ILO, IOM, USAID, JICA, WB and other concerned donor agencies.

of development: as an alternative, post-development or reflexive development? For Escobar (1995), the era of post-development replicates the advance world as savior of a hegemonic mainstream of development project. However, it has never ceased the situation, rather resulted to a severe situation. In his statement:

“...instead of kingdom of abundance promised by theorist and politicians in the 1950's, the discourse and strategy of development produced its opposite: massive underdevelopment and impoverishment, untold exploitation and oppression” (Escobar, 1995:4).

This provides a new avenue of deconstructing one-size-fits-all model development and reconstruct that relatively fits all intervention. For Gibson-Graham (2004), the study on surplus possibilities is significance and engaging people's initiatives and indigenous practices in the name of development. This has to do with bottom-up approach and demand driven approach where people play an important role in the development process. Similarly, Newman (2011) argued to draw “alternate vision upon the concept of human security and gives greater emphasis to welfare, livelihoods and local engagement can make peace building more legitimate and sustainable” (Newman, 2011:1737).

In relation to development changes in power relations for the marginalized sector, Gaventa (2005) introduced the concept of ‘power cubes’. It is an approach in analysing the spaces, places and dynamics of power framework of civil society in a donor interventions. He argues that power must be understood in relation to how spaces for engagement are created, the levels of power (from local to global), as well as different forms of power cross them. He suggests that of these changes point to the need for activists, researchers, policy makers and donors who are concerned about development and change to turn our attention to how to analyze and understand the changing configurations of power (Gaventa, 2005). Gaventa stresses that “if we want to change power relationships...make them more inclusive, just or pro-poor – we must understand more about how power works” (Gaventa, 2005:6).

## 2.4 Academic Field or Theoretical Perspectives

Third is on the *academic field*. It is concerned on the discourse on gendering, peace-building and development efforts.

Recently, the notion of gender is inextricably link in the theory of intersectionality. This has occupied in feminism literature. Intersectionality has founded from the experiences of black feminist in the US, where women are anciently negate with their rights and inequality embedded to their constructed identity and representation of slavery, oppression and discrimination. Evidently, intersectionality is being characterized in three interwoven categories as ‘gender, race and class’ as one, as the axes of differences and oppression.

The argument of monotony of a 3in1 category in understanding the nature of oppression in social group is hard to operationalize, outside the entrenched category, in the context of other women, like the case of Muslim and indigenous women in Asia. There are many differences among people of color and within class groups (Young, 1994; Lugones, 1994; Mackinnon, 1989; Fogg-Davis, 2006 in Weldon, 2008:198). There are wide range of factors that explain the wide range of oppres-

sion and discrimination in the social strata. As such, intersectionality will, “lead to an infinite regress, an infinite process of splitting of social groups, until one is left with nothing but individuals” (Young, 1994; Weldon, 2008:197). The hegemonic view of some feminism has to bend in a way, that, inclusion of other gender discriminatory factors may incorporate for a more forceful theoretical paradigm.

The emergence of gender ideology has emerged in various forms of dilemma and discrepancy among sexes, between men and women. Aristotle once said that “inferiors revolt in order that they may be equal, and equals that they may be superior” (Ostby, 2008:149). Duerst-Lahti posited on gender ideologies such as ‘masculinism and feminalism ideology’. These are structured beliefs and ideas about ways power should be arranged according to social construct associated with sexed bodies. *Masculinism ideology* has capable of setting the terms of normal, just and proper arrangement for political power and social power. The patriarchal incentives to mask its hegemonic dominance in the discourse and practices of universal individuals and meritorious standards and women had reason to react against their subordination (Duerst-Lahti 2008:164). While, *feminalism ideology* begins from and generally prefers that which is associated with human females, often conferring advantages on them that can include equality with males (Duerst-Lahti, 2008:174). This is where feminism is perceived as the opposition to men’s domination of women and their unequal treatment.

This has true to gender inequality. This can be discerned with the concept of relative deprivation and horizontal inequality. This demonstrates that the greater one person’s power over another, the greater will be the gap between his or her benefits and those of other. These theories of inequality can also be useful in examining how gender can be operationalized in terms of access, adequacy and power sharing. Relative deprivation is explained on the undermining expectations and capabilities that develop into more complex ‘want-get’ gap leading to conflict (Gurr, 1970 in O’Gorman, 2011). While, horizontal inequality, it is the deprivation between groups, classified by ethnicity, religion, linguistic differences and tribal affiliations, etc. It is classified discriminatory barriers to minority recruitment restrict the economic opportunities and help perpetuate material disadvantage of certain groups, example, the opportunities given to men than to women.

The concept of participation is problematize in this context especially involving the women and other vulnerable actors. As such, gendering participation has become enticing variable and ‘development orthodoxy’ in promoting development efforts particularly in the establishment a livelihood, socio-economic and environmental reform. It has continued the marginalization of women, as it remains ‘piecemeal, a gesture of benevolence’, and has overlooked the women’s ‘real participation’ from participatory projects (Mayoux, 1995; Mohanty, 2002; Gaventa, 2002 in Cornwall, 2003:1326).

There are two linking words that deal in determining peace such as ‘negative peace and positive peace’ introduced by Galtung (1996 cited in Strickland and Duvvury, 2003:5). For them, negative peace refers to the mere absence of violence; while positive peace represents a stable social equilibrium in which new disputes are resolved without resort to violence and war. Positive peace includes not only the absence of war, violence and hostilities but also the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equality and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within society (UN, 1993 in Strickland and Duvvury, 2003:5).

Once more, Strickland and Duvvury (2003:3) cited that a growing number of policy pronouncements and program guidelines by multilateral and bilateral organizations have responded to the issue of women and gender in relation to humanitarian and development activities in conflict-affected settings. In their ICRW 2003 report, it highlighted that several UN agencies and affiliated committees have developed gender-sensitive guidelines for conflict-related interventions, often as part of a system-wide UN initiative to mainstream gender through all operations. Specifically, the UNCHR adopted guidelines on the protection of refugee women to ensure equitable protection and assistance activities, while, the International Labor Office (ILO) issued gender guidelines for employment and skills training in conflict-affected countries to help mainstream gender issues in policies and programs.

Lately, the WB has shifted from discreet gendering into mainstreamed 'engender development'. Strickland and Duvvury (2003) cited that WB reports in 1997 and 1998 negate gendering in post-conflict reconstruction mandates. The Bank's assistance has had two overall objectives, first to facilitate the transition from war to sustainable peace, second to support resumption of economic and social development (Kreimer et al., 1998 in Strickland and Duvvury, 2013:13). The bank has considered the role of women in rebuilding social capital in particular, calling for attention to their potential as strong community leaders who can facilitate the rebuilding process. Recently, the WB 2000 report reconfirms the importance of gender equality in the fight against poverty, and stresses the urgency of promoting gender-related action reports, while the WDR 2012 report stresses that greater gender equality is also smart economics, enhancing productivity and improving other development outcomes, including prospects for the next generation and for the quality of societal policies and institutions. Above all this recognition and mainstreaming of gendering, the experiences and perceptions of target players, the women and the weak have to be heard and revealed.

Moreover, on one hand, UN resolution 1325 reflected the women's growth in peace activism. It provided protection for women and girls in war and to ensure the full participation of women in humanitarian, conflict resolution, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction initiatives. It highlighted and reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in the peace-building process, and stressed the equal importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision making with regards to conflict prevention and resolution. This legitimate recognition on the relevance of women in peacebuilding does not appear to be perceived in actual context of implementation.

Puechgirbal (2010) has revealed in the UN resolution text that women are primarily represented in a narrow essentialist definition that allows male decision makers to keep them in the subordinated position of victim, thus removing their agency. For him, 'essentialism' is a dangerous political force, designed to shore up difference and inequalities, to sustain domination. It operates through stereotypes that fix identities internal dualisms as women as victims and women as warrior. It has found out that the construction of women and children was used 163 times compared with the much less frequent use of women as combatants for six times and men as vulnerable mentioned once (Puechgirbal, 2010:172). He implied that the problem is the 'well-grounded masculinist norms within the UN system'. "The norms are the barometer that defines who is included and excluded from the cor-



ridors of power. In this context, resolution 1325 may appear to be an aberration... thus, relations of inequality and the imbalance of power between women and men within the UN system remain uncontested, despite the existence of resolution 1325” (Puechgirbal, 2010:184).

On the other hand, Mazurana and McKay (1999) examined gender and meanings of peacebuilding at UN, NGO, and grassroots levels. They concluded that women’s peacebuilding was culturally and contextually based and usually located at community and regional levels. Women’s peacebuilding interests are likely to be shaped by local and regional concerns (De La Rey and McKay, 2006:143). They further regarded structural orientation of peacebuilding has been expanded upon by those who view peacebuilding as encompassing equality and social justice, improved relationships, and meeting of basic needs (Fisher, 1993; Lederach, 1995a, 1995b in De La Rey, et.al, 2006). Moreover, all approaches of peace psychologists have used in discussing peacebuilding, all reflecting concern with human processes such as prevention, proactivity, human needs, and eradication of oppression and inequality (Abu-Saba, 1999; Christie, 1997; McKay, 1996; Wessells, 1992) and yet, peace psychologists have given little explicit attention to women’s views of peacebuilding within their own cultural contexts (cited in De La Rey and McKay, 2006:143).

Peacebuilding is coined in response on the conflict affecting the world as panacea on post-conflict peacebuilding and liberalization. De La Rey and McKay (2006) cited different views of peacebuilding: For Lederach (1997), peacebuilding is a series of interventions to transform all forms of conflict and violence in different stages in conflict affected communities. It refers to the transition from emergency disaster response to relief operations and to rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development. Galtung (1976) described as non-military function intended to restore or enhance peace within a given country or region, an infrastructure within and between nations that offers alternatives to and removes causes of war. For Ruecekr (2000), it is an effort to strengthen the prospects for internal peace and decrease the likelihood of violent conflict and enhance indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence (cited in De La Rey and McKay, (2006:143).

Peacebuilding is hailed as “self-evidently benevolent pursuit, motivated by a desire to realise an internationalist agenda that was inclusive and concerned to act on behalf of those harmed and traumatized in conflict” (Ramsbotham, et.al, 2011:228). This evidently shown that both conflict preventions policy and gender sensitive approaches became mainstreamed in the agendas of international organization since 1990s, legitimized in UN resolution 1325 in 2000 and supported in WB framework specified in WDR 2000 and 2012.

In deviating views, Ramsbotham, et.al (2011) supported Mac Ginty (2006) views on ‘peacebuilding’ that can be reduced to a functional and technocratic exercise of ticking boxes, counting heads and weapons, amending institutions, and reconstructing housing units. For them, what is being constructed is not emancipatory peace, but a liberal peace led by hegemonic power, who may be concerned more to stabilize a world order dominated by the rich and powerful than to enable a liberating transformation out of violence (Ramsbotham, et.al, 2011:232).

