Recognising Women's Participation in Sustainable and Lasting Peace

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

2010 marks the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security. It is also the year that the Philippines launched its National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 making it the second country in the Asia Pacific region to formalise its commitment to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 through a concrete national action plan. Despite progress achieved through the efforts made by government, civil societies and women's groups and communities that have been affected by war and armed conflict, it is a reality that community, local government, media and even some civil society groups remain unaware of UNSCR 1325, let alone UNSCR 1820, 1888 and 1889, the other relevant UN resolutions regarding women in peace building.

With financial support from ICCO, Isis International recently concluded a two year two country project entitled "Cultural Politics of Peace and Conflict: strategising and capacity building for the Philippines and Indonesia", June 2008-May 2010. The project aimed to help create an enabling environment where women can actively participate in and significantly contribute to peace and conflict resolution processes; and to build the capacities of women in peace building processes.

In the Philippines, Isis International worked with the grassroots organisation, Balay Rehabilitation Centre and their communities in Pikit, Cotobato. Overall results in the Philippine study reflected that gender was not an issue that was taken into consideration in the peace work whether it was being done by the local government or by civil society groups. At the same time media and communication work has not been maximised to mainstream gender in peace building nor has media reflected women's participation in peace building rather only as victims of conflict.

For instance, the day care teachers shared creativity in teaching the value and understanding of living in a tri-people (Christians, Muslims and Lumads or indigenous peoples) community that calls for acceptance despite

differences. The indigenous farmers also spoke of "Damayan" (helping each other) not only as a farming system but also a way of community life that exists during times of peace and conflict. Yet, none of this is projected in media nor is it known by local government or civil society groups working in the area of peace building. At the same time, neglecting participation of women including conducting any consultation with them in peace building results in a lack of or insufficient programmes and activities addressing women's issues and concerns during times of war and conflict.

On the other hand, women successfully expressed their experiences and concerns using the media and communication skills they have learned in the capacity building seminar conducted by the project in a multi-stakeholders dialogue. This dialogue included government, civil society and media representatives; such representatives for the first time heard these women and understood their issues. Civil society groups acknowledged that they had lacked the gender perspective in their work and local government acknowledged the value in including women representatives in the peace negotiation panels.

But peace and conflict issues in the Philippines are not confined in Mindanao alone. In Luzon and in the Visayas, women suffer the consequences brought about by armed encounters between the military/police and the New People's Army in a war that has, like the conflict in Mindanao, stretched on for decades. Women likewise become victims of clashes between various armed groups and private armies.

In these contexts, civil society groups and local governments recognise the lack of gender perspectives in various peacebuilding efforts. Women's issues are rarely prioritised in peace work and women are seldom allowed to participate in decision-making processes.

Isis International thus realised that with so much peace work being done by various groups, both among civil society and government, its value lies in bringing in the gender aspect of peace work and emphasising its value by looking at and working on peace building holistically. And to do this, Isis International realised it is essential to initially find out to what extent or if any at all do peace advocates include or consider women and gender in their peace work. Then, to expand its capacity building work among the grassroots women to empower them by equipping them with the tools so

that they may voice out their experiences, issues and ways they can contribute to both civil society, local government and media. And lastly, to promote the UNSCR 1325 as a valuable tool in ensuring women's participation in peace building as well as the protection of women and children in times of conflict and reconstruction.

The overall goal of this project is to strengthen the collaboration and build the capacity of peace advocates and women community leaders in the Philippines to implement and monitor UNSCR 1325 and National Action Plan. The specific objectives have been formulated as follows:

- To ensure that women and gender issues are given a profile in peace work through the use of UNSCR 1325 and Philippine National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 as important tools in peace building;

- To promote cooperation between strategic players from women's movements, peace movements and media to strengthen each other's efforts and engender mainstream approaches to peace building; and

- To build women's capacity and strengthen their skills in leadership, communication and advocacy towards actively participating and significantly contributing to peace building.

These goals and objectives will be achieved through three-interrelated phases of the project: the action-research phase, capacity building phase and multi-stakeholders' dialogue. The action-research phase aims to surface the current practices of and challenges faced by peace and development organisations in including gender as an important aspect of their peace work. The findings and analysis arrived at in the action research phase will contribute towards shaping the second phase of the project which is the capacity building phase intervention for peace and development organisations. For Local Government Units (LGUs), agencies and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) the intervention will focus on strengthening of knowledge, skills and attitude for Gender, Peace and Development Work. For community-based women's organisations the capacity building intervention will focus on Leadership and Communication Skills for Peace and Development Work. The third and final phase of the project aims to contribute to forming or strengthening sustainable partnerships for peace through a multi-stakeholder's dialogue that is also inclusive of media as a partner and stakeholder in engendering peace.

Gender, Conflict and Peace Situation in the Philippines

Armed Conflict in the Philippines has been on-going for several decades now. The Communist Party of the Philippines – National People's Army (CPP-NPA) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front – Bangsamoro Islamic Auxiliary Force (MILF-BIAF) are the two major groups that are at war with the State for a number of reasons: some fight for their rights to ancestral domain, clamour for access to basic rights and services, and the experience of poverty and marginalisation. In the different regions of the country - Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao - different groups figure into the war with the Philippine Government. The radical change that they aim towards has been espoused through a long history of armed struggle against centuries old problems of colonisation, poverty, inequality and marginalisation that to date is felt by marginalized sectors of society: peasants, workers, Moros, and indigenous people (IP) in different regions of the Philippines (Teodoro, 2007).

Gender and Armed Conflict
In 2007 UNICEF and Ibon Foundation conducted extensive research that looked into the situation of women and children who continue to be affected by war and conflict. Aside from being able to look into the situation at the grass-roots level, it was also able to provide a summary of the roots of war by looking into the history and the stand of the armed groups that figure into this war.

While various groups recognise long-standing issues of conflict and war in the Philippines, it is also important to note the gendered impact of war on women and children. Margallo in her 2005 report summarised the status of addressing gender issues in Conflict Situations in the Philippines. She notes how gender responsiveness continues to be a difficulty encountered by peace and development actors at the national and community levels despite achievements towards gender responsiveness. One of the problems she noted was that women are still not able to participate in decision making processes in the home, communities and formal governance. When women are able to

occupy leadership positions, it is largely due to the fact that they come from political families and dynasties. Evidence of this is the experience of the Philippines in having two women presidents: Cojuangco-Aquino and Macapagal-Arroyo. Leadership is still not seen as a role women should be playing because of traditional notions of femininity that is interweaved with cultural and religious beliefs that may vary per region.

The last two decades saw marked efforts at trying to address women's strengthened participation in leadership and governance. At the international level this is evidenced by the adoption of two key international conventions and resolutions such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1981) and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325, October 2000). These two resolutions aim to define the experience of discrimination in various contexts while being mindful of the crucial role women play in leadership. In the Philippines efforts to match international policy development for women's participation is evidenced by the adoption of the Women in Nation Building Act (RA 7192, 1992), Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710, 2009) and the Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (supported by EO 865, 2010).

However despite the existence of both international and national policies that seek to address women's strengthened participation (a mandate for 30% representation of women at different levels of governance); women continue to see low levels of representation in political leadership and governance. This situation was further affirmed by the experience shared by the women of Pikit, North Cotabato, southern most regions in the country where they continue to face traditional notions of gender that question women's participation in higher levels of governance. Women's capacity and strength in leading amidst a conflict situation is continuously questioned because of traditional notions of gender that see them as weak and unable to protect themselves.

In one of the interviews conducted by Isis International, Susan one of the research partners shared her observation that she as a woman leader is a minority in the village council, as she is one female out of 8 leaders in the council. Realising women's minimal representation in leadership, she attempts to call the attention of her Village Captain citing international and national policies that call for women's participation in various levels of governance. Her concern was met with indifference as he responded by saying, "is that still lacking until now?" This indifference may be a manifestation of a lack of sensitivity and awareness of gender issues in leadership. As various stakeholders look into statistics and ratios of women in leadership, we also need to be mindful of socio-cultural and religious beliefs surrounding women's participation, and ways this can be supported in everyday peace development work.

Health Impacts on Women
During conflict situations and as communities move out of their homes and into the evacuation centres, access to basic services such as maternal health care is still much of a challenge. The key informant interviewees shared stories of difficulties in child birth and nursing their new born in the evacuation centres as one of the most difficult experiences they encounter during conflict. These services have not improved despite the fact that this conflict situation has been going on for decades.

Gender based violence or violence against women continues to be an experience that is shared in whispers and kept a secret by women. In the informal discussions they can be a bit candid about the difficulties and intimate violence they encounter with their husbands. The inability to talk about the violence

they experience or observe from others may be drowned by the larger experience of conflict and war. The women welcome the discussions on violence against women, existing policies to address these, or even be able to acknowledge the experiences in a 'safe space'. There is a holistic viewing of violence and conflict that is external as well as in the home.

Isis Contribution to Gender and Peacebuilding Work
Interwoven in the gender and conflict situation of the Philippines is Isis International's commitment and contribution to looking into the achievements and challenges of inclusion of women in the peace process and development work. As a 37-year old feminist and development communications organisation that has committed itself to working towards empowering women and movements in the global South, Isis based in the Philippines for the past 15 years has worked with development organisations towards democratising governance and communications spaces as a way to strengthen women's participation within and outside of their communities. In the past four years, Isis International has worked steadily on women's participation in peacebuilding through various projects. Isis has been effective in making sure that women are included in a process that looks at holistic approaches towards peace and development work, by making sure that peace and development efforts are mindful of women's voice and contribution in various processes at the formal and informal level.

In addition, Isis launched its Activist School in 2009 to provide skills building capacity to women on the various use of community media technology and ICT to advance their advocacies and to strengthen their capacity to articulate their own issues through their own perspectives and experiences.

Gender, Peace and Development Work: A Literature Review

The current environment of gender, peace and development can be surfaced from written sources, current practice of advocates and lived realities of people in the community. A review of literature from the 1980s to the present has been done to have a better picture of framework building and policy development on gender

peace and development work. We have clustered these into four thematic areas: Policies and Framework at the International Level; Policies on Gender and Peace: The Philippine Experience; Media Accounts of Gender Issues within Conflict Situations; and Building Praxis on Gender, Peace and Development.

The year 2000 was significant for policy advocates on Gender, Peace and Development because it was in October 2000 that the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was passed and approved for implementation. The UNSCR 1325 is grounded on the framework of Women, Peace and Security that appreciates the particularity of women's experiences within conflict situations. It is aware of the fact of long standing issues of gender that contribute to the gendered impact of war and conflict on women and this is manifested in the way they experience sexual violence during these times and many of their issues are not given attention because of a lack of appreciation of gender as well as the urgency of war. Policy advocates however cannot deny the contribution of women in trying to rebuild peace – whether in small or in big ways. Given this appreciation of women's experience of conflict and their roles and participation in peacebuilding the UNSCR 1325 focuses on five thematic areas of work, and these are: prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery, and the normative. The aspect on prevention entails that a gender perspective be included in all aspects of conflict prevention strategies and activities. The aspect on women's participation seeks to look into promoting and supporting women's full and meaningful participation in the different aspects of peacebuilding work. The aspect of protection looks into ways to secure the over-all well-being and security of women and girls such as physical, mental, psychological and economic. The last aspect looks into women's equal access to relief and recovery programmes and services.

Ten years later after the adoption of the UNSCR 1325, articles have come out to look into the effectiveness of the implementation of the said resolution. Samuel contributes to that set of articles as she writes for DAWN Informs on her thoughts on the challenges faced in implementing the said resolution. The article points out that the implementation of Security Council resolutions has been weakened by lack of political will and monitoring bodies. This raises the culpability of member states of the UN who have failed to adopt and modify the resolution on varied levels. Despite her critique, she continues to challenge people in continuing to contribute to the realisation of the said resolution and put this in full implementation as a way to uphold human rights. In this article she also traces the roots of the resolution to other platform for actions and conventions. She names the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) as having contributed to action plans aimed at the increased participation of women in

conflict resolution. This to her has helped lead into the crafting of UNSCR 1325, which encourages member states to involve women in decision-making process, peace-building, and security concerns. Samuel also shares the development of other resolutions to augment and help strengthen UNSCR 1325. These are UNSCR 1820 that is aimed to address sexual violence in conflict and UNSCR 1888, adopted to reinforce the protection and prevention of sexual violence by assigning leaders and calling for coordination among stakeholders (Samuel, 2010).

Other articles that have contributed to understanding the historical development of the UNSCR 1325. The authors wrote a quick guide titled "CEDAW and Security Council resolution 1325: A Quick Guide". The book explains the importance and implications of both provisions—UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (UNSCR 1325) and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in assuring and promoting the protection of women during conflict and post-conflict situations. This also recommends for member states to implement both UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW in order to get better impact on protection of women from violence. The authors also highlighted the rational of the two resolutions by giving examples of vulnerabilities of women in conflict. They have cited the following incidents: 1) inequalities in the control and distribution of resources and aid can leave women and girls desperate to meet their needs and can thereby expose them to sexual exploitation and abuse in order to secure these resources; 2) settlements and camps may lack security to protect women and girls from armed forces and exploitation in host countries; and 3) health services for displaced persons are often inadequate to address women's and girls' particular needs. They also share their perspective of how the SC resolution 1325 intends to address these problems: 1) all parties to conflict fully respect international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls; and the 2) need to take special measures to ensure women's and girls' protection from all forms of gender-based violence. In strengthening the historical roots of the UNSCR 1325, they also share how earlier the CEDAW provides insight into the types of measures needed to protect against and address violence against women; and stresses the need to document the form of violations. Like most articles they also cite the basic provisions of the resolution, but the authors follow this with concrete applications of the UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW in different stages

of conflict and post-conflict. These are discussed throughout the chapter of the book. They enumerate some forms of effectively implementing these, like: organising for peace, rehabilitation, reintegration and reconstruction, importance of ensuring post-conflict political participation, justice and legislating equality, peacekeeping and peace support operations (Inglis, 2006).

In the article written by Bhagwan-Rolls she shares on the experience of women peacebuilder in the Pacific Conflict Zones. In the article for the Women In Action written in 2006 on "Women as Mediators in Pacific Conflict Zones," the author states of the hindrance of surfacing violence to the public: "Violence against women during conflicts in Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Bougainville are often undocumented making these violations invisible from the mainstream peace process" (Rolls, 2006)i. In this article, Rolls stresses not just the provisions of the resolution but also the need to account for the impact of conflict on women and girls (especially as the impact of violence against women and violation of the human rights of women in conflict situations are experienced by women of all ages). However, it should be recognised that women play a significant role in conflict resolution as well.

Manuals on policy planning have also been written to help in the crafting of country level policies or resolution. Valasek and Nelson pointed out that laws and policies, including UNSCR 1325 have been implemented; however, actions toward realisation of such policies are not fully taken. The authors establish the need for a plan of action in better analysing the situation, consult with stakeholders, and initiate strategic actions specifically for women, peace, and security. It would further increase comprehensiveness, coordination, awareness-raising, ownership, accountability, and monitoring and evaluation. In order to highlight the components of a plan of action, the authors share a definition from UNESCO of this as "a written document that describes the efforts and resources required in order to implement a goal, law, mandate, or policy within a specific period of time. It also states who the responsible actor is for the implementation of each activity. They also point out a common challenge in implementing women, peace, security plans and policies; an example of this is increasing funds to address gender issues that are less prioritised and the difficulty in securing enough funding. But the authors also point out basic needs to ensure the effective implementation of plans of action, and these are: 1) ensure political

will- lack of responsibility, enthusiasm and action, and understanding of the importance of gender issues or resistance; 2) Build capacity in developing plan of action (need for tools and guides); 3) strengthen coordination- different actors work at different levels; 4) institutionalizing monitoring and evaluation-overly bureaucratic, time-consuming, under-funded.

The guidebook also shares other recommendations to overcome the challenges in implementation: 1) include realistic, measurable objectives and start securing funding commitments in the early part of developing plan; 2) have adequate tools, training, toolkits, guidelines and other materials needed for capacity-building sessions; 3) increase task force for implementation and/or focal points for implementation of the WPS action plan; 4) include information which initiatives have been successful, need to be changed and which should be discontinued; include provisions for monitoring and evaluation. The guidebook also shares 6 basic steps in creating a holistic WPS Action Plans that cover building political will and commitment to the implementation, planning, organising and evaluations (Valasek, 2006).

Books that look into conceptual grounding also came out in the past decade. One of the books that contributed to this discussion is "The conceptual framework: security, peace, accountability and rights". This book cites reasons why UNSCR 1325 focuses on women and analysis of the policy framework related to peace and security. By using this toolkit, the authors hope for women and organisations to be provided with information and tools needed to enable their systematic inclusion in peace processes. It is also to draw women's own experience and expertise (Anderlini & El-Bushra, 2006). The authors also cite the needs to surface women's perspectives in this difficult conflict situation, one comes from an awareness of the invisibility and lack of voice of women because they are perceived to be low and undervalued and are viewed to be passive victims whereas they often initiate more peacemaking and peace-building efforts than any others; and women's organisations are often disconnected and have limited access to information that would help in developing effective approaches with other women's groups as well as to reach regional and international levels. The authors share that grounding in women, peace and security has a long-term aim at ensuring the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men; immediate term is focusing on the empowerment of women. There should be an approach to achieve both short and long-terms by the policy framework.

In this book the authors enumerate four inter-related elements in evolving peace and security framework: 1) human security (the centre of security concern); 2) conflict transformation, coming in the form of replacing unjust structures and policies that may worsen conflict); 3) humanitarian accountability, by receiving support from international community; 4) upholding women's rights in global policymaking (Anderlini & El-Bushra, 2006).

Policy Development on Gender and Peace: The Philippine Experience
Successful international policy development needs to be matched by national policy development that is grounded to the needs and situation of women. The 1990s saw the development of a number of policies for women to address issues of participation, development and addressing violence against women. This section of the current literature looks into policies that were developed in the last two decades.

Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, November 2010
A decade after the approval of the UNSCR 1325 the Philippines launched the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in November 2010, that is the first launch in Asia and 17th in the world. The basic components of the Philippine NAP covers an implementation plan for UNSCRs 1325 (women's participation in peace building) and 1820 (addressing sexual violence as a weapon of war). To contribute to awareness raising on the international resolutions and the Philippine NAP, the Women Engaged in Action 1325 Network produced information materials on the basic components of the plan with its purpose, outcomes and indicators, and ways to achieve these.

Purpose 1: Protection of women's rights and Prevention of violation of these rights in conflict and post-conflict situations. Outcome & indicators: decrease in number of violence against women, to be achieved in the following ways: a) develop, enact and implement policies; b) support programs of LGUs and CSOs in providing services for women and girl survivors of armed conflict; c) strengthen criminal justice system; d) conduct trainings, workshops on UNSCRs 1325, 1820, CEDAW, and other women, peace and security policies; e) sustain peace talks, work towards more gender-responsive peace agreements and strengthen implementation of peace agreement mechanisms.

Purpose 2: Empower women and ensure their active and meaningful participation in peace-building,

peacekeeping, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. Outcome and indicator for this purpose: increase in number of women representatives for active roles. Ways to achieve are as follows: a) develop non-discriminatory policies that address the situation of women in the security sector; b) involve women as stakeholders of programs; and c) increase number of women peace and women's rights advocates in peace bodies.

Purpose 3: Promotion and mainstreaming of gender perspective. The main outcome & indicator are gender-responsive and sensitive mechanisms. Ways to achieve this purpose are as follows: a) integrate gender perspective in National Peace Plan and others; b) mainstream NAP into national, regional, and local development plans; c) integrate peace, non-violence and gender education in formal and non-formal education; d) promote involvement of CSOs particularly peace and women's groups in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the NAP; and e) gender-responsive and culture-sensitive media.

Purpose 4: Capacity development and monitoring and reporting. The outcome and indicator of this capacity development purposes are evidences of NAP-influenced changes in policy, planning, and service delivery. The way to achieve this is through the establishment of a NAP monitoring, evaluation, and reporting system.

RA 9710: Magna Carta for Women, August 2009
Republic Act A 9710: An Act Providing for the Magna Carta of Women, "is a comprehensive women's human rights law that seeks to eliminate discrimination against women by recognizing, protecting, fulfilling and promoting the rights of Filipino women, especially those in the marginalized sectors" (Philippine Commission on Women, 2010). In its declaration of policy the MCW reiterates a recognition that the economic, political and socio-cultural realities affect women's current condition, the State affirms the role of women in nation building and ensures the substantive equality of women and men. It shall therefore promote empowerment of women and pursue equal opportunities for women and men and ensure equal access to resources and to development results and outcomes. The MCW has defined how it sees empowerment and discrimination and named who it considers women and marginalised sectors in need of specific interventions.

Shortly after its passage in 2009 the Philippine Commission on Women (formerly NCRFW)

published its Implementing Rules and Guidelines, attempting to cover basic provisions of the law and its implementing rules and regulations. Specific to its provisions for intervention for women in conflict affected areas it formulated Sec 5. (b) "Women shall have the right to protection and security in situations of armed conflict and militarization. Towards this end, they shall be protected from all forms of gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all forms of violence in situations of armed conflict. The State shall observe international standards, particularly International Humanitarian Laws, for the protection of civilian population in circumstances of emergency and armed conflict. It shall not force women, especially indigenous peoples, to abandon their lands, territories and means of subsistence, or relocate them in special centers for military purposes under any discriminatory condition" (PCW, 2010).

The MCW also has specific provisions for Women in Media under SEC. 12. "Non-discriminatory and Non-derogatory Portrayal of Women in Media and Film. The State shall formulate policies and programs for the advancement of women in collaboration with media-related organisations from the private sector. It shall likewise endeavor to raise the consciousness of the general public in recognizing the dignity of a woman, and the role and contribution of women in the family, community and the society through the strategic use of mass media"(PCW, 2010).

Finally the MCW also assigns, the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) formerly known as The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) will take overall charge to monitor and guide the implementation of the Act (PCW, 2010).

Republic Act No. 8505: "Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act of 1998"
The 10th Congress of the Philippines (1997), approved on 13 February 1998, Manila, Philippines Republic Act No. 8505: "Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act of 1998, purpose of which was to secure the rights of the victims from sexual violence especially in war conflict areas, proper and adequate actions must be taken for the victims to overcome their physical, emotional injuries, and trauma and the system of this service should be accessible by nation-wide (10th Congress of the Philippines, 1998).

This urges Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Justice

(DOJ), and a lead non-government organisation to establish in every province and city a rape crisis centre located in a government hospital or health clinic or in any other suitable place. They must provide victims with psychological counselling, medical and health services, and legal assistance (10th Congress of the Philippines, 1998).

Republic Act No. 8353: The Anti-Rape Law of 1997, 30 September 1997
The 10th Congress of the Philippines, 1997, approved on 30 September 1997, Republic Act No. 8353: "The Anti-Rape Law of 1997". One of the basic achievements recognised by many women's organisations in the Philippines is the recognition of rape as a crime against person. Congress has formulated the law to define its elements or the situations that classify a crime of rape; and enumerates circumstances that may be punishable by death. Rape is defined as a crime 1) By a man who shall have carnal knowledge of a woman under any of the following circumstances: a) Through force, threat, or intimidation; b) When the offended party is deprived of reason or otherwise unconscious; c) By means of fraudulent machination or grave abuse of authority; and d) When the offended party is under twelve (12) years of age…" and "2) By any person who, under any of the circumstances mentioned in paragraph 1 hereof, shall commit an act of sexual assault by inserting his penis into another person's mouth or anal orifice, or any instrument or object, into the genital or anal orifice of another person" (10th Congress, Philippines, 1997).

The law also had specific provisions on sexual violence occurring during times of conflict and violence. It recognised that war may rise to several serious problems even after the conflict has ended. This increases the incidents of sexual and gender-based violence against civilians. Thus, it is important to secure the rights and protect these victims from further violence (10th Congress, Philippines, 1997).
The law similar to UNSCR 1325 also recognises that "women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instil fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group" (10th Congress, Philippines, 1997).

Republic Act No. 8371: "The Indigenous Peoples Right Act of 1997"
President Ramos together with the 10th Congress of the Philippines, approved Republic Act No. 8371: "The Indigenous Peoples Right Act of 1997". The

said act contains provisions that ICC/ IP women shall enjoy land rights and opportunities with men in all spheres of life. It provides for her participation in the decision-making process in all levels as well, full access to education, maternal and child care, health, nutrition, housing services and training facilities" (Philippine Commission on Women, 2009).