Peacebuilding is also intrinsically entwined with liberal peace theory. Doyle highly accentuated the three paradigm of liberal theory paradigm, such as republicanism,

cosmopolitanism and free trade as the only sufficient explanation of liberal peace or liberal war, they should “operate together and only together and not separately” (Doyle, 2005:463). For others like Rosato, he argued that “democracy does not cause peace” rather a flawed logic of liberal peace (Rosato, 2003:600). Newman claimed that the “prevailing approaches to peace-building give insufficient attention to basic and everyday human needs, and promote externally conceived models of state institutions which are not always appropriate” (Newman, 2011:1737) . While Paris revealed that the record of peacebuilding has indeed disappointing. He suggests a critical mind to gain a better understanding of underlying tensions and contradiction of peace building (Paris, 2010:338).

Above all this discursive arena is the inclusion of the unheard voices, the powerless, disadvantage, the marginalized sector that needs more lobbying, and reflect on the over studied and recurred debate on gendering and peacebuilding.

## **2.5 Conclusion: Reflexivity and Inclusivity as the Missing Link?**

As I have said previously, the missing dimension in the research arena may be the exploration of reflexivity, inclusivity and participation of people, that includes conscientization and praxis, as favoured by Freire. Mayoux argues that:

“increasing the numbers of women involved in participatory projects cannot...be seen as a panacea... to addressing politically sensitive aspects of gender inequality. Serious questions need to be asked about which women are involved, what sort of participation is taking place, and who benefits. The material consulted here indicates that in many cases women’s participation has not led to significant change in gender inequality” (Mayoux, 1995: 251).

Specifically, Hilsdon (2009) indicated that Maranao women championed community peacemaking and established a social fabric of peace work (see also Tabay, 2003). However, the efforts made by these women remains largely “unacknowledged publicly, and women’s pivotal role disappears when male leaders finalise the agreements and reap all of the credit for the peaceful settlement” (Hilsdon, 2009:355). The unrecognition of peace efforts made them invisible body in the mainstream. Somewhat like having a “power without a bludgeon” (Foucault, 1980 cited in Hilsdon, 2009:352), the powerless imagery and role of a Maranao woman despite of the powerful contribution that she has done. Hence, this argument of invisibility of Maranao Muslim woman body will be assessed further in peacebuilding and establishment of PDC (see chapter 3).

Further, Angeles (1998) showed that Muslim women have double minority status – that of Muslim and woman. This is between the insinuated framing of ‘war’ and ‘Islam’, on the perceived role of Muslim woman as articulated by local NGOs and the women themselves and the global meanings (cited in Hilsdon, 2009:350). In this notion, Hilsdon (2009) suggests to challenge the universal definitions of war, conflict, violence and Islam, as well as their race, ethnicity and religion in Mindanao. These are performatively constituted vectors in a framework that produce Muslim women as embodied subjects. “The embodiment of these variables occurs continually through ‘dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques and function-

ings' in a network of power relations that are 'constantly in tension'" (Foucault, 2006 cited in Hilsdon, 2009:350). This problematize embodiment of Maranao Muslim women will also address in this study in chapter 3.

Thus, the notion of reflexivity may seek to explain the awareness and dialectic of doing an action and reflection to think critically the appropriate actions to be taken affecting the embodied subject. Buhaenko, et al. (2004) said that this is the part of the peace-building process that is often overlooked and vital in the stage of interventions, where project implementers and stakeholders reflect on the whole process (cited in Usop, 2013:230).

Lastly the focus is on the missing link in the gendering peace and development framework. The question is: who is absent, who is present? How are power relations exercised? Who controls what and for whom? Both gendering and peace-building have many critics, as they are continually search for missing dimensions or axes of overcoming violence. To help in understanding the impediments to sustainable peacebuilding efforts, Paris (2010:337) suggested that we should "distinguish between justified and unjustified criticisms, and to promote a more balanced debate on the meaning, shortcomings and prospects of liberal peacebuilding" and the gender paradigm.

## Chapter 3

# Maranao Women's Role, Identity and Reflexivity

*"...Amidst the rhetorics of government policies and multi-donor interventions on peace and development, the reality is that the war dealt a severe blow right into the core of the Moros' existence. It has degraded their sense of being and identity, thereby inflicting deep wounds into their body, mind and soul, as a people."* Yasmin Busran-Lao<sup>11</sup>, 2010

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will explain how Maranao women perceived their role, identity and reflexivity in peacebuilding. This will analyse further the cultural and religious identity and the engagement of Maranao women as problematize in social power relations in peace and development program.

To draw an in-depth discussion, I used the PDC signage depicting women and children (see appendix 3). This is supposed to elicit discussion in the interview and FGD on how is the role of women understood in peacebuilding emphasis on the axes of intersectionality such as 'race, gender and class' in PDC. However, I got only a common response, 'not an issue nor a problem', a retired midwife in the PDC community says, *"There is no boundary in serving mankind, whether Muslim or Christian, rich or poor, young or old, men or women"* (key informant, Muntay PDC, 2014). This implies my initial contestation on intersectionality and proposition on the paradigm of inclusivity, where development assistance involves entirety of actors. Inclusive approach deals not with the differences but the common challenges affecting community. For people can certainly do, build and respond to their issues of differences consensually and cooperatively.

Going back, it took a lengthy lecture to contextualize the theory of intersectionality, from the mantra of 'race, gender and class' factors to the notion of differences, theorizing inequality, oppression and discrimination of women. This may suggest that intersectionality should operationalize in the context of relativism, not a monistic lens. Hence, I asked further question, on culture and religious identity that seemingly raised that affects differences and inequality among women, and power relations between men and women.

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<sup>11</sup> *Yasmin Busran-Lao* is the current Secretary on National Commission on Muslim Filipinos. She is a well-known Maranao feminist, peace and civil advocate. She is the chairperson and founding president of Al-Mujadillah Development Foundation, Inc. based in Marawi City and Founding Chairperson of Nisa-ul Haqq Fil Bangsamoro, a Mindanao Network Alliance of women.

### 3.2 Cultural and Religious Identity of Maranao Women

One of the key informants, I called her, 'Aleema', a learned Muslim woman. She is a registered teacher in the Philippines. She finished her Arabic education in Saudi Arabia. During our talks, she argued that education and status of women in the community are significant in decision making and power relations. She shared on how she perceived culture and religious identity and differences of women and power relations in the community: According to her,

*“Muslim woman has a high respect and status in Islam, quoting verses from the Qur’an. “O mankind we created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of god is (he who is) the most righteous of you and god has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things” (Qur’an, 49:13).*

She said that the problem is the ignorance and lack of awareness of Maranao on their role towards their spouse and husband, which is practice in the everyday. If only men have their faith, women will be truly fortunate. These are internal challenges, the bigger picture is harder. The external factors are more difficult, from the outsider criticisms, which are based on extremism and dominant views. She said that *“modern, conservative and poor Maranao family is greatly influenced the modernization”*. Today, the social relationship is standardized with dominant views and dominates the relationship. There is a diminishing value of respect and cohesiveness in the community. Everyone is competing with the material things, even each member of the family. She said that, *“it is very important to continue emulating the principle and values of family, and the role of woman play a big role”*. This has to be recognized and be known as to maintain the cohesiveness in the family and the community at large. She shared a story during the time of Prophet Mohammad:

*A man asked the Prophet, who among the people is the most worthy of his companionship. Your mother answered by the Prophet. Who’s next? Your Mother, answered again by the Prophet. Who is next? Your Mother, answered again for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> time and then your Father. That is why I said, as she said. Woman is the most loved and respected in Islam, because our heaven lies under the feet of our mother. All must be aware and reeducate on our role (Aleema, PDC, 2014, see more details interview in appendix 4).*

The interview was very enriching in understanding better the reality. For me, it has affirmative bearing in nurturing ideology and in understanding gender differences and factors of intersectionality, than being haunted by alarming discursive that is based on representation and lenses of imaginary assumptions. This is not a debate of an issue of ideology and pragmatic notion, it simply imply a mere understanding of the culture and religion as possibly arena of intercultural understanding and peaceful co-existence not as insinuated by Huntington (2003). He claimed that *“revitalization of religion throughout much of the world can reinforce cultural differences and, in turn, may facilitate clashes among civilizations”* (cited in Silberman, 2005:657).

From the excerpts of all the interviews, it can be discerned that Maranao women have a strong engagement in the community as equal partners of men. However, they are affected by the dominant view on how the Muslim women and the society are being constructed. Lao (2011), as stated above, suggested that the Moro situation has *“inflicted deep wounds into their body, mind and soul, as a people”*.

Moreover, according to Aleema, the problem is the lack of awareness not only for the non-Muslim but the Maranao as well. The Maranao women have experienced double standards, torn between their perceived identity and dominant perceptions of outsiders. In the article of Abu Lughod (2002) on 'do Muslim women really need saving?' she argued that stereotypes and essentialised claims arise from both anthropological reflections and cultural relativism. Muslim women are perceived differently, as Muslim women look subordinate and oppressed in the eyes of other, through lenses of orientalism and Western (mis)perceptions. As another key informant said,

*'I questioned why young Maranao Muslim women did not wear veil. I even criticize them, until I moved in the town for my high school days. I need to remove my veil to have a friend and to belong with the group. I realized that I was deprived in my own land and deprived to be a Muslim woman. The PDC program gives us the opportunity to be prioritized and recognized. Before, its' hard to interact with Christians, I'm sure they felt the same. There was always anonymity between groups'* (key informant, PDC Muntay, 2014).

I partly agree with her, as a Muslim who grew up in a mostly Christian community. We felt the anonymity of this constructed divisiveness. I remembered when visiting our grandma in dominant Maranao society, she often introduced us as her 'filipino grandchildren' because we live in dominant Christian society. I argued with her, saying that 'we all Filipinos because we all live in the Philippines'. She hardly accepted it. I just realized the enigmatic struggle that have been protracted in the history of Mindanao affirming the constructed imagery of Bangsamoro. Lao (2011) argued about the significant process of closure and healing and about how people can sometimes confront reality with religious fervour. Arguably, religion is not the root cause of conflict and can therefore also provide a toolkit for reconciliation. Religion can be the most influential variable due to its agency of submission, support, fanaticism and the fastest way of mobilizing people, that is why, it also both a tool for polarization and a means to overcome it. It is an overused variable, replacing economic and political interests in a way that obscures the perennial problem of poverty and other embedded challenges.

I remember when the declaration of all-out war against MILF in 2000' where I was advised to remove my veil, because of fear of violence. More than 20 years of friendship and neighbourhood with my Christian fellow Filipinos was stained through negative publicity and a politics of difference. There was a strong sensitization in media and linking all Muslims to rebel groups in Mindanao. It is very cynical that the majority of residents in Maigo within Lanao del Norte Province in Mindanao. Maigo was not even directly affected by the violence, yet a wave of hatred swept through the area, following separatist violence in neighbouring areas. This form of media biases may even cause the onset of civil war. Amidst strong politicking in the province, the success of any peacebuilding interventions among the Muslims will have a bearing on power relations among various actors at local level.

Fortunately, there are some strong women's NGOs at the grassroots level, and the peace advocacy program and presence of donor peacebuilding helped neutralize the situation of displacement and violence.