Executive No. 273: "Approving and Adopting the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development, 1995 TO 2025," 8 September 1995
In September, 1995 President Ramos approved Executive No. 273: "Approving and Adopting the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development, for the period 1995 to 2025". The Executive Order as a successor plan upon expiration of "Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDPW) for 1989-1992" and passage of Republic Act No. 7192 also known as the "Women in Development and Nation-Building Act" on February 12, 1992 that will guide gender issues in development. This EO mandates that all government, public, and private agencies will ensure the full implementation of the policies/strategies and programs/projects outlined in the Plan; and to institutionalise Gender and Development (GAD) efforts in government by incorporating gender and development concerns. It likewise assigns the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), in coordination with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) to monitor the implementation and conduct the periodic assessment" (www.lawphil.net).

Republic Act No. 7192: "Women in Development and Nation Building Act ," 11 December 1991
Previous to the Ramos administration, President Aquino in 1992 has approved Republic Act No. 7192: "Women in Development and Nation Building Act"endorsed by the Congress of the Philippines on December 11, 1991 and finally approved by President Corazon C. Aquino on February 12, 1992. This law assigns the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) as responsible in providing funds to support programs and training for women for their participation as recipients in foreign aid, grants and loans. Moreover, women regardless of civil status must be given an equal chance to be admitted in all military schools such as AFP and PNP, as well as equal rights in entering contracts, trainings, and clubs (Congress of the Philippines and was approved by President Corazon C. Aquino on February 12, 1992).

It also mandated NEDA to ensure different government

departments to: 1) "formulate and prioritize rural or countryside development programs or projects, provide income and employment opportunities to women" ; 2) "Include an assessment of the impact and extent to which their programs and/or projects integrate women in the development process" ; 3) "Ensure the active participation of women and women's organisations by involving them in the planning, design, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation"; 4) "Collect sex-disaggregated data and include such data in its program/project paper, proposal or strategy"; 5) "Ensure that programs and/or projects are designed so that the percentage of women who receive assistance is approximately proportionate to either their traditional participation in the targeted activities or their proportion of the population, whichever is higher;" and 6) "Assist women in activities that are of critical significance to their self-reliance and development" (Congress of the Philippines and was approved by President Corazon C. Aquino on February 12, 1991).

Media Accounts of Gender Issues within Conflict Situations
Another area to look into in gender, peace and development is to look at how responsive media is in surfacing gender issues in conflict or how they also highlight or look into current participation of women. The related literature surfaced efforts to look into this within the Asia Pacific Region.

In 2006, during the beginnings of projects to strengthen gender analysis in conflict and use of community for peace building, Isis International shared its experience in capacity building through an article "Women Journalists Train for Peacebuilding" for Women In Action (2006). This article looks into the current situation of community radio specifically in a war-conflict area, Mindanao. It shares what the capacity building project would like to look into: 1) Evolve the reportage of peace efforts as news-worthy and promote responsible journalism that gives equal "billing" and attention to women; 2) Through skills training and the promotion of responsible journalism amongst community women media practitioners, usher in a situation where women's participation in peace processes and civil society is empowered; 3) Train community-based journalists adequate skills on radio production that will facilitate the development of radio clips in the promotion of cultural diversity and a culture of peace; 4) Introduce community radio as a medium with great potential in support of women's empowerment especially in areas of conflict; and 5)

Explore women's active participation and maximised utilisation of existing community radio stations and/or the creation of new women community radio stations as cooperative enterprises" (Women in Action, 2006).

Isis International through this one-year project urges for community radio to be popularised as a way to bring women voices together towards peace-building and to exchange information promoting inter-cultural understanding. It is also to develop skills of women in producing articles equipped with a "right" way to approach the conflict situations (Women in Action, 2006).

Shared much earlier in 2002, a book looks into "Media Power" as part of an assessment of the impact of armed conflict on women and roles they now take on in terms of peacebuilding. Chapter 8 (Media Power) of this book reveals how media is limited in coverage of women and is influencing people's perception on women especially those who are in war-conflict situations (Rehn, 2002).

A part of it also discusses how woman-journalists bring about different angles for news coverage which improves content and quality of news. One Filipino participant in a conference brought by International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) describes it as, "Men tend to concentrate on quotes from government officials and focus on conflicts, while women tend to look at the impact on the greatest number of people or sectors" (Rehn, 2002).

After enumerating ways media has been blind to the particular effects of war on women as cited in the experience of Rwanda, Philippines and Yugoslavia the author reiterates the "importance of media in community to give voice to those marginalized sectors to be heard and informed". Internet is also one of the rising technologies in empowering women, while radio is the most accessible medium globally. It names "the power of the media in warfare as formidable. It can be a mediator or an interpreter or even a facilitator of conflict, if only by editing away facts that do not fit the demands of air time or print space..." (Rehn, 2002).

The author continues to be reflective of efforts of media in how they portray women in conflict situations, she notes that there is "little change in the mainstream media; the perspectives on women are rarely nuanced, especially in conflict situations. When women appear, they are often portrayed as victims rather than as activists or analysts" (Rehn, 2002).

The author sees the need to put women into the picture – both as producers of media information and as subjects of it. Otherwise, women's role in peace-building will continue to be ignored, and the primary images we get from conflict zones will be ones of despair. It has specific calls for media and communication experts: 1) Increase donor resources and access for women to media and communications technology; 2) UN, government, private and independent media to provide public information and education; 3) Hate media, under any circumstances and particularly when used for direct and public incitement to commit crimes against women, to be prosecuted by national and international courts; 4) Donors and agencies to support the training of editors and journalists to eliminate gender bias in reporting; 5) The Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression of the Commission on Human Rights to carry out a study on gender, media and conflict (Rehn, 2002).

Building Praxis on Gender, Peace and Development

This section of the related literature shares efforts towards documenting practice on Gender, Peace and Development Work.

In doing so, researchers have tried to analyse the different situations of women within conflict. One specific paper looks into the situations of women in conflict, reasons why they become victims of war even if they are not directly involved in armed forces. Also, it emphasises that women are the most committed sector to peace-building. This further intends to modify current policies, which are vague to be achieved, and suggest future direction for policies to address gender inequality, and bring up issues relating to women (Pankhurst, 2000).

The author in this research is aware of the current perceptions on the role of men and women in war time that tends to cast men as the `doers' and women as passive, innocent, victims. She further notes that although women play a vital role in peacebuilding efforts, patriarchy continues to remain as a system and pillar of power then "women find their historical contribution marginalized in both official and popular accounts of war, and their freedoms in peacetime restricted or removed". She also notes women's vulnerability in time of conflict when women are often exposed to a high risk of rape and associated violence during and immediately after conflict; their health and other basic needs are often neglected in peace processes;

and they tend to bear the main burden for the care of survivors whether as adults or children (Pankhurst, 2000).

With this analysis of the situation of women in conflict situations the author suggests two major recommendations: 1) increase the representation of women in key decision-making bodies and institutions; 2) support to women as groups of individuals (rather than in organisations) is also a common strategy in trying to promote peace-building" (Pankhurst, 2000).

As for improvements on women and peace related policies, she has three ways to move forward better crafting and implementation of these policies: 1) avoid a gendered peace, that looks into having special policies for women which help them to improve their own situations, and which have interventions to respond to their specific needs and instead mainstream gender perspectives in all policy processes; 2) working with women as change agents in society, by providing support for women's organisations involved in peace-building, and increasing the presence of women, through education and training, in institutions undergoing reform, and increasing the number of women in decision-making positions; 3) working with men as change agents in society, by supporting men where they work as peace activists and potential role models and by re-training men in key institutions undergoing reform (especially in security)" (Pankhurst, 2000).

Articles from various fields for example in psychology have also sought to contribute in looking deeper into the experience of conflict, violence and the experience of exclusion as new frames for peacebuilding and feminist theory. The article "Political Violence as Moral Exclusion: Linking Peace Psychology to Feminist Critical Theory", explores what causes people to find violence acceptable and moral. The study is written in the United States context especially the terrorism against the United States. One of the main objectives of the study is to "to facilitate an appreciation of the socio-psychological and cultural processes that create and perpetuate political violence, an appreciation that shall be embedded in feminist critical theory" (Ofreneo, 2006).

By looking into the experience of the 9/11 bombing in the United States, the authors posit that violence is situated in a socio-cultural context. This means, "our subjective conceptions of which and when specific forms of violence are morally justified, even valued

as morally good, are co-determined by culture." This tendency is due to so-called, "moral exclusion" that a group of people in a society tend to perceive outsiders as "non-entities undeserving of fairness or resources." Moral exclusion allows people to accept violence as favourable just like the situation after the 9/11 attack when former U.S. president George W. Bush announced the intention to punish the terrorists or Iraq. However, both terrorists and counter-terrorists (United States.) believe that their actions and war are justified and allowed. Given this frame, violence becomes even normal (normative)—"accepted as just the way things are and remain unquestioned." And in this experience that the authors assert that both terrorist and counter-terrorist "accept their different political, religious, and cultural contexts and rationalisation to end global violence" (Ofreneo, 2006).

In the article on Women as Mediators in Pacific Conflict Zones, Sharon Bhagwan Rolls a feminist, member of Isis, and media practitioner in the Pacific, shares the history of women's agencies and their contribution in each Pacific Islands—Fiji, Bougainville, and the Solomon Islands. She notes that women are drawn into work for peace-building, and they are willing to commit to this work even if this means risking their lives. Despite the challenges, they were able to initiate the Women's Movement in each island. Women's involvement in conflict resolution is more visible and powerful than what people would ever know.

In this article she notes specific actions undertaken by women for peacebuilding work in the different Pacific Islands. In Fiji, the following activities were led by the National Council of Women: 1) a gathering for a peace and prayer vigil; 2) a multi-ethnic group of women, who held daily vigils, encouraged people to pray together for community's peace and unity; and 3) provided support for the family of the hostages; and initiated meetings with the security sector (military), discuss with the military commitments for peace and to respect human rights (Rolls, 2006).

Throughout the article she notes different efforts coming from the women in other islands of the Pacific. Their assistance range from the most immediate such as food assistance by the National Council of Women (NCW) to persuading military forces to lay down their arms (Solomon Islands Christian Association). Women for Peace (WFP) work voluntarily for peace by meeting militants, government and police, displaced families, hospital and through conference and live broadcast.

Even as she notes the efforts and achievements of women peacebuilders, she notes problems faced by women and organisations: 1) invisibility of women in the formal peace processes; 2) exclusion of women in official negotiation processes; 3) and ethnic violence where women have experienced displacement, rape, harassment, and economic hardships; 4) not many women take part in decision making bodies at district level or provincial level (Bougainville).

In light of this she has the following recommendations: 1) strengthen women's and peace networks at the regional level, which requires investment in capacity building; 2) provide more opportunity for women peace advocates to exchange ideas and lessons learned from their Pacific Island experiences is needed; and 3) use UNSCR 1325 as guide and motivation for these women.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As the Philippines is one of the first countries in Asia to launch a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in November 2010, the research and its findings will provide a timely assessment of current strategies and practices already employed by various groups at the same time being mindful of gaps and challenges experienced in engendering peace and development work. Although there is much to be acknowledged in policy development at the international and national levels with the adoption of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820; and the Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, peace and development stakeholders need to be mindful of challenges and achievements in recognising gender as an integral part of peace and development.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

The research looks into current practices for gender inclusion by peace and development organisations working in conflict areas in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The research wants to contribute to assessing the current capabilities and surface gaps in how peace and development stakeholders are able to contribute to an environment conducive for the effective implementation of the UNSCRs 1325 (October 2000) and the Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (November 2010).

A major component of the one-year project is the research phase, the main task of which is to surface current practices of and challenges faced by peace and development organisations in how they include gender issues and concerns in their work. Isis International

sought to achieve this task through the conduct of a focused group discussions (Regional Cheekah Sessions) among peace advocates in specified areas in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, representing various CSOs, LGUs (and agencies), and community based women's organisations. This survey will collect the cases of good practice in implementing UNSCR1325 as well as identify the gaps that may be partially addressed by the succeeding phase or be a guide in supporting the work of peace and development stakeholders.

The research phase of the project aims to respond to the following research question: How can various peace and development stakeholders effectively contribute to strengthening women's participation in peace and development work? What support is needed for CSOs to effectively contribute to the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 through the Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security?

In relation to the research questions, the following objectives have been crafted to help in surfacing the following:

- To assess the level of sensitivity of peace and development stakeholders in recognising and addressing gender issues within conflict situations
- To acknowledge ways and surface the challenges women face in contributing to peace and development work at various levels
- To surface urgent women's rights violations and ways these are being addressed by various stakeholders
- To acknowledge current practices of organisations in engendering peace work as well as to surface recommendations for strengthened partnership among peace and development stakeholders

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Cheekah Session was coined by the Isis International CPCP Philippine Project Team in 2008, as the method for data gathering during the feminist action research phase of the 2-year project. It was designed as several small group discussions that encourage informal flowing conversations with use of creative activities like clay-play and collage making among the research partners to surface their thoughts on women's participation, experiences of conflict, violence and peace. In its first run in January 2009, the research partners affirmed the space provided by the Cheekah to be a space that allowed them to speak freely about their thoughts, feelings and insights on their various roles in everyday community and

peacebuilding. They referred to these sessions as "emotional band-aid" that provides them the space to acknowledge their hurts and experience healing and affirmation within a safe space. This experience allowed us to reclaim the term chika which is a colloquial term for idle talk or gossip, and recognise Cheekah Sessions to be a safe space for women to share and acknowledge their experience.

For the project on Recognising Women's Participation in Sustainable and Lasting Peace, the Cheekah Session is being revived as discussion spaces for women and peace stakeholders representing: women community leaders, local government leaders, government representatives, Non Government Organisation (NGO) representatives and media practitioners. The one-day Regional (Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao) Cheekah Sessions are aimed to surface current practice, support mechanisms available to people, and challenges encountered. The focused group discussion has three thematic areas and uses the following creative methodologies:

Thematic Areas	Creative Methodologies	Guide Questions
The Experience of War and Violence and Its Effect on my Community	Conflict Tree, has long been used a tool for conflict analysis. For this research it has been used to look into the women's experience of conflict as well as mechanisms available to women for redress of grievances. Looking at the experience of conflict goes into the forms of violence experienced, roots of the conflict, and particular effects to the community. With an appreciation of gender as frame of understanding the experience of conflict it tries to surface particularity of women's experience of conflict.	- What are the forms of violence experienced by your community in the past 10 years? (branches) - What are the root causes? (roots) What are the effects of armed conflict/violence to your community? (green leaves) - In what ways are women affected by armed conflict/violence? Before it happens? During? After? (green fallen leaves) - What women's rights violations should be addressed when there is war, conflict and armed violence? (orange leaves) - What mechanisms (policies, structures, programs, etc) are available to women to protect and uphold their rights when there is war and armed violence? (clouds) - What challenges do women encounter in upholding and protecting their rights?(lightning)

Thematic Areas	Creative Methodologies	Guide Questions
Women's Participation in Gender and Peacebuilding Efforts	Women in the News, is Isis International's publication in 2007 of how women are portrayed in the Asia-Pacific Region. For the Regional Cheekah Sessions it is used as creative tool to surface spaces available for women to participate in peacebuilding. It looks into current contributions to address gender concerns, gendered peacebuilding, support mechanisms to strengthen participation and lastly problems encountered in participation.	- As a response to the problems raised in the discussion, what are the contributions of women in peacebuilding and addressing gender concerns? - What mechanisms are available to you in strengthening you gender and peacebuilding work? - What challenges do you encounter in gender and peacebuilding? How are you able to face and overcome these? - What spaces are available to women in peacebuilding? How are they able to participate and contribute to peacebuilding? - What support mechanisms are available to them in strengthening their participation - What challenges do they encounter? How are they able to overcome these challenges?

Thematic Areas	Creative Methodologies	Guide Questions
Women, Peace and Security at the International and National Level	As the research commits to principles of feminist research the Regional Cheekah Session also includes an input-discussion on women, peace and security at the international and national levels. In this session concepts of gender, conflict and peace are shared with the participants to help them understand the grounding of women, peace and security and succeedingly shares policy development on this at various levels. UNSCR 1325 and 1820 at the international level; and the Philippine National Action Plan as part of country initiatives to this.	- How do you think your organisation has contributed to gender and peacebuilding work? - What are aspects of this work that you need to strengthen? How can this be strengthened? - How are you supported by community based organisations, CSOs, and government in your gender and peacebuilding work? - What are aspects of this work that you need to strengthen? How can this be strengthened?

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The research is grounded on the understanding that the experience of armed conflict and violence in the Philippines is distinct in the different regions. As was noted in earlier sections of the introduction there are very different players in conflict in the various regions of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao; at times the government is at war with armed groups while in other situations there are also tribal and clan wars. Gendered analysis of conflict also offers another layer of appreciation of the sites of where conflict occurs and therefore perpetrators can have various faces in the forms of structural violence, authorities, community and even in the family. The research is thus grounded in the fact that effective policy development needs to take into account the particularity of the conditions where it will be implemented.

To understand the regional characteristic of conflict specific areas were chosen in the Philippines, Kalinga (Luzon), Samar (Visayas), and Maguindanao (Mindanao).   Purposive sampling was also done in getting 10-15 women working in various areas of gender peace and development. Participants who were chosen represented: LGUs, government agencies, community organisations, CSOs, and media representatives.

The Regional Cheekah Session, was coined by the Isis International CPCP Philippine Project Team in 2008, it is a method of data gathering used in the feminist action research. It is designed as focus group discussion that encourages flowing conversation and uses creative exercises to give voice and shape to the participants' responses. For this research, the Regional Cheekah Sessions had several thematic areas: women's experiences of conflict and violence; participation on gender, peace and developing work; theoretical and practical grounding of women, peace and security at various levels; and assessing organisational strengths and partnership for this work. Understanding all of these aspects in the different regions chosen will hopefully contribute to assessing and giving profile to gender, peace and development work in the Philippines. The research is the humble contribution of Isis International and Women Engaged in Action in 1325 (WEAct 1325), to an understanding of the current environment of gender, peace and development work where the Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security will be implemented. ◆

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Women Peacebuilders in Kalinga, Luzon

HISTORY OF CONFLICT AND PEACE IN KALINGA, LUZON

Kalinga is a northern province found in the Cordillera Mountain Range of Luzon, the biggest island of the Philippines. Originally part of the Mountain Province (RA 2772), Kalinga-Apayao was established as a separate province under RA 4695 and was eventually divided into two provinces, Kalinga and Apayao, under RA 7878 due to distinct cultural difference of settled tribes (Chan Robles Law, n.d.). Similar to provinces found in the mountainous region, Kalinga is home to indigenous tribes whose culture continues to flourish up to this date.

The Kalingan Tribe is known for their nobility and bravery. The word Kalinga originates from an indigenous word that translates to "headhunters" reflecting the aggressive and protective culture of the tribe (NCSB, 2010). The tribe uses tattoos known as batek to showcase the courage of tribal warriors and these serve as a status symbol among Kalingans (Salvador-Amores, 2002).

Being situated in one of the largest mountain ranges in the Philippines, Kalinga is blessed with abundant natural resources. Estimates of mineral deposits and lumber resources are high in the region and have attracted investors from the mining, logging and water industries. Government promotion has also contributed to the influx of private corporations in the area (Bans-Veridiano, 2011). The sudden intrusion of companies and the destructive development projects being established have led to sporadic uprisings organized by the Kalingan tribe during the Marcos Administration. This, in turn, was countered by political repression and increased militarisation in the region.

Several notable non-violent efforts were initiated by the Kalingan tribe to resist development aggression. Tapping indigenous mechanisms, Kalingan tribes forged bodongs or peace treaties with other Cordilleran tribes and sub-tribes to strengthen their protests for resistance (CPA, 2000). Petitions, letters and civil disobedience were some of the non-violent methods used to amplify their cause. Although there were significant results that were attained through peaceful methods, use of force and violence were imminent and has set the tone for the succeeding protests of the indigenous tribes. Eventually, the armed uprisings took on the tribes desire to be granted more autonomy.

In 1970, some Kalingans, together with other tribes in the Cordillera Region, joined the National People's Army (NPA) to further their cause. Due to ideological differences and membership politics, however, the Cordilleran arm of the NPA seceded from the group and formed the Cordilleran Peoples Liberation Army (CPLA) (Santos and Santos, 2010). The Cordilleran Peoples Liberation Army was established on April 1986 and fought for the regional autonomy and self determination of the Cordillera people.

The movement helped in the establishment of the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) in July 15, 1987 which allegedly granted the indigenous tribes within the area greater autonomy and more administrative privileges. This was complemented by the passage of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act in 1997 and the establishment of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples in the same year.

In 2011, a peace agreement between the Philippine Government and the CPLA was signed. Through this agreement, members of the CPLA continued to be integrated in the military forces of the Philippines and were granted resettlement privileges (OPAPP, 2011). Controversy arose when a faction of CPLA claimed there was misrepresentation in the peace agreement as a result of internal conflict within their organization. Both parties are currently in the process of resolving the issue.

Peacebuilders in Kalinga, Luzon

With the changes in the nature of the security threats in the province, Kalingan women's roles in peacebuilding and gender work are also evolving. To understand these, 15 women leaders were invited to take part in the Luzon focus group discussion held last October 12, 2011 in Tabuk City, Kalinga Province. Coming from diverse backgrounds, these women have already made their names in the fields of media, community and government service. They represented the following local community organizations: Young Mother's Club,

Recently, Kalinga has been the setting for little known security threats that have affected communities and the local inhabitants in the area. Tribal conflicts have become prevalent in the Cordillera Region furthering the divide among Cordillera tribes and resulting in violence and deaths. Stemming from resource-based conflicts they used to collectively protect, tension has now cascaded even to the clans of the Kalingan tribe over land and resource claims.

Historically, Kalingan women fought side by side with men in protecting their province from development aggression. By blocking construction equipment and conducting nudity marches among other efforts, they significantly contributed to the success of protests done to prevent certain development projects in Kalinga (Bula-at, 1995).

The Kalingan tribe culturally has high regard for women. The Paniyao belief of the Kalingans has made killing women a taboo in their culture. Since women are life-givers, killing one would bring a curse upon the killer and his/her descendants according to the locals. This belief has made women more valued and respected by the Kalingan tribe. However, there are also certain cultural practices that subordinate women in the Kalingan society. Women are rarely allowed to take on leadership positions in the community – a practice that endures to this day. Current tribal chieftains and the council of elders are all men as leadership is still seen as a role carried out solely by men.

United Guilayan Peace and Development organization, Kalinga Organic Unoy Farmers organization, Inc., Cordillera People's Liberation Army, KALIPI, Rizal Women's organization, Rural Improvement Club, Matagoan Budong Consultative Council, Nambucayan Women's organization, and media organizations, such as: RNFM Tabuk City, DZRK Radio; and government agencies and LGUs as well like: Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office, Philippine National Police, National Commission on the Indigenous Peoples and Nambaron Local Government.

The Experience of War and Violence

Common forms of violence mentioned by the participants are the sub-tribal or clan conflicts, tribal conflicts and political disputes which are all aggravated by the proliferation of weapons.

Sub-tribal conflict is the most common form of violence in Kalinga. It is the disputes arising between or among clans of the Kalingan tribe that often lead to violence and deaths. These disputes are often due to territorial and resource-based factors. A number of sub-tribes from the high mountain areas have relocated themselves in the lowlands causing already settled lowland clans to become very territorial. Tribes would often arm themselves with guns to prepare themselves in cases of confrontation. Several resettled clans also engage in unlikely behaviour such as extortion and aggressive "turfing". Coined terms like "golden road" are commonly recognised terms to describe areas where "gold-digging" activities of specific tribes are commonplace, like demanding exorbitant fees for the slightest offence.

Moreover, boundaries issued by government agencies have confused tribes and continue to create tension among indigenous groups in the region. Violent clashes with other tribes from different provinces such as Apayao and the Mountain Province are usually triggered by territorial disputes and resource-based misunderstandings. According to the Cordillera People's Alliance, tribal conflict in the region started in the 1970s when Manuel Elizalde, then Presidential

Assistant for National Minorities (PANAMI), was sent to Kalinga and was instructed to control indigenous uprisings over development projects lined up for the province. Part of his efforts was to arm specific tribes and pit them against one another resulting in massive deaths of indigenous peoples and the annihilation of certain tribes.

In addition, the Kalingans have a perception that most development projects and tourism programs are concentrated in the Southern areas of the Cordillera Administrative Region (e.g. Baguio City) inciting animosity between tribes and provinces. Personal interest and gain are also seen as root of conflict especially if it involves unapproved development programs within territories of specific tribes. These conflicts are worsened by the proliferation of guns in the region.

The availability of firearms is widespread in the area. Gun stores offering discounts are common in the area which is an unlikely practice in most parts of the country. Firearms are used for defensive purposes but there have been instances of reckless use of guns on festive occasions such as New Year and Christmas celebrations.

Guns have also worsened the political rivalries in Kalinga where traditional politics continue to impede the province's development. Rivals in local government seats resort to killing each other to assure winning seats every election period.