Furthermore, the desire for peace and understanding was made tangible through intermarriages between Maranao Muslims and Cebuano Christian politicians, as in

the case of the Dimaporo and Quibranza families in the province of Lanao del Norte, who until now ruled the Province. It was challenged every election period, for it is not a perfect leadership at all, but the mixed marriage element in this political dynasty has a neutralizing component that maintains and sustains the peace efforts in the area. This has to do with the social processes of assimilation, amalgamation, acculturation and cooperation of people. These are integral elements in maintaining peace and order in our Province.

Disoma, a University professor in Mindanao State university, has argued that the “outsider makes no distinction of Maranao identities. They regard their cultural identity and upbringing as Maranao, as Filipino, identical to the Muslim or Islamic way of life” (Disoma, 1990:3). In his book he cited from an old, yet relevant, argument of Alfredo Tiamson (1976), a Christian Scholar, and claimed, “...our ignorance of and/ or difference to their culture, art and literature is almost complete. Obviously, a situation like this cannot be attributed to mere ignorance or indifference; it would be more correct to say that the situation is deeply rooted in prejudice and misinformation” (Disoma 1990:3). In this context, the Muslim identity, their culture and religion are important variables in understanding difference and intersectionality, although, there is a divisive argument between culture and religion practices. This also entails a need further empirical study by knowing in-depth of the subject, without biased and rushing conclusion based on assumptions and third lenses.

### **3.3 Maranao Women’s Role and Reflexivity in Peacebuilding**

One of the Maranao key informants recalled her most heroine peace settlement in the locality, is “*seating on top of the jeepney with wide arms, while going to a relative who has afflicted with disputes and family feud with other relatives*” (PDC Muntay, 2014). In settling ‘rido’ (family feud), there should be a mediator, from a royal family, who can provide not only his/her mediation skills but also share on the agreed terms in settling the feud. Usually it is settled by offering blood money, sometimes in a form of intermarriage (see page 5, also Hilsdon, 2009).

The missing link in the analytical framework of power relations with four interwoven components (community, peace and development interventions, the academic field, the missing link) as presented in Chapter 2, is the recognition of womens’ capacity, active engagement and their reflexivity in the process. To analyse this missing link in the dynamics of peace and development interventions in the PDC, let me share the story of ‘Mayora’<sup>12</sup> which is presented in box 3.3 below (see appendix 4 for more details).

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<sup>12</sup> *Mayora* is a local feminist named for elected Municipal mayor. The key informant was once a Municipal Mayor. She served 3 years as local chief executive.

### Box 3.3

Mayora: She is known for her expertise in tracing genealogy in Maranao Royalty. She is a 'Bae-labi- of Cablangan'- a highest rank of women in Maranao royalty in one province.



When asked on how she understood the role of Maranao women in the PDC. She said it was initiated by men but sustained by women. Men are usually responsible for the welfare of the society, while a woman has to take part in pursuing the goal for development. However, the changing society and the diminishing values have caused the terrain of social change.



The men participated in policy and decision making in the case of MNLF peace agreement but in the long run of peace-making, they are invisible. Some men are left in the home. "The lucky ones", for Madam Aisah, "are those who earned positions, have knowledge and skills valued in mainstream society. Still the majority she things are former combatants and farmer, who remain uprooted in their home, and can only hope to seek greener pastures for their children". Now, she feels, women are more recognized and visibly involved in social and political engagement.

The role of women she sees as about finding solutions and making sure that a fair share is provided for everyone. The women have the traits of endurance and perseverance. For her, women are more capable of providing economic sustenance in the family, even though this is supposed to be a duty of men. This is because more women are educated, and education is a very important factor in power relations and decision making. It is a 'duty for every Muslim, to seek knowledge from womb to tomb'. Here she quotes the Sunnah of Mohammad.

She said that neither right of women nor participation of women is an issue here because everyone has given the freedom and freewill to do what she or he has to do. What is an issue is a power relations within the government system, where the actions of women are viewed as based on whims and desires, viewed differently from within the local community. Those women who endured the challenge and stood up for their opportunities she considers lucky, and also those women who produce men of understanding, a faithful servant, who knows his rights and obligations towards women. "What we need", she says, "is to be more compassionate and be aware of our own rights and also the rights of others. This should produce a win-win situation and dialogue when things go wrong". The issue she emphasizes is the wrong and corrupt system of government and faulty mechanisms for administration. She says that "We allowed it to happen. It became a bad habit and a spoiled system embedded in the society and influencing leadership. For example the poor and corrupt political system denies the right of citizens to access basic services, including social services. In my husband leadership and my experienced as Municipal Mayor, even, you give all your time and resources for public service, at the end of the day, people use to be served, than serving". She gives specific examples of elections in the country where people are used to selling their votes rather than choosing a good leader of their own free will. People used the easy money, but there is no lasting relief. The most difficult times of being politician is having the spoils system of politicking. She concludes: "Making a difference is painful and too high an ideal. But you still have to stand up, and hope for the future". (Photo captions: See appendix 4, key informant no. 1)



In my interview with this wife of former MNLF commander and former local chief executive, *Mayora* cited four key players with complementary roles in building community. These are the elected leaders, the religious or spiritual group, the rich and the poor. Each has social obligations, moral and ethical standards, and has complementary and reciprocal tasks in nurturing a sense of community. The situation, as she views it, is full of competition over resources and material and worldly desires. For her, this can imply the diminished functioning of society. Here she reflects on experiences in the PDC and in peace-building.

She also revealed that the story of *Barangay* Muntay as PDC became a refugee centre during the 'all-out-war' in 2000 was also considered in Chapter 1. There were various incidents, including occupation by a separatist armed group that meant some nearby communities became militarized despite the declaration of the community as PDC, as the case of *Barangay* Pendulunan in the Municipality of Munai and the Municipality of Tangcal in the Province of Lanao del Norte. Most of Maranao key informants originated in this place, like *Mayora* who was originally reside and became a Municipal Mayor. The securitization of development interventions encouraged the community to move to other places where they felt more secure. They build and integrate to a new community like *Barangay* Muntay in Municipality of Kolambugan. The weak engagement of women in some PDCs in peacebuilding also noticeable in the community, this is where the demographic terrain has changed, and, women preferred to be uprooted in their place of origin, than staying in a volatile and vulnerable situation. There is a piecemeal approach of intervention, showcasing interventions rather on integrated and holistic approach of interventions.

### 3.4 Conclusions and Synthesis

This chapter of the study reveals that power relations depend on the context of key actors. The more women there are with high status within local or donor programmes, the greater the opportunity, visibility and engagement of women in peacebuilding is likely to be. In the article of Irene Santiago, she proposes to integrate gender into analysis of long-term development so as to address grievances arising from deprivation (Ramsbotham et.al, 2011:310, see also Hilsdon, 2009). I may suggest a formally supported women's institution to facilitate and organize community peace and development interventions beyond the life of the program or project. The government should train and hire more locally-rooted, community peace and development worker, especially women, to oversee human rights, peace and development interventions in general. Hence, one of the findings of this study is that rethinking is needed in the minds of hegemon-men, including in UNCHR practices, so women's position and competency can be better assured. Thus mainstreaming of gender perspective should not only apply to policies and programmes but also to human rights monitoring, peacebuilding and development activities.

One problem, as this study has found, is that practices of peacebuilding have become mixed up with other abstract categories, including the role of the military and wider strategic geo-political ventures such as the 'war on terror'. Enloe has insisted that gendered analysis of the international system is vital, since women globally are being incorporated and co-opted across the threshold of all kinds of social institutions that promote militarization (cited in Ramsbotham, et.al, 2013,

305). Simpson (2005) meanwhile affirmed that “development advocates are accustomed to the slippery politics of defending aid budget for poverty eradication...aid has been used as tool for foreign policy and military objectives-often to the detriment of development and peace” (2005:3). This may result in the securitization of peacebuilding and related development efforts.

Moreover, the functional model of community, as discussed in the peace framework in chapter 2 will not work well under conditions where corruption is widespread. Spoils politics reinforces the conflict model which in turn deters growth of the community despite peace, creating new development challenges. This may be because the development intervention is channelled to the spoiling system, benefiting only the few individuals with power, influence and control of the flow of development funding.

Furthermore, it is insinuated in this chapter the significance of understanding the other axes of challenges affecting Maranao Muslim women in the gender analysis emphasis on their identity, culture and religious context. It also implies the importance of the recognition of the capacity of women and engagement of women in the peacebuilding. It implies further that one of the benchmarks of development success is awareness, a pronounced leadership role for women in their own context, and good leadership so that power is widely shared with among actors in the community.

## Chapter 4

# Women's Experiences and Engagement in PDC

*"Scholars of Southeast Asia still frequently repeat the assertion that women enjoy the 'high status' in the region, but a gender relations approach encourage us to 'dig-deep' to understand the dynamics of the observer-subject, and to questions the ways in which gender relations are an aspect of the exercise of power in society,"* Robinson, 2010:116.

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the empirical results, synthesis and analysis of how the women in the PDC perceived their experiences and engagement in peacebuilding programmes as part of the creation of a PDC. The involvement of women includes a wide range of activities such as volunteerism, organizing, mediation, advocacy, monitoring and policy making (see Appendices 2, 3 and 4). The question is whether this has been done in such a way that women have developed their full potentials and capacity for peacebuilding. Given that peace-building activities come on top of their household chores as house manager, budget officer as they described, the pressure on women's time may be considerable.

### 4.2 Towards a Synthesis Model: The 3-Ds

In this section, a synthesis is proposed based on field data about women's experiences and engagement in the PDC peacebuilding programme. This is conceptualized in a figure below (Figure 4.2). I called this the 3Ds model of gender dimensionality. These are the dilemmas, development and disparity on gender engagement on peace and development efforts.

Consequently, each dimension as reflected in figure 4.2 below is explained further with the reflexivity of women during the key informant interviews and FGD conducted (see appendix 4 and 5 for more details). The question whether the peace and development efforts improved the situation of women? That depends on how we perceived development intervention, is it immanent or intentional, from bottom-up to top-down approach, or the other way around? There is a concoction of provisions and power relations in gendered peacebuilding despite of the legitimate claims of women for more rational interventions.