The brewing tension within the Cordilleran Peoples Liberation Army is also a potential cause of violence in the province. Known to use arms to push their cause, CPLA is exhausting diplomatic ways to come to an agreement with the Philippine Government. In line with this, "tagging" is seen to create a rift between the community and the military. Military personnel often label Kalingan men and women as members or supporters of the National People's Army. There are instances wherein civilians and reintegrated Kalingans are gunned down due to this speculation. This has incited hatred and mistrust among the Kalingans towards the military. Furthermore, it has led to families opting to own arms to take responsibility for protecting themselves.

These forms of violence affect families and communities. In families, health and education of children are neglected and economic activities are disrupted. Conversely, the community experiences insecurity, deaths, emigration, poverty and the deterioration of the Kalingan culture and traditions.

Family members are usually torn on whether to act aggressively or to peacefully resolve conflicts with another clan. Fear is instilled among families when they come into conflict with people who are speculated to own guns.

In the community, tension and mistrust building up within clans has caused insecurity. Clan wars in the area do not focus on a specific clan member's actions but its concept of retaliation can involve the collective tribe. This means that harming anyone from a rival clan equates to achieving justice regardless if the individual is involved with the personal experience of rift by the aggressor. Children, women and older persons become vulnerable due to this practice of avenging injustice or offence. A memorial to remember the lives lost in sub-tribal conflicts was constructed attesting to the many lives lost from sub-tribal and tribal conflicts.

Experiences of death and insecurity are factors that have encouraged people to migrate and permanently leave the province. This trend has worsened the poverty situation of the region with Kalingans opting to seek and invest in safer settlements. Furthermore, migration has also contributed to the gradual decline of the practice of the Kalingan culture.

Gendered Impact of Violence

Most, if not all, groups have linked the importance of livelihood to women's productive and reproductive roles in the family. Their primary livelihoods such as farming and fishing immediately sustain their family's needs and at the same time generate income for their households. It is therefore important to not lose access to the lands they till and rivers they fish in order to address both areas. As a consequence of armed conflict, men are unable to continue with their economic activities and are forced to stay at home. This has made the women take over the responsibility of not only taking care of their children but to become the primary breadwinners of their families. Moreover, sub-tribal conflicts hinder women from continuing their businesses and other economic activities in conflicting clan territories fearing for their security.

As narrated by the women, gender discrimination in employment is one of the main reasons for the lack of economic opportunities for women. Because of this they are pushed further into the experience of exploitation as women are forced to engage in prostitution. This experience is attributed to armed conflict situations as well as the experience of poverty in Kalinga.

Women experience a tremendous sense of insecurity not only for themselves but for their children. They bear the brunt of thinking about their children's health and schooling which has led them to sacrifice and neglect their own needs. Furthermore, psychological and emotional stress is felt in instances where a family member, their husband or child, dies as a result of conflict. Oftentimes women are not given proper debriefing and ample time for mourning as they need to immediately resume their work and provide for the remaining family members.

Even in such uncertain times, women cited a positive effect of crisis and violence, in that their faith is strengthened. Women in their deep spirituality invoke faith in the Spirit to help them in their situation. Their faith has also led them to become more forgiving and inclined to resolve conflicts through peaceful means.

Women's Rights Violations

Most women's rights violations mentioned are all in the categories of insecurity and gender-based violence. The participants raised issues mostly experienced by women in the household-level with the women's sense of insecurity being an extension of her concern for her family. The burden of thinking about the family's welfare and needs causes emotional and psychological distress to many women. Economic insecurity is also experienced when women have no choice but to discontinue their work due to on-going conflicts.

Cases of rape, sexual abuse and domestic violence are also aggravated during times of conflict although these cases are frequent occurrences in the household and the community even when there is no particular conflict arising.

Mechanisms and Challenges to Access of Women's Rights

Laws for women are major mechanisms that protect women's rights. Examples of these are the Magna Carta for Women and the Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) laws. Police stations in Kalinga also have well-established Women's Desks that assist women victims of violence. The potential of these laws and initiatives, however, is compromised by the lack of implementation and resources. The investigation and monitoring of cases are affected by the limited police personnel stationed in Kalinga. Only two police stations are operating in the province with some personnel unacquainted with the local dialects.

There are also policies promoted by the Philippine National Police (PNP) with regard to gun ownership.

The PNP stations in Kalinga regularly conduct gun registration drives to encourage gun owners to register their fire arms. Gun statistics are meant to monitor the number of firearms used in the region and to also aid in crime investigations.

Community spaces such as consultations and leadership positions in government units and community organizations are also open to women. A growing number of women's organizations have encouraged women to participate in community gatherings and campaigns and have started their own initiatives and advocacies in Kalinga such as "Clean and Green" and Nutrition Projects. The existence of women's organizations and the growing importance of women in community work have established them as important institutions in the community. Organizations such as RIC and KALIPI are well-known in the province.

Several cultural factors either support or impinge the protection of women's rights in the area. The Bodong System continues to be a cultural mechanism that is recognised by the Kalingans. The Bodong is a set of peace agreements that have been the community guidelines of the Kalingan people for decades. These laws are interpreted by a council of elders which is comprised of male community leaders. The Bodong not only has a role in preserving Kalinga's culture and traditions; it is also vital in maintaining peace and order in the region. However, the significance of the Bodong is being threatened by the availability of firearms in the area. More and more Kalingans are resorting to using guns instead of raising their concerns with the council. This has further worsened the peace and order situation of the community and has contributed to the weakening of the Bodong System.

Culturally, the Bodong system promotes respect for women. In the past, it is socially unacceptable to aggress and hurt Kalingan women. This has changed, according to group, citing external influences and the misinterpretation of the Christian faith by the Kalingans. In addition, cultural perceptions on women continue to reinforce traditional gender roles that limit the spaces for participation and involvement of women in the community.

The culture of shame and the culture of revenge also deter the protection of women's rights in the community. Since most enumerated women's rights violations occur within the household, it is likely that women would consider them as private issues and would avoid sharing their experience with other people, even the authorities. This has negatively affected the

monitoring of the said violations as well as the potential for protecting women's rights. Moreover, the masculine culture of revenge has exacerbated sub-tribal conflicts and women's experiences of victimisation during conflict periods. The old adage "an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth" still holds true in the community especially in clan misunderstandings. Women become affected either as mothers and wives of the slain or even as primary victims.

A unique perspective shared by the participants is the value of their own contribution and roles as an important mechanism in itself. They perceive that women play a crucial role in mediating and reconciling differences among the tribes given their hands-on experience of reconciling differences within their own families. These traits can be useful in peace negotiations. According to the group, women have the inclination to see past the hatred and anger to be able to resolve disputes for the sake of their families and the community. There are also individual efforts of women to educate themselves and participate in community activities such as training and mass consultations.

Another challenge women face in the full protection of women's rights and women's participation is the cultural roles that are still adhered to in the province. Culturally, leadership is only seen as a task given to men. Despite individual efforts of women to empower themselves through education and training, there is still resistance on the part of men to include them in decision-making activities in the community. "Oy babae lang kayo (you are only women)" is a phrase still used to remind women of their status in the community. Conversely, the group also explained how some women leaders impose their authority and act as "dictators" even in government agencies. Women who are given opportunities to take on high-level positions, whether consciously or otherwise, also exhibit domination in asserting their leadership and authority.

Women's Participation in Gender and Peacebuilding: Tensions and Contributions

Women get to be appointed as negotiators in community disputes and gender focal persons in certain government and non-government organizations. Women also get to participate in legislative work in the barangay-level.

Economic and financial security is a primary concern of Kalingan women especially during times of conflict. Cases of Kalingan women organising themselves to form cooperatives have been shared by the group. These cooperatives have significantly developed

and have been recognised in the community as important organizations. Certain community women's organizations also focus on providing alternative livelihood to women and honing their skills in business. Cooperatives and similar organizations formed by women do not only serve as a space to generate income but have become a way for women to contribute to development.

A number of women's organizations also focus on teaching Kalingan women parenting skills and values geared towards the building of a culture of peace.

Women also actively participate in consultations initiated by government agencies and private companies. Consultations are very important procedures to achieve consent of tribal communities with regard to development projects in the area. One of the primary reasons violence broke out during the Marcos regime was the lack of free prior and informed consent. Free prior and informed consent is defined by Philippine law as "the consensus of all members of the ICCs/IPs to be determined in accordance with their respective customary laws and practices, free from any external manipulation, interference and coercion, and obtained after fully disclosing the intent and scope of the activity, in a language and process understandable to the community" (Chan Robles Law, n.d.).

Furthermore, there are women who are involved in organising said consultations. They ensure that consultations are done prior to the approval of development projects and that all stakeholders, including women, are represented in these dialogues. Conducting consultations allows women to become more educated with issues on the ground.

There are also notable women who are elected and appointed in high-level positions in government units and community organizations. These cases serve as inspiration to other women and have led them to start certain initiatives such as making petitions and organising themselves to create cooperatives. It is observed that peacebuilding efforts of women usually start within families and get to be honed in their involvement in the community. Support for women's participation in the community paves the way for women to become more involved in gender and peacebuilding work as soon as they have established their presence in that space.

Kalingan women show active participation in available spaces such as mass consultations and community meetings. Community consultations can be about

policy-making or improvement and development agendas in the community. These community gatherings are open to all members of the community regardless of class, religion and gender.

Another important mechanism that supports women's participation is the Kalinga Bodong System. The system, however, does not tackle gender-specific issues and is currently more focused on solving resource-based conflicts. An opportunity for women to influence the Bodong is through the Bodong Congress, which occurs every 3 years. The Bodong Congress reviews the Bodong system and recommends revisions and improvements to the Bodong Council. Kalingan women are allowed to participate in the Bodong Congress.

Modelling is also seen as motivator to Kalingan women. Exceptional women taking on leadership positions in the government and community organizations have inspired other Kalingan women to become leaders themselves. By further developing their capacities, women become more aware of their rights as well as the opportunities for them to become involved in their families, organizations, and the community.

There are also notable efforts of organizations to take on a gender perspective in their work. The Philippine National Police stations in Kalinga requires gender-sensitivity training to police officers tasked to handle VAWC cases. Certain organizations also provide capability-development training that caters to women. Skills acquired and honed vary from accounting, entrepreneurship, and leadership.

According to the group, their community participation has not experienced strong resistance as peacebuilding is part of the Kalingan culture and ways of living. The initial challenge women face, however, start from their own perspective when they do not see the need to participate in community activities. Perceptions that women should only be concerned with household affairs are still common among Kalingans even to the women themselves. If and when they get to recognise the value of participation, husbands normally prevent them from being involved. Kalingan women usually make compromises to ensure that their involvement in community work will not affect their tasks and responsibilities in their families.

Although women are active in exhausting available spaces for participation in gender work and peacebuilding, their efforts have yet to be formally recognised. The group has stressed the need for LGUs

and agencies to reinforce the already established role of women as peacebuilders in the community and to encourage leadership among women despite cultural norms.

Organisational Strengths and Partnerships
Diverse organizations were represented by the women leaders who were invited. A good number of participants came from community organizations in Kalinga such as Kalinga Organic Unoy Rice Farmers organization Inc. and Rural Improvement Club which focuses on agriculture and rural development, Young Mothers Club and Rizal Women's organization which provide livelihood alternatives to Kalingan women, and the United Guilayan Peace and Development organization and Cordillera Peoples Liberation Army working in the fields of regional governance and development. Representatives from local governments units such as Matagoan Bodong Consultative Council and the Nambaron local government were also present.

The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, the Philippine National Police and the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office are the government agencies that were also represented. The National Commission on Indigenous People's mandate is to "protect and promote the interest and well-being of the ICCs/IPs with due regard to their beliefs, customs, traditions and institutions". The agency conducts the consultations and information drives needed for development projects to be implemented in tribal territories. Women, according to their representative, are highly encouraged to take part in these consultations to make them aware of their rights under RA 8731, the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, and to understand how development programs will impact their lives. Conversely, the Philippine National Police has 2 stations in Kalinga and is tasked to promote peace

and order in the province. PNP has well-established Women and Children's Police Desks to assist female and child victims of violence. The Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office provide social protection for disadvantaged sectors including women. Assistance may be in the form of educational courses, skills training, and livelihood programs.

In the area of media, commentators from DZRK Radio and RNFM Tabuk City participated in the discussion. Radio is considered to be the most popular form of media in the province.

The assessment exercise surfaced the participants' organizational contribution, capacity development needs, and possible intervention. Seven questions were asked during the final exercise:

- What is your organization's contribution to gender and peace work?
- What are aspects of this work that you need to strengthen?
- How can this be strengthened?
- How are you supported by government in your work?
- How can this be strengthened?
- How are you supported by media in your work?
- How can this be strengthened and improved?

What is your organization's contribution to gender and peace work?
- Mediate between tribes for reconciliation
- Community building process where every sector of the community is given the chance to participate
- Conduct of massive information and education campaign (IEC) on the four basic rights of ICCs/Indigenous Peoples under RA 5371 emphasising the rights of women to enjoy equal rights and opportunities with men in regard to social, economic and cultural spheres of life; the participation of indigenous women in decision making in all levels as well as development of society shall be given respect and recognition
- Conduct of livelihood skills training; generation of financial support for livelihood projects and seed money for cooperative; utilise women in the cleaning and greening of the community; and in settlements of conflicts
- Active participation in the organization activities, tagging along their family members, peace within the family is strengthened

- Monitoring to ensure implementation of family, women, youth and child welfare programs
- Counselling of rebel returnees
- Conduct of gender sensitivity trainings
- Encouragement of RIC women members are to voice out their opinions whenever there are consultative meetings
- Law enforcement, prevention and suppression of gender-based crimes; advocacy programs in coordination with community against violence against women
- Counsellor especially in crucial decision-making issues affecting the region
- Commitment to volunteer work
- Involvement of women in gender-sensitivity training and gender and development
- Involvement of women in government programs and activities
- Helping women to join Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
- Helping women to join empowerment activities

Participants have cited several contributions of their organization to gender and peace work that encompass advocacy, capacity-building, service delivery and program monitoring.

Some participants have mentioned their involvement in the decision-making levels of community politics. One continues to serve as the community's consultant when it comes to making decisions on issues crucial to the community and formally mediates clan and tribal conflicts in their area.

Several cited spearheading capacity-building activities catered to women on gender-sensitivity and gender and development. Some organizations also work to support economic activities of women by providing them training programs on livelihood skills and supporting small and medium enterprises.

For advocacy, a number work for the promotion of issues such as the rights of the indigenous people, environmental cleanliness and violence against women, among others. They conduct information drives, create and distribute campaign materials to the community.

Other services mentioned are law enforcement, counselling among rebel returnees and mediation and reconciliation. Additionally, there are others who

engage in the monitoring of the projects related to family, women and children's welfare.

Within their organization, they also encourage women's active involvement. Some mentioned that the management of their organization is very inclusive and democratic giving all perspectives a fair hearing. According to some women, they create a very levelled and less-intimidating work environment.

Although not related to their work, some women cited their participation in various community building processes such as consultations and community meetings. They also encourage their family members to actively take part in community activities which they see as a contributing factor to peaceful familial relationships. A few have also taken upon themselves to commit to their volunteer work as well as to encourage other women to be involved in the community.

What are aspects of this work that you need to strengthen?
- Skills training, particularly skills in mediation and reconciliation
- Participation of women in meetings/consultations, decision-making process
- Information dissemination about rights of women
- Leadership training skills
- Community and police relations; capability and training enhancements; information campaigns
- Education of women
- Enhancement of management skills
- Training on empowerment
- Consultative meeting and dialogue with the *barangay* council
- Programs focused on women in the field of education, health and politics
- Information dissemination
- Economic programs for members of CPLA
- Strengthening of role as a woman leader
- Strengthening of indigenous culture
- Opportunities for participation
- Provision of services on family welfare program

In regards to the aspects of their work that need strengthening, the majority mentioned the lack of skills training they get particularly in the areas of mediation, reconciliation, management, governance

and leadership. Formal training is viewed as a way to ensure their meaningful participation and contribution to the existing spaces they can utilise. The need for the programs to be culturally-appropriate also surfaced. Gender and peace work can serve as a vehicle to sustain indigenous culture by tapping indigenous mechanisms that are in place.

Participants mentioned the importance of continuing existing programs and ensuring participation of women in all consultations conducted by the local government and local agencies. Stress was given to women's economic empowerment and the need to intensify programs to uplift women's economic status.

How can this be strengthened?
- Free education/scholarship
- Encourage women's organisations to participate in community development
- Free education to those women who cannot afford
- Health assistance to women and free health education
- Allocation of training funds to support logistics
- More meetings
- Allowances/allocation of funds
- Sustainable financial support and program implementation
- Massive IEC on the rights of women (SCR 1325, RA 8371, EO 865) and to actively participate in decision-making processes
- Through initiative and cooperation among law enforcers, LGU and NGO and community
- Information drive on UNSCR 1325

The recommendations of the women in strengthening the areas of their work that need improvement are: providing free education and training, continuous delivery of basic social services, resource support for program sustainability and strengthened cooperation between the local government and the civil society.

Free education and training is seen to help women in confidently participating in local political processes and other community activities. Financial assistance will help the organizations in implementing their various programs. There is also a practice of giving minimal allowance to women members which, according to some participants, supplements the women's income and at the same time encourages them to be involved in community activities.

How are you supported by government in your work?
- Allocation of funds or forms of financial assistance in some projects
- Involving women in government activities/program, like KALIPI and RIC
- Inclusion of women's organisations' projects for funding
- Through gender mainstreaming
- Provision of training, like those related to women empowerment
- Strengthening of GAD
- Establishment of institutions that address the problems of battered and abandoned mums and children
- LGU, helps in community development, through regular government programs and agencies such as the NaDESCOM, DA and TESDA.

Government support, according to the women, is mainly through financial assistance to their programs. Local government and agencies have been prioritizing gender-responsive programs and have a fixed budget on Gender and Development (at least 5% of agency budget). Infrastructure development has also increased efficiency of service delivery. Establishment of health and women's centers has made certain services to women readily available.

Furthermore, several local government agencies provide specific programs that aid in community development. Offices cited are NADESCOM (National Development Support Command), Department of Agriculture and TESDA (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority). The local government and other agencies regularly include women's organizations in their conducted consultations.

How can this be strengthened and improved?
- Conduct of assessment meetings
- Livelihood projects and other barangay development plans
- Prioritize projects concerning peace and security
- Presentation of issues and concerns supported by data to convince government to provide additional funds
- International convention on women's rights
- Cheekah Sessions with government officials
- More participation of women

More funding allocation for gender-responsive projects is seen as a way to strengthen government support in their work for gender and peace. Specifically, continuous support to livelihood programs and village development plans as well as prioritization of peace projects are cited by women as strategic focus areas.

To strengthen the relationship of the civil society and the local government, civil society participants recommend that regular dialogues with government agencies be facilitated to address issues of hampered service delivery, funding and assessment of projects. It was also suggested that local policies and programs complement international standards in protecting women's human rights.

Conversely, government representatives call on women to provide supporting data and necessary documents in order to facilitate speedy approval of project funding. They also encourage that more women participate in community activities such as consultations and village meetings.

How are you supported by media in your work?
- Helps in information campaign for peace
- Radio guesting to discuss programs and services
- Advocacy on women's programs and rights
- Information dissemination; Announcements
- Education campaign regarding women's concerns

The media plays a vital role in information dissemination and advocacy. Some were quick to argue that despite these, media support is essentially lacking when it comes to tackling women, peace and security issues. A possible cause for this is the damaged radio transmitter of the province that has been not been repaired for almost a year – a major difficulty in a community that has radio as the most popular and accessible form of media.

How can this be strengthened and improved?
When asked how media support can be strengthened and improved, the women suggested that media help in promoting their activities and advocacies. In line with this, they encourage impartiality and fairness when it comes to news coverage and delivery. The women working in the field of media similarly see the possibility of increasing their coverage and discussion of women's involvement in gender work and peacebuilding.

Synthesis and Initial Recommendations
The primary roots of violence in the province are economic and resource-based. Kalingans have become very protective of their land as it is their primary source of livelihood and basic needs.

Based on the Kalinga Regional Cheekah Session the following are recommended to protect women from violence and the violation of their rights; and to promote their participation in decision-making processes related to peace:

Strengthening of the Kalingan indigenous culture and identity is a possible way to mitigate tribal and sub-tribal conflicts. In the past, it is their sense of community which allowed them to mobilise themselves against development aggression. It is also this deep sense of affinity that enables them to empathise with a kin's experience of violence and assist in extracting revenge. A possible way of looking at the current experience is by juxtaposing it with their history. Kalingans have already seen the effectiveness of non-violent methods of resolving conflicts and championing causes. This positive effect of collective identity should be highlighted and tapped to create the shift from clan affinity to a wider Kalingan identity.

This effort should be aided by massive information drives on indigenous people's rights and the continuation of the conduct of consultations regarding all potential development projects to be implemented in indigenous territories. LGUs should also look into promoting the province as an eco-tourism destination. Highlighting the unique Kalingan culture and the natural landscape of the area may help shift the idea of Kalinga being merely a resource-extraction site for private corporations. Such an endeavour may not only bring about improvement in the local economy but also help showcase and preserve Kalingan culture and further protect Kalinga's natural resources.

With regard to the struggle of the factions of the Cordillera Peoples Liberation Army, peace negotiations should be sustained. Women's involvement in the talks must be ensured for gender issues to be included and women experiences to be considered in the discussion and results of the negotiations. Similarly, aggressive support for the continuation of the peace negotiations between the National People's Army and the Philippine government should be complemented by a monitoring and reporting on human rights and CARHRIHL violations of involved parties.

Conflicts in Kalinga are generally aggravated by the widespread availability of firearms in the province. Access to firearms has made violence a quick and easy option to exact justice. The widespread availability of firearms has led to the senseless deaths of Kalingans. Gun regulation and stricter implementation of policies on gun ownership should be implemented in the province to help re-establish the importance of the legitimate justice system. Information campaigns on gun violence, intensified disarmament education and stronger presence of the National Police forces in the area can also aid in this endeavour.

Similarly, Kalingan women's definition of peace heavily revolves around economic security. Their notion of peace and order is when they are able to meet their families' needs and help augment the family income. It is also the state where family members are secure and are able to access basic social services. Kalingan women's personal security is secondary during times of conflict. Oftentimes, they are faced with multiple burdens simultaneously providing for their families, continuing their economic activities and ensuring their family's safety.

To immediately address economic insecurity, local governments should strengthen existing mechanisms that focus on providing economic opportunities for women. Support for women-led initiatives such as community cooperatives and micro-enterprises through funding should be prioritized. Skills training and livelihood programs should also be readily available to the community.

In regards to women's rights violations, Kalingan women tend to equate women's rights violations solely with sexual violence and abuse. This limits the ability of women to identify their experiences when their rights have been compromised. To address this, more campaigns and awareness drives regarding women's rights should be conducted in the community level. Understanding of their rights and the mechanisms that protect them can encourage women to transcend notions of shame and inferiority once their rights are violated and be able to report them to proper authorities. Establishment of women crisis centres can also help address the experience of insecurity by the female victims of abuse in the community.

The primary hindrance of Kalingan women's community involvement and peace efforts is the cultural roles imposed on their gender. This has affected their individual sense of agency as well as the community's understanding of their contributions and the provided spaces for them to participate. Despite this, women are able utilise and thrive in these available spaces to build peace and empower community women.

The individual and collective efforts of Kalingan women in gender work and peacebuilding are commendable. What are lacking are the formal recognition of their contribution and the encouragement of their participation in both formal and non-formal spaces of gender work and peacebuilding. This gap has led to the inability of the women leaders to relate their community involvement as a form of peace and gender work. Most, if not all, of the women do not immediately recognise that their current participation is already a contribution towards building a culture of peace and equality in the province. The realization of this important fact can create more ripples of initiative among Kalingan women that will eventually lead to sustainable and lasting peace.

Moreover, formal recognition should be complemented by further enhancing their capacities as women leaders. Leadership trainings are necessary to hone the skills of women and to ensure that their leadership styles and strategies are empowering and proactive. Although there are a number of women who are appointed in high-level positions, women themselves have pointed out how these leaders personify aggressive behaviours to convey authority and power. Other skills such as accounting, policymaking, proposal making and assessment are identified by women to be important and necessary. Moreover, social safety nets like health benefits and educational services should be in place to ease the women's burden in thinking about her family's needs and allow them to become more involved in community work.

Cultural hindrance to women's participation can be addressed by using cultural mechanisms, as well. Kalingan women can look into hinging their peace and gender advocacy to well-established indigenous mechanisms like the Bodong and Paniyao. This effort should be augmented by introducing gender concepts to Kalingan tribal leaders that will help challenge culturally accepted beliefs that are discriminatory and disempowering to women.