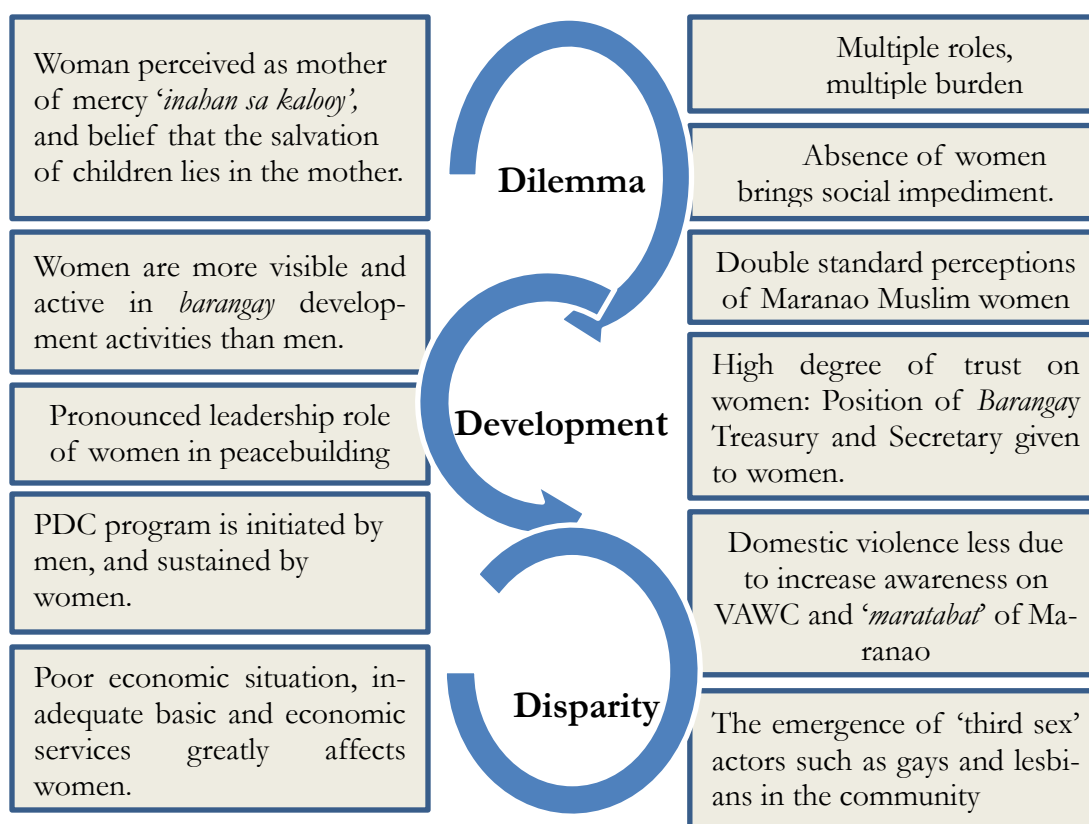


Figure 4.2 the 3ds model of gender dimensionality

### 4.3 Dilemmas of Women

Local women, puzzled, as well as amazed with the life changing in the society. Remembering their youth was filled with conservatism, traditions and mores, and governed under the very strict patriarchal family. Yet, they consider a very strong family ties, with high respect and compassion with the patriarch, as provider discipline and compassionate head of the family. He treats his children with benevolence and affection, and permissiveness usually suffuses the family atmosphere (Hunt, et.al, 1997). Comparing the new generation as the total opposite of their generation, about 20 years ago (based on the average age of total respondents). Complaining, that woman of today, has to work, playing the role of men, for one, in support of the meagre resources in the households, and the socio-demographic changes in the community cause by displacement, poverty, and conflict and population growth. It has been visible in the PDC community that men played as 'house-bandry'—doing household chores, baby sitting, while, the wife has its own work as professional, domestic helping, vending and other income generating activity. Box 4.3 below is an example of information from the FGDs conducted (see Appendix 5 for more details).



### Box 4.3

The FGD was conducted on August 12, 2014, held at the nursery and fisher folk centre funded by ACT for Peace Programme in coordination with the former *Barangay* Secretary, who has been involved in PDC peace programme. She is also a member of peace and development advocate (PDA) in the PDC.

After the formal preliminaries and introduction of the research study, I started the discussion about their general assessment of the PDC to tune in my research. According to them, PDC programme helped improved the physical conditions of the community and gained recognition from various local and donor agencies

Thereafter, I started on the focus question: The highlights as follows for first research question:

FGD question # 1: *Experiences and perceptions of women in the PDC Peacebuilding.*

-They described woman as ‘mother of mercy’, who will sacrifice and endure hardships for the welfare of the family. They will do everything to earn for living and guide their children. However, the poor conditions and poor education and lack of literacy mean that it is painful for them to fully cater to the needs of their families.

-The women in our *barangay* are seen as more active than men. This is visible during assembly meetings and communal work, including cleaning the *barangay*. Women are always tasked for the implementation of development program.

- In the fisherfolk association, there were more women members than men (36 Women, 30 men). Women engage in fish vending. Women are seen as more hardworking than men in our *barangay*.

-Women are working, because men have no work. Women have no time in guiding their children, and this is one of the reasons why children lack discipline and are easily swayed by bad peers and societal problem e.g. drugs, early marriage.

-Men in the community usually do the “work of women”. The implication is that men depend on women. It was asked if this has impact on relations like male ego dominance and domestic violence. Very few reported this, though they said it usually happened when men were drunk. But in the community, there is a strong program on violence against women and children (vawc). For Maranao participant, they can remember any examples of domestic violence. According to her, they are some rumors that young husbands engaged in illegal gambling and drug cartel for easy money, trying not to depend on professional wives.

### ***4.3.1 Multiple roles, multiple burdens***

Women perceived that their multiple role become a multiple burden on their part. Although in early 1990s, working mothers find satisfaction in being able to supplement the income of the husband and to afford more conveniences and luxuries. In cases where the husband's income is sufficient for the support of the family, the mother may seek self-fulfilment in job satisfaction. Little by little, the working mother begins to demand equal privileges in the home. In addition to regular employment, she is responsible for managing the household which sometimes brings problems, where the husbands refused to help with housework (Hunt, et.al, 1985).

These manifestations of transcending and changing role of women and men create new framework of social change and social structure. How could it be? How does a power relation exercise in the family and the larger society? What are the psychological and socio-economic and political implications in sustaining a PDC?

### ***4.3.2 Exchanging roles of men and women***

These changing roles occupy the dilemma of women in the local community. Women agreed that they are more productive than men; they also recognized that it has a negative implication in the family. Their absence in the family neglect their children, the men don't have the patience with their children. If they have the choice, they rather stay at home and respond to their agency of motherhood, which is more affectionate than men. But they need to work, for their poor economic situation and afflicted with culture of poverty. They need to work and held for the welfare of the family. This may implies on the maximum engagement of women, where limitations of their biological capacity will be at stake. The agency and transcending role of women may affect their psychological capacity and social relations, and may also affect positively or negatively in the process of social change.

### ***4.3.3 Social impediments***

In some study, increase of domestic violence in the household proliferates as the male ego dominates. It has psychological implications in the power relations between men and women. It is happened when women exceedingly overpower men. The negative implication of battering and violence in the household greatly affects the children and other members of the family. Fortunately, the strong awareness on VAWC in the community diminishes the issue on violence. However, it is not a guarantee from physical and psychological violence, but, it has larger implications in society, where family and home is wrecked, that creates a more chaotic social problem. During the FGD, it has mentioned the growing case of delinquent children, early pregnancy, illegal gambling and drug problem. These are threatening situation that will disrupt the social relation in the family another. This may indicate that home care capacity of women is trade-off into the basic and material needs in the household. This may also implies that poverty is a perennial problem that complicates the situation of women.

#### 4.3.4 *The Maranao maratabat: a protection mechanism?*

Maranao culture has its distinct dilemma focusing less or negating the issue on domestic violence but more on the changing behaviour and dependability of men. There is lack of evidence showing domestic violence in the Maranao family. One of the respondents had said,

*“my husband never use force on me, when we have fight, he went to his parents, taking his favourite son, and blackmailed me for divorce or by marrying other’. One time, he was so upset of not preparing food for him. But, we are used to it. I am busier than him; we have small business with 3 kids. He helped me in the house, actually, it is because of his Maratabat and I also have mine. Our Maratabat can be good and bad. It is good when you used your pride and honor to have a good life, It is bad when you used to defend the wrong acts”* (key respondent, Muntay, 2014).

Maratabat (as I mentioned in the earlier page) is the driving force in the everyday life of Maranao. It became psychological and social security of women to protect her chastity and gain respect. However, *Maratabat* will also infuriate conflict when Maranao woman is assaulted with negative publicity, by putting shame her chastity (Bentley, 1983; Tabay, 2003; Hilsdon, 2009). *Maratabat* is the driving force of men to strive hard for his family; however, the inadequacy became variable of submission and his indifference (see also Hilsdon, 2009).

As such, this section on dilemmas of women shows the arising complex situations and avenue of discourse in gender relations. During my visit in the office of Women Studies Center of Mindanao State University (MSU) in doing this research, a male old janitor entertained me. He has been working in the office for long. I asked him what do men doing in the women centre, why they did not hire women. He said, *“There are things, which only men can do, such as lifting heavy weight, pointing out the sewing machine for skills training”*. This revealed that men and women have each own distinct capacity that has to be nurtured and recognized, as vital in changing society. It may sound an ironic situation that success of women, as active and empowered women may significantly disempowered men as implies in this dilemma of changing role. This may implies that triumph of feminism in the local context. What will be the gender paradigm for the next decade? Is there a possible twist of situation of femininity and masculinity, from women to men issues, or a continuous monotony of inequality, oppression and discrimination in all sexes?

There is somewhat imbalance in the approach of development assistance. The intention of addressing the problem of women, may also affects other sectors. In my discussion of community as myriad of actors and power relations, it implies the interdependency and mutuality in the web of social relations. That imbalances, inequalities and injustices depends on the form of power relations in extending development supports and intervention of one group as for men or women. As such, the process of peace and development interventions is again questioned. In the case of PDC, it seems that success of women has brought dilemma in the community. This may entails that empowerment is beyond the capacity and potentialities of gender in the power relations, but also emphasis on the welfare of women and her entire family, the men and children. According to Robinson, “not all men exercise power, but the patriarchal dividend allows men in general to benefit in some way from masculinity control of institutions” (Robinson, 2010:116).

## 4.4 Development Initiatives and Policy for Gender

It has been insinuated that development interventions produce unlikely result to the social relations in the community. This has been condemned by the post development critiques, the retrogressive impact of development (see Escobar, 2005).

### 4.4.1 Women engagement in the community

Let me introduce the experience and engagement of Madam Cora in PDC in box 4.4.1 below. It is an ordinary story of dedication of a woman, who made an extraordinary contribution for peacebuilding.

#### Box 4.4.1

Madam Cora: She is a retired midwife in the Barangay. She was actively involved in peace and health program in the PDC. She was involved in counselling, mediation aside from her primary role of taking care of the mothers and their children'. She was like a Mother of the PDC. She was loved by the Maranao women. Her experienced in the PDC extremely made her busier. She was able to travel to many cities in Mindanao just to attend health and PDC concerns sponsored by donor assistance. She learnt a lot of things aside from being a midwife, as health worker in the *barangay*. She met Muslim women in different tribes and from other provinces. She used to be called 'doctor' as she recalled. Accepting patients from other PDC, for her, "*there's no boundary in serving mankind, be it old, young, rich, poor, Muslim or Christian*".



The declaration of their community as PDC by the MNLF helped in the augmentation of basic services in the *barangay* and established good relations between the Muslim and Christian constituents.

She expressed that women of today are empowered and actively engaged in peace building. There are regular programs for women under GAD development fund in the *Barangay*. In addition, she perceived that women in their *Barangay* are working due to poverty.