The Kalingan experience of conflict is quite distinct. It encompasses diverse issues concerning culture, environment, economic security and indigenous people's rights. Although there are initiatives to address them, there should be efforts to understand the interconnectedness of these themes to effectively respond to the root cause of the Kalingan Conflict. All these efforts should recognise women as partners for the realization of a better Kalingan society. ◆

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Chapter 3

Women Peacebuilders in Samar, Visayas

HISTORY OF CONFLICT AND PEACE IN THE ISLAND OF SAMAR

The island of Samar occupies the northernmost section of Eastern Visayas and lies southeast of Luzon. It is divided into three provinces: Northern Samar, with Catarman as capital; Eastern Samar, with Borongan as capital; and Western Samar with Catbalogan as capital. Samar province is hilly with narrow strips of lowlands, many of which lie in coastal areas.

All three provinces of Samar are touted as poor with Northern and Western Samar making the list of the "poorest" provinces in the Philippines, according to the National Poverty Map 2007 prepared by the Peace and Equity Foundation (PEF). Ranking was based on various poverty indicators such as the lack of housing, lack of access to clean water, sanitation facilities, incidence of malnutrition, and income level.

It is no surprise then that Samar is home to armed groups namely to the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Samar is also host to political dynasties known for their intense rivalry. Northern Samar has consistently been placed on the election watch list during previous national and local elections because of unresolved cases of extra judicial killings and human rights violations, including the murder of eight PNP members and a barangay council officer on Aug. 21, 2010 and the killing of a parish priest in October 2009.

It is posited that the insurgency problem is sustained by the situation of poverty. Recruitment to armed groups is not difficult especially for those living in depressed areas and at the hinterlands, usual targets of recruitment by the rebel group.

In a meeting organised by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders and Women Engaged in Action on 1325 in the City of Calbiga on March 30 and 31, 2012, participants talked about problems of insurgency, militarisation and armed encounters. They attributed the conflict to poverty, corruption, injustices, and human rights violations, abuse of power and authority and lack of development in the province. They narrated that the conflict between the armed groups have resulted in extra-judicial killings, massive evacuation, disappearance of suspected rebels, destruction of property and farm products, migration to safer areas outside of the province, increased

unemployment, decline in tourism, and death. They claimed that the conflict has caused separation of family members with men in the house migrating to major cities like Manila to seek greener pastures as the conflict has affected economic activities particularly agricultural production. Participants also attributed the increase in crime rate in urban areas to the conflict as people abandon their jobs in rural areas highly affected by activities of armed groups.

But initiatives to address the situation of conflict and violence in the province are not wanting. In the same meeting organised by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders and Women Engaged in Action on 1325 in the City of Calbiga on March 30 and 31, 2012, invited local government officials and workers explained that they conduct multi-sectoral dialogues to solicit ideas from the public on how peace could be attained in the province. In moments when evacuation is necessary, they shared that they provide temporary shelters and relief goods to victims.

Peacebuilders in Samar, Visayas

Samar was chosen as an FGD site due to its experience of conflict brought about by the clashes between members of the National People's Army and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The Visayas Regional Cheekah Session was held at Waling Waling Inn, Catbalogan City in Samar last October 25, 2011. The event gathered 13 women and 1 male participant active in local governance, media, and CSO work in Samar and the neighbouring province, Leyte.

They represented the LGUs of Barangay San Isidro, Pinabacdao, Western Samar and Calbiga. Government agencies such as Catbalogan Social Welfare and Development Office, Philippine Information Agency, and the Philippine National Police and Department of Social Welfare and Development. Media organisations like DYUG Radyo ng Bayan Samar Island Press Club, Federation of Provincial Press Clubs in the Philippines. As well as civil society and community based organisations like MATA Samar, Daram Mobile Kusina, Women's Cooperative Organisation, Social Action Centre Diocese of Calbayog, and the Rural Development Institute of Leyte, Inc.

CSOs have also been formed to address issues of poverty, political violence and armed conflict, among others. One of these networks is the Samar Island Partnership for Peace and Development (SIPPAD) whose members are the three peace and development networks in the region: Eastern Samar Peace and Development Forum; Samar Partnership for Peace and Development; and the Northern Samar Peace and Development Forum. Members of its Executive Committee are the Bishops of the Dioceses of Catarman, Borongan and Calbayog.

But what is the gendered impact of the armed conflict in the island of Samar? What are the levels of participation of women in terms of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding? What role do the women in media play in this politically charged environment? The focus of this research on Samar is made due to the dearth on information available in this regard.

The Experience of War and Violence in Samar, Visayas
Peace is not only the absence of war or armed conflict but also the absence of justice and conditions of well-being in various spheres of human interaction: political, social, cultural, economic and ecological. Hence, violence is not only direct or physical manifested in armed conflict, war, human rights violations or crimes. Violence may also be structural as seen in the highly uneven distribution of resources, both economic and political. Structural violence would refer to institutions, systems and structures that allow resources to be enjoyed by a few at the expense of the majority. Poverty is a direct result of structural violence. Violence may also be socio-cultural manifested in various forms of prejudice and discrimination such as sexism, religious intolerance, racism and ethnocentrism. Many of the armed conflicts today are aggravated by intolerance for diversity. Violence may also be ecological as seen in the wanton destruction of the earth's ecosystems without regard for future generations.

Forms of Violence
FGD participants explained that the Samar region is confronted by violence of various forms: economic, physical, psychological, and socio-cultural. Armed groups exist in the region, particularly members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Communist Party of the Philippines-New Peoples' Army. In the home front, domestic violence is prevalent despite the enactment of the law criminalising Violence against Women and Children. Socio-cultural violence is apparent in the work front with women witnessing double standards in terms of treatment and experiencing discrimination. Some women have experienced rejection for job applications because of their marital status, child-bearing and child-rearing duties. Costs incurred by the offices for maternity leave trigger rejections of women's applications for employment. Structural violence is apparent in the absence of basic social services particularly health services, and in widespread poverty experienced by large segments of the population in the region. The group highlighted not just financial deprivation but the general experience of lack in all aspects of life especially social services like education and community services.

Roots of Violence
Poverty has been cited as the most common root of conflict along with social injustice, patriarchy, ignorance of rights, and the corruption of traditional values. Since women are not informed of their rights, victimisation is pervasive. Men, as well, normally don't know if they are violating rights of their spouses. Participants explained that there are certain influences in their community that have led to the corruption of their values.

Insecurity was also mentioned as a stimulant in committing violence against women within the household. Women's success and achievements create feelings of insecurity and unfortunately result in physical abuse. Women participants also offered some psychological explanations to domestic violence citing bad childhood experiences as causes of aggressive behaviour. FGD participants also posited that environmental factors such as peer influence, vices and alcohol stimulate aggressive behaviour and lead to domestic violence.

Political rivalry was also offered as an explanation to violence in the community. Politicians are perceived to prefer and favour communities where leaders come from the same political party and have initiated development projects in communities where leaders tow the political party line. This has caused resentment on the part of the neglected and who have reacted to such situations with violence.

Gendered Impact of War and Violence
Armed conflict has caused families to evacuate from their homes and has affected access to services particularly health services. The armed conflict has caused destruction of lives and properties. Members of the community are reported to have joined insurgent groups because of the loss of confidence in the government.

The armed conflict has also caused feelings of insecurity among media personnel as they are often labelled by the rebel groups as government supporters when they air the perspective of the government, or tagged by the government as rebels or NPA sympathisers when they articulate the cause of the rebel groups. Such has not only put to stake their mission of relaying the truth to the people but has also put their lives at risk.

Socio-cultural violence, on the other hand, has worsened marginalisation, and has affected women's self-esteem. Their fear that they might not be able to contribute in discussions discourages them from participating in community gatherings and meetings and has resulted in social withdrawal. As a result, many women have turned passive and have become accepting of their marginal status. Domestic violence has resulted in broken homes and relationships. Women have reported being suppressed by their partners in achieving their goals. Hence, many are not able to advance professionally to avoid conflict with their partners. Discrimination in the work front has negatively impacted efficiency and productivity.

Women's Rights Violations as a Result of Conflict and Violence
Cheekah participants reported that in the face of violence, women experience violation of women's rights among them the right to be employed, live a decent life, equal treatment, education, involvement, and financial independence. They shared that the various forms of violence that confront them affect their freedom of choice. Their right to work is often affected by the double standards offices have in employing women and men.

The women also complained of inadequate, and even absence, of health facilities, education and economic opportunities for women and children.

Mechanisms and Challenges to Upholding of Women's Rights

Mechanisms Available to Women in Protecting their Rights

Mechanisms refer to structures, systems, institutions, programs, policies and practices. Cheekah participants mentioned several mechanisms that protect the rights of women: GAD funds, women's crisis centres, women's laws (RA 9262, 9208, and 7610), CSO advocacy campaigns, and the existence of peace and women's organisations.

The budgetary allocation for women, the GAD fund, is a useful and landmark mechanism. However, questions were raised by the Cheekah participants in regard utilisation of these funds. They shared that there is either a mistaken notion or an alibi given by local government that the said funds are for the Community Social Work and Development projects. The centre is said to be the main agency that implements projects for women but is lacking in human resource and facilities to organize projects and programs.

Women also lauded the existence of grievance mechanisms and crisis management centres. They shared, though, that only a few are operational. Furthermore, they raised the suggestion that the existence of crisis centres be complemented by preventive mechanisms as these centres cannot address the rising cases of women's rights violations.

According to the Cheekah participants, there are sufficient laws related to the protection of women's rights but not enough resources to implement them rendering them ineffectual. An example given was the juvenile justice law. There are also a number of helpful local ordinances and codes that supplement the national laws and are context-appropriate. Likewise, its implementation is also affected by the resources available to the community and the local leadership. An example given is the local Children's Code of Calbayog which was seemingly forgotten as soon as the new official from a different party took on the leadership role in the city. The group stresses the need for a monitoring mechanism as soon as projects are approved for implementation. Furthermore, they prefer strengthening these local codes and mechanisms such as the Barangay Human Rights Action Office and abolish offices that have similar nature of work to centralise project implementation and funding. Participants shared that information dissemination is crucial to create awareness among community women regarding

these laws that protect their rights. Unawareness often breeds corruption by centralising the benefits to the preferred few.

In relation to social services, women reported of programs that have very stringent requirement that discourage many women from applying. An example given was the Alternative Learning System. Women are also not aware of their right to avail of health services. Furthermore, health programs are often advertised as projects of certain officials with their names and photographs bigger than the service announcements making community women attach these services to specific government officials.

Finally, the participants expressed that some of the government officials manifest political will by actively helping in the implementation of projects and programs relevant to community women. Such exceptional political will transcends entrenched political culture of rivalry among members of opposing political parties.

Challenges Encountered by Women in Upholding and Protecting their Rights

Government's inability to put policy into practice is perhaps, one of the biggest frustrations shared by the women in this Cheekah Session. They reported of laws that remain unimplemented citing in particular the law allowing women to own properties. Although there are laws that promote women's participation such as the Women in Nation-building Act which, according to them, mandates that women should comprise 50% of the bureaucracy; such also remains true only on paper. They lamented that in politics; women are marginalised and are usually at the bottom of governance structures. Participants pointed to possible causes: lack of political will, political divides and political preference. Programs meant to protect women's rights are sidetracked when initiated by those on the opposite side of the political fence. Political preference is also the name of the game. Programs are delivered if one's community or group is favoured by those in power. "Dapat malakas ka sa taas."

Dissenters pay a huge price. Because of these problems with service access, the poor remains poor with only a few reaping the benefits of government service – services which everyone should be entitled to.

Participants also shared the perception that the government does not give priority to women's concerns and the protection of their rights. They blame this on patriarchal thinking. Women perceive that health care is a less important agenda for local government affecting the availability and delivery of health services in the community. The women posited that gender-sensitivity training in the government and for government officials is an imperative to challenge the system of patriarchy.

Poor governance is just one challenge. The women of Samar also talked about the unstable peace and order situation brought about by the armed conflict. This has generated fear preventing involvement of women in community work and in expressing themselves and voicing their opinions.

The armed conflict has also led to the labelling of people as either allies or enemies. The women in media participating in the Cheekah Session shared feelings of fear in regard their safety. They find themselves caught "in the middle of the conflict" and are sometimes unable to report accurate information for fear of backlash and of being targeted by either the military or the insurgent groups. Unfortunately, some people in media, according to them, have used this situation to gain advantage. Some people from media, they posited, have distorted information to favour political groups in exchange for some financial gain.