Similar to Madam Cora, another respondent, a Maranao woman, a nursing graduate, became a PDA. Another was former secretary of the *Barangay* Muntay, 'Inday', who proudly expressed her gratitude for the opportunity of learning the passion of advocacy on CoP of PDC programme. Inday is now active in NGO work and engaged in voluntary work and community resource and disaster management. These women recognized their potentials as significant element in establishing and maintaining a peaceful and developed community. However, it has to consider the other integrative factors in building a PDC, in addressing perennial issues on poverty.

The experience of Madam Cora, and other key informants (see appendix 4 for more details) indicate success of peace advocacy of peacebuilding in PDC, where women have given the opportunity to participate in develop programs and capacitate their welfare state. It may also produce high calibre of women, who held posi-



tion in local government office. These are intangible interventions of peacebuilding that women have an avenue to voice out their interest in building a community. What lacking now is the tangible resources particularly on the socio-economic challenges.

#### ***4.4.2 Tangible and intangible interventions?***

The story of Madam Cora and the experiences of other women in PDC show that that status and position of women in the community significantly improved. Where women may explicitly be heard and suggest for genuine peacebuilding in the community, their improved status can be discerned in relation to their positioning of social class, where women status will rise and they step up the ladder of power relations. Social class can be defined by wealth, income, education, heredity, standard of living, circle of friends, pattern of etiquette and occupation. These factors will help determine the status of women in the strata of social organization. These can also explained on the sociological concepts of ascribed status and achieved status.

The high degree of commitment, persistence and hard work of women, put them in the high rank of the strata. They earned high degree of respect and recognition from the society. Philippines is not a closed-class, but a relatively open-class society. In other words, a society in which one may move with relative ease from one class to another. It is not a society in which it is extremely difficult to change one status, as with a caste system, for example. Hence, women have a great advantage so long as visibility and widening of opportunities is possible.

However, the participation of women in peace-building should not be forceful, since women remain responsible for nurturing and for working towards social cohesiveness. As a young PDA said:

*“As PDA, I became a volunteer facilitator of bringing the programs in the community, basically more on capability training. It is not adequate. We are lucky, that we are the priority of the PDC programme. They even give us capital for small generating project to compensate our peace advocacy work. However, the majority of the community is poor. The community needs a stable and sustainable development type of interventions. There is a need a more concrete intervention that will sustain the PDC interventions”* (key informant no. 6, Muntay, 2014).

Nonetheless, the PDC contributed in providing physical infrastructures and facilities in the community, such as water facilities, rice and corn mill, solar dryer, and health facilities. These are one-size fits or menu-type of interventions. This kind of development assistance is critically argued. These are hegemonic form of assistance that continually exploit, influence the resources and enforce subordination from the local to global context. In a geo-political sense, the globalization and imperialism has use development as means of controlling over the struggling developing countries. The development assistance begets dependency and widening gap between the rich and the poor. There is a recurring and worsening form of interventions. It has never ceased the issue of poverty issue but it produces a more complex web of societal, economic and political challenges, from micro issue of delinquency, violence, poverty to macro issue of trafficking, war-terror. Indeed, it entails ramification of questionable development and reification of structural violence. This may be the reason why feminism and other societal movements are

flourishing to venture a new form of interventions, deviating from classical development to a sectoral, mass-based and marginalized focus of development interventions.

In the gender equality policy of UNHR, it is claimed that women empowerment has the right not only on political and civil but also on cultural, economic and social dimension (UNHR 2011). Yet these other dimensions are the urgent at most visible needs in the ground. This may suggest a rethinking of interventions, from emphasis of intangible to tangible form of interventions that gender has fully accessed and involved on the concrete interventions that address the economic problem. It may suggest a collective, integrated and sustainable form of peacebuilding and development assistance.

#### **4.5 Disparity on Gender Engagement in Peace and Development Efforts**

Disparity comes when challenges and events are still visible despite of the volume of assistance boosted by both local and donor assistance. *Mayora* had said, “*The PDC programme was initiated by men, but sustained by women*”. This is because the PDC was founded from the peace agreement and donor interventions that is mostly participated by men. It sounds true that “women’s involvement is often limited to implementation” (Cornwall, 2000:1329). In this case, women were actively engaged in the implementation of the peacebuilding program, and it was combatant men who became marginalised and invisible.

Women’s experiences suggest that gender is not totally ignored in peacebuilding program. This is due to pervasive struggle of women in building a safe refuge that provide security, opportunity and better life compare to their former war affected community. It is because of women’s agency that pushes them to do something for peace efforts.

There are exemplary and best practice from the commitment and endurance of women in the establishing a PDC, however, the situation of poverty and emerging societal challenges still lingers in the community. The gender disparity, presence of sexual complexity and transcending exchanging role of men and women is getting intense.

One of the respondent’s comments, “*The issue of today is not only between men and women, but also the growing number of gays and lesbian*” (key informant, Muntay PDC, 2014). This is happening due to the discrepancy in the planning process, policy making and imbalances of gender opportunity and lived realities affecting community constituents.

Hence, I may argue on gender analysis in favour of women and other marginalized sectors such as other booming ‘third sex’ sector. Although this is another gender discursive sect, it has to be address in the gender disparity issue to ensure a sound social justice and equality in every community. It is somewhat an inclusive and integrated approach of interventions that include the development web of assistance from the point of view of the marginalized and disadvantage group. This may suggest a gender perspective inclusionary approach in any peacebuilding efforts for

“amplifying voice and access to decision making of those who tend to be marginalized or excluded by mainstream development initiatives...making a difference on challenging embedded assumptions about gender and power, and on making new alliances out of old divisions, in order to build more inclusive, transformatory practice” (Cornwall 2003:1325).

This implies that experiences and engagements of women in development work have productive impact in peacebuilding. Yet, it also revealed the disparity and dilemma of these social changes. This area still needs further study as to understand the underlying factors and influence in the society and continue questioning the visibility and legitimacy of women and other sector in the realm of peacebuilding.

## **4.6 Conclusion and Synthesis**

This chapter shows that the women engagement in PDC significantly contributed in the success of peace and development efforts. It also shows that the inadequacy of basic services and poor socio-economic situation of people forced the women to do beyond their capacity and help sustain the family requirements.

What lesson can be learned in PDC development is the active involvement and high degree of commitment of women, for without them, peacebuilding still in the state of instability. Fortunately the PDC Muntay had accessibility of opportunities, had strong women, and good relations among a mix of people, with high trust and commitment of local leaders. By contrast, other PDCs in the Province are in a state of inequities and indifference.

Moreover, the experience of women in the establishing PDC may sound a success in the world of radical feminism, as women highly involved in peace and development efforts. However, it indicates negative implications to men dependability, as mentioned earlier as to the dilemma of women. Development per se, is a manipulative force that brings material relief, yet, produce social impediment like early marriage, delinquency and broken home. This entails that modernization and demographic landscape also contributed in the social changing structure.

Hence, what this chapter has suggested is that common to the experiences of women in the PDC peacebuilding program is their proactive role and perseverance in building a truly peaceful and developed society. Maranao women play a significant role in conflict mediation, with or without legal claims and recognition. Other women have also actively engaged in peacebuilding for the welfare of their family and community as a whole. This may indicate that the agency of women has to be nourished through operative and active mechanisms and not through passive notions of subordination.

## Chapter 5

# Conclusion: Towards a Pragmatic Gendered Peace?

*“With each passing day the world is becoming more complex and interdependent. The problems we are facing cannot be resolved by the efforts of only half the population of the globe. Both men and women must work together as equal partners in order to ensure a sustainable future for the generations to come”* Perez de Cuellar, March 18, 1990.

This study of Maranao Muslim women in the PDC peacebuilding program in Mindanao, Southern Philippines has tried to explore reflexively, their experiences, perceptions and situations of women who aspire to be co-equal actors in a marginalized community, along with men and children. Looking back to the various waves of feminism, their impact lingers on, and the theory of intersectionality in particular suggests a continual struggle for visible and self-reliant women with equal opportunities to men. UN resolution 1325 in 2000 can be seen as a big leap in an inclusionary approaches, where women have legitimate claims in the realms of peace and development programs. However, the degree of women’s engagement in peacebuilding and development practices is hard to assess in practice. Returning to the peace framework of this study, each component such as community, peace and development interventions, theoretical perspectives and the missing links has been integral to understanding power relations and social change in the community of *Barangay* Muntay.

This study has also shown that discourses cannot be divorced from reality and from ideologies, or from relations of power within the community that was researched. Such power relations were found to be deeply embedded in social ties, influencing the search for genuine peace and the welfare of community members in *Barangay* Muntay. What this suggests is that for a lasting and sustainable peace and development process to be possible, there is a need for a meeting point that can achieve consensus. The framework of peace appears to be a continuing inquiry that not only builds community, but also supports and talks about community. This includes the building of people’s capacities, and their dreams and aspirations of a ‘gendered’, peaceful community.

The study also suggests that the concept of PDC should be reinforced from an insider rather than an outsider perspective. This is because gendering peacebuilding, as an inclusive paradigm, may need an empirical review of experiences at community level. Peace programs should not offer solutions from outside, but “must be pursued as a positive process of addressing injustices, reworking social relationships, and transforming the way people describe themselves and others” (Dwyer and Cagoco-Guiam, 2010; see also Lao, 2011). It is a core value and strategy of peace programming is enabling and supporting people in building their own peace (Anderson & Olson, 2003; Gardiola, 2003, Usop 2013:230). It will be a genuine product of people’s empowerment, somewhat a ‘power with bludgeon’ if I may rephrase an expression from Foucault (in Hilsdon, 2009).

However, there are more serious problems that accompany the power and gender relations and powerlessness of marginalized women. As I presented in Chapter 4, the 3Ds (dilemma, development and disparity) are related to the engagement of

women in PDC, and imply that development is impacted by social impediments despite intensive interventions within a locality. Thus, a need for continuing questioning and reflecting on the kind of development approaches needed, and on mechanism of gender policy making and practice, is essential to ensure local ownership.

Generally the study leads to the conclusion that it is important to be more reflexive about the ontology of development. Persistent widening of development gaps between weak and strong women, mean that it is vital to address the immediate basic needs of more vulnerable women as well as engaging in empowerment programs. In a context of poverty, the state of apathy, hostility and passivity are often endured and power imbalances are likely to persist. Competition will persist for control and distribution of meagre resources, and the interests of the most marginalized people may need explicit protection. As such, an enduring and pervasive component of a gendered peace, is inclusivity which requires both transparency and a high level of commitment of all actors involved to end the protracted fragility of the most marginalized in Mindanao. Only in this way can future hostilities be avoided, or reduced.

Hence, I therefore conclude and suggest the following:

That, the concept of gendering has to consider the biological capacity, socio-economic impact and distinct quality of both sexes, as vital for analysis in gender relations and changing society.

That, the theory of intersectionality can enrich our analysis, since it considers other axes of oppression, including stereotyped and constructed differences of cultural identity and religion, all found to be relevant to gendering peacebuilding among Maranao Muslims.

That gendering development can be a means of bringing material relief, yet can also be manipulative and produce its own social impediments to peaceful change. The modernization and demographic landscape have also contributed to social changes in relation to both agency and structures.

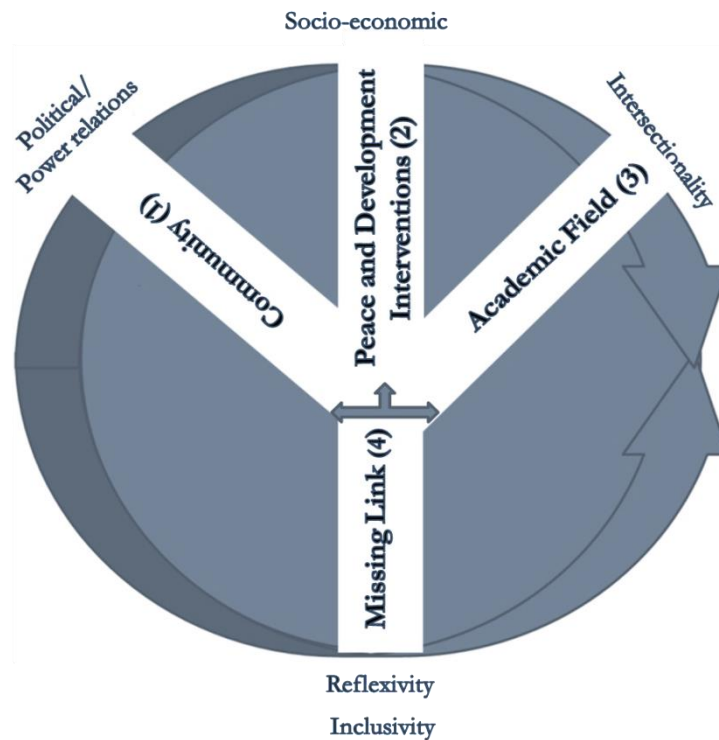
That gendered peacebuilding would require a more inclusive approach, and is not a piecemeal approach to intervention, showcasing the most 'successful' interventions. There should be a more integrated and holistic approach to development interventions.

That gendered peacebuilding should be contextual. Successful interventions should be defined in relation to an insider and not an outsider perspective. A gendered peacebuilding approach needs to dig deeper into the dynamics and to reflexively learn from experiences, perceptions and situations of actors in the community so that more co-equal relations could be constructed in future among WO+MEN, and even children.

Lastly, I finally find I have joined the bandwagon of those who favour gender analysis for understanding both women and men's local development issues. Although I was quite reluctant to adopt this approach at first, since much gender analysis still talks mainly about women, rather than about women and men. However to discern reasons for imbalances in power relations, and other emerging dimensions of inequality within Mindanao, a gender analysis has proven useful. It

has helped to identify women’s local institutions as a vital component of wider development and peacebuilding processes. A gender analysis has also helped address what tangible opportunities there might be for women in future.

Finally, we may continually challenge and explore the missing link, as the foundation of peace and conflict study towards pragmatic gendered, inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding interventions. A critical mind and proactive role on the normative peace structure to somewhat significant in the lives of the marginalized community. Not as adaptive but integrative mechanism, somewhat rethinking the peace symbol model, into an upward position?



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# Appendices

## *Appendix 1: Sample of interview guide*

Research title: Engendering Peace and Development in the Land of Promise: The Maranao women experiences and perceptions in establishing a peace and development community

### *I. Background of key respondents*

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Religion: \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnic affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_ Status: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Children: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Highest educational attainment: ( ) English \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Arabic \_\_\_\_\_  
 Place of origin: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of years in the PDC: \_\_\_\_\_ Position in the PDC: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Involvement in PDC: \_\_\_\_\_

### *II. Key questions:*

1. What are the experiences and perception of women in Muntay's peace and development program? How have women's experiences differ? Ano ang mga napagdaanan at masasabi ng kababaihan sa programang pangkapayapaan and pangkaunlaran? Paano nagkakaiba ang kababaihan?

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2. How do Maranao women understood their 'role and identity' in peacebuilding program and establishment of PDC? Ano ang pagkaintindi ng kababaihang Maranao sa kanilang tungkulin sa programang pangkapayapaan at pag tayo ng isang mapayapa at maunlad na pamayanan?

- 2.1. How is the role of women understood in 'peace and development advocacy signage' as symbol of peaceful and developed community?



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- 2.2. How women do understand their 'culture and religious identity' in peacebuilding and establishing PDC?

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3. What lessons can this study draw about gendered power relations in the PDC peacebuilding program, including with local agencies and international donors?

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Appendix 2: Copy of attendance and background of key informants and participants

A. Copy of attendance of the key informants

ISS  
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*Creating*

**Research**  
Title: (En) gendering Peace and Development in the Land of Promise: The experiences and perceptions of Maranao women in PDC peacebuilding program, Mindanao, Philippines  
Date: August 2014  
Place: Barangay Muntay, Kolombagan Lanao del Norte

**Activity**

A. Key Informant (s)

| Name                    | Age | Sex    | Religion | Ethnic Affiliation | Status  | No. of Children | Highest Educat. Attainment  | Involvement in Peacebuilding (PDC)                                      | Signature          |
|-------------------------|-----|--------|----------|--------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1. Githenor M. Caris    | 25  | Female | Islam    | Meranao            | Married | 4               | Highschool Graduate         | participant   | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| 2. Soraida M. Caris     | 29  | Female | Islam    | Meranao            | Single  | None            | College - Arabic level      | madaris teacher   | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| 3. Norminah A. Abubakar | 52  | Female | Islam    | Meranao            | Married | 3               | College and Arabic Graduate | madaris teacher   | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| 4. CAIRON C. ODAY       | 38  | Female | Islam    | Meranao            | Single  | None            | College Graduate            | MSU member  | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| 5. Bedonie Cantongan    | 60  | Female | Islam    | Meranao            | Single  | 4               | Arabic level                | participant   | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| 7. Pacina M. Mucha      | 30  | Female | Islam    | Meranao            | Married | 2               | college graduate            | member  | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| 8. Aisah Biro Batingolo | 56  | Female | Islam    | Meranao            | Married | 6               | Arabic level                | multi-birad member of the organization, Ustatha, former municipal mayor | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| 9.                      |     |        |          |                    |         |                 |                             |   |                    |

August 1 2014 (Women in PDC Muntay) Key informant No. \_\_\_\_\_ 1

B. Copy of the attendance of the FGD participants

ISS  
International  
Institute of Social Studies  
*Creating*

Research Title: (En) gendering Peace and Development in the Land of Promise: An exploratory study on Maranao Women's Engagement in PDC Peacebuilding program, Mindanao Philippines  
Activity: Focus Group Discussion  
Venue: Brgy. Muntay, Kolombagan, LAN  
Date: August 12, 2014

Attendance Sheet

| Name                   | Status | Age | Religion | Ethnic Affiliation | Current Position    | Role in the Community | Signature          |
|------------------------|--------|-----|----------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| ELVIE M. ABANG         | M      | 54  | Catholic | Cebuano            | BHW                 | Community Volunteer   | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| JOCelyn L. BONGGOL     | M      | 47  | R.C.     | Cebuano            | Community Organizer | Community Volunteer   | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| Rosalie L. Manisan     | M      | 44  | R.C.     | Cebuano            | Member, MUFA        | Women's MEMBER        | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| alma P. weica          | M      | 47  |          | Cebuano            |                     | MUFA                  | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| JOY ANN G. GRENTH      | single | 31  | R.C.     | Cebuano            | PROG. KAG.          | PROG, KAG.            | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| Virginia R. Montefalco | M      | 52  | R.C.     | Cebuano            |                     | women Mayor           | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| CAIRON ODAY            | F      | 38  | Islam    | Meranao            | Self-employed       | PSA                   |                    |

C. Informal talk with the some members of academe and women's NGO, such as:

- 3 Professors, Faculty members of College of Public Affairs, Mindanao State University
- Member and former project officer of Al-Mujadillah Development Foundation Inc. based in Marawi City, Mindanao Region
- Member and former Project officer of Christian Women NGO based in Cebu City, Visayas Region

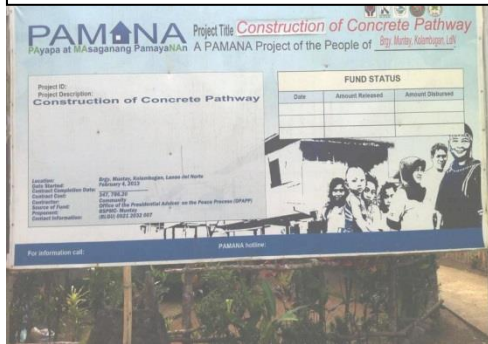
*Appendix 3: Glimpse of Barangay Muntay, a PDC Community!*



PDC Signage depicting women and children



Office of the *Barangay* Local Government Unit (BLGU) in *Barangay* Muntay, Kolambagan, Lanao del Norte, Mindanao , Philippines



*Maranao Village*: The colourful buntings known for Maranao motif, use for important occasions, such as, welcoming pilgrims, wedding, graduation in Madrasah (Arabic school), enthronement ceremony, etc.



The picture shows the Primary School of the *Barangay*. The concrete colored green fence is a school project from the donations of residents in the *Barangay* like the MNLFC Chairperson.

Key informant no. 1

*Mayora*: She was a former Municipal Mayor, an Ustadja (an arabic learned), known for her expertise in tracing genealogy in Maranao royalty, She is a 'Bae-labi- of Cablangan'- a highest rank Maranao royalty in one province. She is the 2<sup>nd</sup> d wife of former MNLF commander.

As wife of commander, they are responsible in preparing food; serve the food wherever the troops are. They are also responsible for securing medical team of the victims of war.

In the establishment of successful PDC, she cited 4 key players that have complementary roles in building community. These are the leader, spiritual group, the rich and the poor. They have social obligations, moral and ethical standards, complementary and reciprocity task in nurturing a community. These are "old folk's litany" as she said as to be considered in policy making and providing development services.

Never in her life to neither lead a Municipality nor take any positioned in the community, as she described herself as "shy, submissive wife", despite of privileges that she has. "It was a big tasked to be a Mayor" she said. She was under estimated and perceived to be a decoy of her husband, who can't run anymore as he served 9 years of Mayor, not by their choice but for the people as they said. The picture on the right was the proclamation of the elected candidates by commission on election officer, where she was elected as Mayor in in 2010 Elections.

When asked on how she understood the role of Maranao women in the PDC. She said it was initiated by men but sustained by women. Men are usually responsible for the welfare of the society, while a woman has to take part in pursuing the goal for development. However, the changing society and the diminishing values have caused the terrain of social change.

The men participated in policy and decision making in the case of MNLF peace agreement but in the long run of peace-making, they are invisible. Some men left in the home. "The lucky ones", for Madam Aisah, "are those who earned positions, have knowledge and skills valued in mainstream society. Still the majority she things are former combatants and farmer, who remain uprooted in their home, and can only hope to seek greener pastures for their children". Now, she feels, women are more recognized and visibly involved in social and political engagement.

The role of women she sees as about finding solutions and making sure that a fair share is provided for everyone. The women have the traits of endurance and perseverance. For her, women are more capable of providing economic sustenance in the family, even though this is supposed to be a duty of men.



*Continuation of the interview with Mayora.*

*Photo:* the photo is the typical Maranao royal enthronement. In the center is the husband of Mayora, a former MNLF commander, crowned as Sulutan, the highest rank among men royalty and his side is the Bae-a-Labi as woman counterpart. She came from other family but close relative. This is to show equal power relations among kinship on the royal house. Ustadja was also crowned as Bae-labi but in separate location based on their place of origin. Sultan Abdulaziz, the name of his husband, received various recognitions from media, NGO, local and international citation as he showed high degree of dedication and commitment in peacebuilding and service to his community and its people.



This is because more women are educated, and education is a very important factor in power relations and decision making. It is a 'duty for every Muslim, to seek knowledge from womb to tomb'. Here she quotes the *Sunnab*<sup>13</sup> of Prophet Mohammad.

She said that neither right of women nor participation of women is an issue here because everyone has given the freedom and freewill to do what she or he has to do. What is an issue is a power relations within the government system, where the actions of women are viewed as based on whims and desires, viewed differently from within the local community. Those women who endured the challenge and stood up for their opportunities she considers lucky, and also those women who produce men of understanding, a faithful servant, who knows his rights and obligations towards women. "What we need", she says, "is to be more compassionate and be aware of our own rights and also the rights of others. This should produce a win-win situation and dialogue when things go wrong".

The issue she emphasizes is the wrong and corrupt system of government and faulty mechanisms for administration. She says that "We allowed it to happen. It became a bad habit and a spoiled system embedded in the society and influencing leadership. For example the poor and corrupt political system denies the right of citizens to access basic services, including social services. In my husband leadership and my experienced as Municipal Mayor, even, you give all your time and resources for public service, at the end of the day, people use to be served, than serving". She gives specific examples of elections in the country where people are used to selling their votes rather than choosing a good leader of their own free will. People used the easy money, but there is no lasting relief. The most difficult times of being politician is having the spoils system of politicking. She concludes: "Making a difference is painful and too high an ideal. But you still have to stand up, and hope for the future".

Meeting dates: August 18, 23 and 26, 2014 in Barangay, Muntay, Kolambugan Lanao del Norte and Iligan City

<sup>13</sup> *Sunnab* is the saying and teaching of the last prophet in Islam, Mohammad.

*Key informant no. 2*

*Hadja 'Bedo'*: A divorcee for more than 15 years, still maintain a civil relationship with her relative husband. She has 4 children and proud grandma for 9 grandchildren. The most heroine peace settlement that she remembered in the locality is “seating on top of the jeepney with wide arms while going to relatives who has afflicted with disputes and family feud with other relatives”.

“In settling rido (Family feud), there should be a mediator, from a royal family, who can provide not only his/her mediation skills but also share on the agreed terms in settling the feud. Usually it is settled by offering blood money, sometimes in a form of intermarriage”.

*Key informant no. 3*

*Madam Cora*: She is a retired midwife in the Barangay. She was actively involved in peace and health program in the PDC. She was involved in counselling, mediation aside from her primary role of ‘taking care of the mothers and their children’. She was like a Mother of the PDC. She was loved by the Maranao women.



Her experienced in the PDC extremely made her busier. She was able to travel to many cities in Mindanao just to attend health and PDC concerns sponsored by donor assistance. She learnt a lot of things aside from being midwife, as health worker in the *barangay*. She met Muslim women in different tribes and from other provinces. She used to be called ‘doctor’ as she recalled. Accepting patients from other PDC, for her, “there’s no boundary in serving mankind, be it old, young, rich, poor, Muslim or Christian”.

“The declaration of their community as PDC by the MNLF helped in the augmentation of basic services in the *barangay* and established good relations between the Muslim and Christian constituents”.

She expressed that women of today are empowered and actively engaged in peace building. There are regular programs for women under GAD development fund in the *Barangay*. In addition, she perceived that women in their *Barangay* are working due to poor income of the family. There are more opportunities than men.

*Key informant no. 4*

*Ms. Rasmia:* She is a graduate of agriculture business management and worked as community organizer in NGO for 4 years. She is actively involved in culture of peace advocacy and women's organizing. Recently, she resigned with her work and preferred to be a full-pledge housewife to care of her 2 kids. She is now assisting the Bangsamoro grassroots in the province on the realization of the recently signed peace agreement between the MILF and Philippine government.



In her own reflection, saying: “I questioned why young Maranao Muslim women did not wear veil. I even criticize them, until I moved in the town for my high school days. I need to remove my veil to have a friend and to belong with the group. I realized that I was deprived in my own land and deprived to be a Muslim woman. The peacebuilding program gives us the opportunity to be prioritized, the opportunity and recognition. Before, it's hard to interact with Christians, I'm sure they felt the same. There was always anonymity between groups”.

“As a Maranao, we are affected the shadow of our constructed and distorted history. Our ancestors who fought to protect our ancestral lands against the colonizers became an enemy. They became marginalized in their owned land. These are the reasons why the protracted conflict continued in Mindanao. It was reinforced with poverty, poor education and poor governance. There was a strong manipulative political force that controlled and troubled the peace situation and development in Mindanao. Despite of these challenges, the equal endurance of peace building from religious sector and NGO works in countering the conflict”, she is active in the NGO on culture of peace programs.

In her views, the position and high status of women in the local, national or donor agency helped in giving priority the women sector. There is also increasing number of young women who is working in grassroots organizing. In this way, “the participation of women is highly ensured in development programs and the power sharing is exercised based on the position held”. (Interview conducted on August 10, 2014 at Barangay Poblacion, Maigo Lanao del Norte).



*Aleema:* A teacher both in Madrasah and in secular school with Islamic Values Integration. She is a registered teacher of Philippine regulatory commission. She finished her Arabic education degree on Islamic Jurisprudence in Saudi Arabia. She lives in Makka, Saudi Arabia for more than 10 years.

My interview with her is enriched with her Islamic background. She said it has been her advocacy to judge the Muslim based on the scripture not on dominant views and claiming to be Muslims like Maranao who did not practice Islam. She said she is always confronted with the issue of women and Islam. There is a knowledge gap between the reality and the truth. She started saying that Muslim woman has a high respect and status in Islam, quoting verses in the Qur'an: "O mankind we created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of god is (he who is) the most righteous of you and god has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things" (Qur'an 49:13). She said that "the problem is the ignorance and lack of awareness of Maranao on their role, of both the spouse and the husband, which is practiced in the everyday. If only men are aware of his responsibility as Muslim in the context of Islam, woman will be truly fortunate".

She observed that the situation now is more women are educated than men, more women earning than men. These situations affect the family especially the decision making. In Islam, it is the obligation of man to provide her family, to ensure well-being of his family. He has no right to get the dowry or wealth of her wife, unless the woman voluntarily shared. For this reason, man is given the authority over her family. But the reality informed us on the incapacity and inadequacy of men. This is where the woman forced to work and has to take part in economic being of the family. For this reason, the woman has to play a bigger role in decision making since she has the biggest share in the family, which is supposed to the role of men. The level of education and status of women in the community are significant in decision making and power relations. She said, "Every individual, man or woman is obligatory to seek knowledge from womb to tomb" as what the Sunnah of Prophet Mohammad.

For her, the biggest challenge is the external factors. It is more difficult, from the outsider criticisms, which are based on cultural practices, extremism and dominant views. In the household of Maranao, there is a define role of every member. Man as provider; the woman as safekeeping, the girls and the boys has to take part in the household chores—each member has tasked to do, either one or two, for the cooking, washing, sweeping, fetching water, etc. but due modernity, children are more pampered and only task to finish their education. The modern, conservative and poor Maranao family is greatly influenced the modernization. Today, the social relationship is standardized with dominant views and dominates the relationship. There is a diminishing value of respect and cohesiveness in the community. Everyone is competing with the material things, even each member of the family.

She said that is very important to continue emulating the principle and values of family, and the role of woman play a big role. This has to be recognized and be known as to maintain the cohesiveness in the family and the community at large. She shared a story during the time of Prophet Mohammad.

*"A man asked the Prophet, who among the people is the most worthy of his companionship. Your mother answered by the Prophet. Who's next? Your Mother, answered again by the Prophet. Who is next? Your Mother, answered again for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> time and then your Father. That is why I said, as she said. "Woman is the most loved and respected in Islam, because our heaven lies under the feet of our mother. All must be aware and reeducate on our role".*

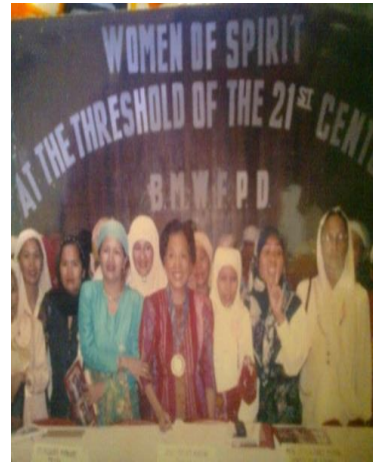
Key informant no. 6

*Cai*: a graduate of Nursing. She represented the MNLF-Bangsamoro women from Lanao del Norte. She is an active peace and development advocate. She attended numerous conferences and peacebuilding seminars for women empowerment.

When she asked about her experience in PDC? She said it gave her high level of confidence in giving her opinion and respected in the community. As the youngest and the only single among the PDA, she always keeps quiet. However, as the oldest in the family, she has always the final say in the affairs in the family.

“The PDC programme gave us the opportunity to be more visible. There are lot of women working with us, from local and donor agencies. That is why it is easy for us to share and talk. As PDA, I became a facilitator of bringing the programs in the community, basically more on capability training. It is not adequate. We are lucky, that we are the priority of the PDC programme. They even give us capital for small generating project to compensate our peace advocacy work. However, the majority of the community is poor. The community needs a stable and sustainable development type of interventions. There is a need a more concrete intervention that will sustain the PDC”.

“The programme has ended, we became empowered as they said in a way that we became more visible in peacemaking, but our people need more than empowerment. It should address the socio-economic needs of the people. As a woman, as a PDA, I am committed to endure the peace work”.



Key informant no. 7

Sittie Nor : She has four kids at the age of 25. Their family has a very small business, her husband drives ‘tricycle’ – a public motor vehicle.

“For my observation, the PDC contributed the recognitions of Muslims. I learned skills such as handloom weaving, cooking and enhanced our native delicacies. As for my role, I have to work and help my husband in raising our child. We have small business, we are helping each other”.

“In our community, more women are working. Men are dependent for fishing. For Maranao men since they uprooted in their native place because of poor governance and conflict, they helped their wife. You can see a lot of Maranao men driving motor to earn income, they used to do farming. But for those who don’t have skill and opportunity, they helped in the house. It is ok for me if my husband will stay at home and do house-keeping, than, be influenced by drug addiction. Although, there are case of drug pushing for easy money especially other men”.

“As far as I know, there is no violence in Maranao Society. My husband never use force on me, when we have fight, he went to his parents, taking his favourite son, and blackmailed me for divorce or by marrying other. One time, he was so upset of not preparing food for him. But, we are used to it. I am busier than Him; we have small business, with 3 kids. He helped me in the house, actually, it is because of his *Maratabat* and I also have mine”.

“Our *Maratabat* can be good and bad. It is good when you used your pride and honor to have a good life, Bad when you used to defend the wrong acts”.

*Key informant no. 8 (informal talk with male resident)*

*Basber:* He has a son. He supports his wife in household chores. They have a very small store in the house. Their house is located near the national highway; they have a good place for 'bystanders' with the bamboo bench and the canopy of the mango tree. Some of the men in the community usually stay to play chessboard.

While waiting for my contact, I have the opportunity to open a conversation. There on, I asked how he perceived the men in the PDC. *'miyakala so awida akal imanto, mas tijomo o mama so gabel sa walay, kagiya daa mapengelebakan sa siyudad ago sa ingud. So mga datu na mas kurang sa suport. So mga taw na di iran dii pesaan so boto iran. So ped a mga mama, na miyamangped sa di mapiya a galebek datar o kapesa sa drug'*. The society is problematic, men preferred to do housework than look for job, maybe because Muslim men has very limited opportunity working in the city and no job opportunity. The leader has no political will and support to his constituents. The people also sold their vote during election. The worst is that, other men, engaged in drug syndicate just to earn money, a pride, because their wife are more productive than them.

*Appendix 5: Documentation of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Activity*



The FGD was conducted on August 12, 2014, held at the nursery and fisher folk center funded by ACT for Peace Programme in coordination with the former *Barangay* Secretary, who has been involved in PDC peace programme. She is also a member of peace and development advocate (PDA) in the PDC.

After the formal preliminaries and introduction of the research study, I started the discussion about their general assessment of the PDC to attune my research. According to them, the PDC programme helped improve the physical conditions of the community and gained recognition from various local and donor agencies.

Thereafter, I started on the focus question: The highlights as follows for first research question:

*FGD #1: Experiences and perceptions of women in PDC*

-They described woman as 'mother of mercy', who will sacrifice and endure hardships for the welfare of the family. They will do everything to earn for living and guide their children. However, the poor conditions and poor education painstakingly respond to cater the needs of the family.

-The women in our *barangay* are very active than men, it is visible during assembly meeting and communal work such as cleanliness of the *barangay*. Women are always tasked for the implementation of development program. In our fisherfolk association, there are more women members than men (36 Women, 30 men), women engage fish vending. Women are hardworking than men in our *barangay*.

-The women are working, because men have no work. Women have no time in guiding their children, one of the reasons why children lack discipline and easily sway with bad peers and societal problem e.g. drugs, early marriage.

-Men in the community usually do the work of women. The implication is that men depended on women. It was asked if it has impact on relations like male ego dominance and domestic violence. Very few report, it usually happened especially when men are drunk. But in the community, there is a strong program on VAWC. For Maranao participant, she cannot remember of any domestic violence. They said, they are some rumors that young husband engaged in illegal gambling and drug cartel for easy money, not to depend to their professional wife.

*FGD # 2: Role of women as understood in PDC signage and how they understand their identity in culture and religious context in establishing PDC.*

-We have not seen any issue, but, women are always present in peace building. We are happy that we are given great importance, compare before. Today, the GAD programme provides awareness and social activities for women.

Continuation:

-Poverty is one of the major reasons, why some members are sceptic on development programs. It also the reason why some members chose to be isolated, withdraw from the larger society, being apathy and hopeless.

-Our Muslim sisters are stronger in terms of mutuality and giving support to each other. They are more privilege than us. A Maranao participant replied that being a Muslim is a privilege, maybe because of our strong cohesion. Outside the PDCs, some Christians are still afraid of us, and hesitant to us, maybe because of politics and problems of the past.

-At the present time, we have not heard any domestic violence, because of the active awareness on VAWC and womens' advocacy. It only happened when man is influenced by alcohol and drug.

FGD # 3: Women's perceptions on power relations in the PDC peacebuilding program interventions of local and donor actors.

-At present, the opportunity given to women was very significant. The level of respect for women is established in the PDC. The women are a symbol of respect and understanding.

Power relations in the PDC depend on the degree of commitment of the actors in peacebuilding. However, there are certain times that the ego of man blocked in giving opportunity for women. Hence, the status and positions of women in development agencies give us more priority.

Women are more trustworthy, they are more persevering and sincere in accomplishing tasked. What has to be learned in PDCs is the engagement of women in defining, implementing and sustaining the kind of interventions. Although in the inception stage of interventions, all forms of assistance is imperative.

*Appendix 6: The Peace and Development Community Concept: A Peacebuilding donor interventions of the Government of the Philippines and United Nations Multi Donor Programme (GPH-UNMDP).*

Peace and Development Community (PDC) is a former warzone and war-affected community that likely transcends into a more peaceful and progressive community. PDC refers to a village, *barangay* or small community, predominantly occupied by the families of MNLF. *Barangay* is the basic political unit in the Philippines. The criteria in selecting PDC were as follows: A PDC may consist of a cluster of adjacent *barangays*, or a *barangay* and adjacent sitios where a large majority of combatants and their families reside. The target community must be reasonably accessible and through its leadership must show willingness and initiative to transform itself into PDC through active mobilization and voluntary contribution of time and resources. The PDCs are selected by the MNLF partners who are committed to support their development as fully functional PDC (UNMDP, 2000).

The success of PDC is evaluated and assessed based on the formulated peace and development indicators. The phases of development of PDCs explained as follows: The Phase I is *Confidence Building*. This is the period when community development facilitators enters the MNLF community to make the initial contact and provides relief and emergency assistance. This phase helped the community in identifying its resources, collective strengths and weaknesses. This is also the phase where the community was given ample time and opportunity to identify qualified community development managers and potential peace and development advocates. Phase II is *Capacity Building*. This is the planning and implementation phase where peace and development advocates and development managers and members underwent series of capability activities to enhance the capabilities of the organization to undertake collective action and responses to the challenges faced by the community. Phase III is the *Institutional Building/strengthening/consolidation phase*. This is the period where the community assessed and learned from its experiences and consolidated their learning. It is on this phase where they realized their own power in controlling and redirecting their lives, and in enhancing their indigenous knowledge and values and moved forward towards ensuring that organization developed the means and capabilities to sustain its organization and operations. And the last phase, *Sustainability Building or Phase-out stage*. This is the phase where organization was strengthened and trained towards more self-reliance and autonomy. This is now the phase where the organization can now advance its cause with minimal organizing and technical assistance from an external development facilitator. It is also the phase that organizations was already capably of extending support to neighbouring PDCs in the area (UNMDP, 2000).

The PDC is built upon the 1996 peace agreement in Southern Philippines. It has also marked a new development frontier from international donor assistance. The United Nations agencies extended assistance to the MNLF through the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD). The phase 1 of the donor assistance was anchored initially under the tripartite policy framework of the 'SPCPD-NEDA and UN Multi Donor Programme (UNMDP)'<sup>14</sup> as early in 1997,

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<sup>14</sup> *SPCPD-NEDA-UNMDP* is the tripartite peacebuilding programme agreements in Southern Philippines. SPCPD represents the MNLF, NEDA represents the Government

and it was extended to until 2010. The Phase 2 to Phase 4 programme was implemented under the partnership programme of GPH-UNMDP.

The table below shows the list of PDCs in the Province of Lanao del Norte and the status vis-a-vi on the development indicators of the PDCs.

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of the Philippines, and UNMDP represents the UN multilateral interventions. This is the preliminary phase of the peace and development initiatives in Southern Philippines. The subsequent programme was merged between the Government of the Philippines and UNMDP.

PDC Status visa-vi Development Phases of PDC in Province of Lanao del Norte (As of March 08, 2002)

| Name of PDC       | Municipality/City | DEVELOPMENT PHASES OF PDCs |  |  |  |  |  |                                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|                   |                   | PHASE 1                    |  |  |  |  |  | PHASES 2                              |  |  |  |  |  | PHASE 3  |  |  |  |  |  | PHASE 4                                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                   |                   | Entry (6 mos.)             |  |  |  |  |  | Planning/ Implementation (6-24months) |  |  |  |  |  | Strengthening/ consolidation stage (3 – 5 years) |  |  |  |  |  | Sustainability/Phase-out (5 years onwards) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.Muntay          | Kolambugan        |                            |  |  |  |  |  |                                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.Pagayawan       | Bacol             |                            |  |  |  |  |  |                                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.Mandulog        | Iligan City       |                            |  |  |  |  |  |                                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4.Imburnal        | Matungao          |                            |  |  |  |  |  |                                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5.Big Banisilon   | Tangkal           |                            |  |  |  |  |  |                                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6.Small Banisilon | Tang              |                            |  |  |  |  |  |                                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7.Pindulunan      | Munai             |                            |  |  |  |  |  |                                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.Lumbac          | Magsays           |                            |  |  |  |  |  |                                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. Mentring       | Maigo             |                            |  |  |  |  |  |                                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10. Delabayan     | Kauswagan         |                            |  |  |  |  |  |                                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Note: Mark indicators conducted / implemented in each development phases of PDCs

Indicators of Development Phases of PDCs

| Phase 1 – entry   | Phase 2 – planning / implementation  | Phase 2 - strengthening / consolidation   | Sustainability / phase out   |
|---|--|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identified PO or care group</li> <li>2. Identified potential leaders</li> <li>3. With community declaration to engage in peace &amp; development</li> <li>4. With community profiles and plan</li> <li>5. LGU recognized and/or supported</li> <li>6. General awareness of the peace agreement / process</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formal and functional PO</li> <li>2. Community mobilized on specific community issues / concern, access to basic services</li> <li>3. Community plans integrated into local development plans</li> <li>4. With projects funded and implemented</li> <li>5. PDTF organized</li> <li>6. Consciousness raised / awareness on culture of peace</li> <li>7. Participation of basic sector (woman etc.)</li> <li>8. Linkage developed</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strong PO</li> <li>2. Community inter-intra networks established</li> <li>3. Integrated dev't program in place</li> <li>4. Basic services in place</li> <li>5. PDTF institutionalized</li> <li>6. Peace advocacy plan in place</li> <li>7. Increased stakeholders counterpart contribution</li> <li>8. Linkage developed</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Autonomous / self-reliant POs</li> <li>2. Capacity to assist other communities and advocate own experience for replication</li> <li>3. Community alliances built (pace – peace alliance for community empowerment)</li> <li>4. Pronounced lead-role of LGUs</li> <li>5. Community engaging other players</li> <li>6. Community engaging in local governance</li> <li>7. Peace advocacy plan adopted</li> </ol> |

Source: Accomplishment Report, ACT-Central Mindanao Special Operations Group in the “Strengthening the Foundations for Lasting Peace and Development in Southern Philippines” January –December 2002 (Minukon, NUNV-CDF, 2002).