Women also reported that the protection and promotion of their rights are challenged by the situations of poverty and environmental destruction. They also shared being challenged by modernisation. They said that they spend time countering the negative effects of industrialisation as well as the advent of information and communication technologies. These, they said, should be looked into and addressed by the government.

Interestingly, participants posited that one big challenge to women's rights protection and promotion is the passivity and indifference of women in regards their subordinate status. Many women have remained unresponsive and uncooperative as their priority is putting food on the table. "There is no money in organising", some of them have argued. Unfortunately,

such notions have contributed to their continued marginalisation and victimisation.

Women's Participation in Gender and Peacebuilding

Women serve as community organisers. They hold training sessions from livelihood to nutrition and health. They inform women of the services and programs available to them and allow them to assess the implementation of these projects. Such training sessions are meant to empower the women in the community. They have aided in building women's confidence to face and dialogue with different people including those from government agencies.

Those in local government give opportunities to women in the communities to participate in government affairs. They invite them to meetings and to be involved in government projects such as the CSWD BSP and provide them a modest allowance as a form of incentive. They have also helped form women's organisations.

Women's organisations have helped organize community women to put up successful cooperatives. In these cooperatives, women are taught fundraising methods that aid them in setting up small stores and buying properties. Other women's groups help address the nutrition problem of the community. They organise women in communities with high cases of malnutrition. These women's groups also organise stay-at-home mothers and encourage them to learn livelihood skills. One such project is the Mobile Kusina, a government-supported project that aims to provide livelihood programs to jobless women and allow them to engage in small-scale businesses. Women undergo training to learn skills needed to set up businesses. Another is the "grow organic" project that has encouraged women to grow organic vegetables contributing to the improvement of the nutritional status of communities. These programs have helped encouraged women to become more income and health-oriented.

Women in local government are able to contribute in advancing women and peace agendas in formal spaces and at addressing immediate concerns of women in the community. Rosemarie Rodriguez of Calbiga, Samar, for example, has led the drafting of the Gender and Development code in her city which is currently being reviewed for approval. She also leads the lending program that provides women with business capital devoid of interest. The good performance and output of women borrowing funds has led to the increase of

budget allocation for such program. Rosemarie makes use of her position to advocate for the protection of human rights and the inclusion of women in political decision-making. Her office is under the process of incorporating the Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security to their local action plan, a plan she calls from "NAP to LAP". As a reformer in government, she works on strengthening local government associations to build peace through women.

The primary roles of the Philippine National Police (PNP) related to peace are protection and investigation. It provides immediate assistance such as shelter and food to victims of violence in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development. It also provides counseling through its Women and Child Protection Desks found in police stations nationwide. According to Zenas a participant representing the PNP, all women police are skilled in handling Violence against Women and Children (VAWC) cases as well as in counselling. The PNP also supports local livelihood programs and has initiated a project called Barbero sa Barangay (Barber in the Barangay) which trains women in haircut and hairstyling.

CSOs in Samar are engaged in advocacy work. The Rural Development Institute (RDI), for instance, is committed to working for the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) to make sure that farmers get to own the lands that they till. Vast lands in the neighbouring provinces of Leyte are owned by few families.

Joji from RDI quipped:

Ang lupa ay isang malaking bahagi ng buhay ng kababaihan sa kanayunan. Bilang tagapaghanda ng pagkain sa hapag kainan, sa kanyang pamilya at

sa sambayanan. Kaya (hindi dapat) gutumin ang nagpapakain sa baya. (Land is an important part of a women's life in the community. [From land], she is able to prepare food for the family and the community. Hence, she should not be made hungry as she feeds the country.)

Mechanisms for gender and peacebuilding work
Numerous training sessions are being organised throughout Samar by both government and NGOs. These training sessions are meant to teach skills that can be useful in creating livelihoods and improving women's situations. Some of these training sessions are on improving health and nutrition, fundraising and livelihood skills.

Cooperatives have been formed and lending programs were designed to give women the opportunities to become more economically productive.

There are government programs or desks that are useful in engaging women to participate in the different programs, such as the CSWD BSP. The WPD of the PNP is deemed helpful in protecting women against violence.

Government projects such as Mobile Kusina (Mobile Kitchen) and Barbero sa Barangay were also reported useful in providing income opportunities for women.

Challenges and Resilience at Work for Gender and Peacebuilding
Some community efforts do not get much assistance from LGUs and CSOs. Community women hope for assistance in terms of funding and capacity-building to strengthen their initiatives. An example of this is the formation of cooperatives. With the absence of help, they are looking into creative ways on how to expand their cooperative.

Some women's organisations face membership challenges such as dishonesty. They are also confronted with the problem of inactive membership. Dishonesty among certain members unfortunately affects the income of the organisation. They also report that programs and activities are being held up by the armed conflict between the government and the insurgent groups adding that they simply put up with the armed conflict and resume halted work as soon as tension subsides.

Women are also challenged by their minimal participation in local government. Such challenge is confronted by actively engaging men in governance that they may not have to hurdle tough resistance in

forwarding proposals related to gender and peace.

CSOs, on the other hand, are faced with legal suits filed by landowners. To address this, they go through paralegal trainings and lectures and encourage farmers to be involved in all local governance structures from the barangay to the provincial level. A product of this effort is the formation of the Barangay Agrarian Reform Committee (BARC) which has sufficient women representatives.

Spaces Available for Women in Peacebuilding Work
There are women in political spaces and their occupation of such spaces has been useful in advancing causes of gender and peace. Women are at the forefront of numerous community and CSOs, and leadership in such spaces has helped women become more productive.

There are also spaces in the security sector such as the WPD which are managed by women and are aimed at protecting women from violence.

Assessing Gender and Peacebuilding Work: Reflecting on Organisational Strengths and Partnerships

Civil Society Organisations' Contribution
An important aspect of civil society work is networking. CSOs have connections with various agencies from the national level down to the barangay. CSOs are seen as service providers providing technical support to local communities. They are the ones primarily being tapped to assist in community work. They aid in obtaining crucial information needed for any research and assessment work.

CSOs also have the capacity for immediate mobilisation for gender issues. They can be tapped to lobby for certain causes primarily because of their commitment to their respective advocacies. For instance, they monitor and lobby for the release and proper utilisation of the GAD budget. They are the watchdogs of people in committee hearings and budget approvals. Because of their networks, CSOs also function as communicators. They conduct information dissemination from national to barangay levels and are usually a resource of data for diverse issues.

One of the areas of their work that needs to be strengthened is the sharing of information with each other and with government. They expressed the need for collaborative engagements with each other and with government agencies. They also think that gender and peacebuilding work could be strengthened by expanding existing networks.

More capability-building activities should also be done in order to share the knowledge at local levels. According to the group, CSOs should empower themselves first to successfully help even the basic organisations in the communities. They feel the need to have more technical and legal trainings. As peace advocates, they feel that they should know legal processes to properly participate and lobby in formal spaces. Human rights mechanisms like the CARHRIHL should be known to CSOs region-wide as Samar is an armed conflict zone.

Strengthening and Improving Government Support for Civil Society Organisation Work
CSOs expressed the need for constructive, collaborative engagements with government agencies whether through project financing or project implementation. FGD participants pointed to a successful collaboration with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) which, initially, was very sceptical of the intentions of CSOs. The CSOs have dialogued with the officials and explained that their intention was not to criticize but help improve service delivery. Currently, they are collaborating with DPWH in monitoring project implementations in the community.

The CSOs represented in the Cheekah Session also posited that awareness of human rights mechanisms like the CARHRIHL should be promoted in government agencies especially in offices tasked to implement them. An experience shared was the case of a 14 year old girl who witnessed the killing of her mother. CSOs helped her in referring the case to the police but the unit was not able to prioritise the case.

They also had problems seeking help with the crisis centres of DWSD. It was only until NBI intervened that the girl was placed in a witness protection program.

Furthermore, CSOs want formal recognition as peace advocates so that they can formally participate in peace work given their knowledge of ground realities. CSOs request government to efficiently deliver basic support services. They posited that highly politicised interventions affect the delivery of services to communities.

Problem with fund-sourcing is also a common dilemma for CSOs. Most CSOs are dependent on assistance and grants from donors which are often unstable. Despite having skilled and competent people, organisations find it hard to get things done due to lack of funds. In this light, they expressed hope for logistical support from government and call on the latter to put to priority the needs of the community in preparing and appropriating budget, as well as in implementation of programs and projects.

Additionally, CSOs request for security and protection especially because of the armed conflict situation in Samar. Since their work is mostly in communities, they are vulnerable to labels as supporters of either the government or the insurgents.

Strengthening and Improving Media support for CSO work
CSO participants in the FGD expressed that responsible journalism is vital to peacebuilding. CSOs hope that media sticks to the facts when reporting and avoid branding CSOs as leftist groups and rebels.

Government Contribution
Government has various tasks related to gender and peacebuilding. It ensures primarily the allocation of the GAD budget. Government works to make sure that the GAD budget is reflected in local annual budgets; and is released and properly utilized.

Government also works to enforce laws and local ordinances that protect the rights of women such as RA 9362, 9344 and 7610. A member of the national police in the group expressed that implementing these laws should be enforced without fear or favour. Government is also tasked to follow gender quotas in all government sectors. In the PNP, its first and second recruitment phases should have, at least, 10% women. Deployment after training should also not discriminate and underestimate women's capacities.

In terms of capability-building efforts, members of the PNP are required to undergo gender-sensitivity training. In the communities, barangay assemblies are organised to promote awareness of women's rights.

Government also works to establish WCPD in all police stations. Despite laws mandating that all stations should have a desk in charge of cases against women and children, implementation and performance are not properly coordinated and monitored. Officials should also conduct gender sensitivity trainings in all LGUs. Vice Mayor Rodriguez, one of the participants of the Cheekah Session shared that she knew little of gender and development when she was asked to draft a GAD plan. Capacity-building is important to sustain and improve what agencies are doing right now. Participants in the FGD expressed the need for training on basic accounting skills to promote transparency in government units. More training and seminars for local legislators are also needed in formulating policies and ordinances

There are several other areas of work in government that need to be strengthened. One of them would be in the area of logistics. Oftentimes, projects and programs remain unimplemented because of funding problems. Moreover, lack of human resources deters them from fully protecting women's rights. The PNP should ensure that at least one woman police is designated in WCPDs.

To further strengthen their work, participants shared that government agencies should continue establishing working relationships with other government units and with other sectors. Government units should also prioritise projects at the rural level and continue providing incentives to those who contribute to program implementation.

CSOs, both international and national can support government in terms of skills training and program development. Zenas of the PNP shared that there are several women's group such as Gabriela and The Soroptimists which aid in the investigation of some VAWC cases through gathering information and evidences.

Media, both mainstream and informal can support government by increasing public awareness on women's rights.

Media Contribution
Media is an important institution in Samar. It is often seen as the primary outlet to solve problems of people

within communities. When cases of abuse and injustice are experienced, people are more likely to report such to media people instead of proper authorities. As media practitioners, they can choose to tackle issues pertaining to women in their programs. Mae shared that her program, "Maagam ba kamo?" a radio program is running for 8 years now and has a segment on women and children which consistently receives high ratings. As information dissemination is the primary role of media, they utilise this space by writing stories and producing broadcast content related to women, peace and security. Media can also explore less covered topics such as the experience of women working for peace within communities. Media practitioners are also invited to sit as council members of several networks such as the Bantay Abuso Network and the multisectoral rig reaction team. The media is always involved especially in transparency and accountability mechanisms of various network groups. They are also active in supporting projects of both local governments and CSOs. The Samar Island Press Club holds medical missions supported by the An Waray Partylist.

The aspects of their work that need to be strengthened are in the fields of security, logistics, exposure and linkages. The Philippines has been tagged as the world's most dangerous place for journalists. Unlike journalists of big networks, community media practitioners are defenceless especially when they are labelled as supporters of either the government or the communist insurgents. In regard to the possibility of owning small arms, they believe that they lose their civilian status once they arm themselves. Because of this insecurity, they also find it hard to do gender and peacebuilding

work often shelling out their own resources to investigate issues and participate in trainings. Free trainings given by the government is very limited. Often trainings are given by CSOs. Exposure and linkages are also limited and are often regulated by their supervisors. In media, there is an unwritten mandate not to look into highly political issues, a "directive" that limits what they can do to further the women, peace and security agenda. Additionally, FGD participants claimed difficulty in accessing information especially government documents.

Media participants to the Cheekah Session posited that they are not only seen as sources of information but have become well-trusted institutions. "We are not just avenues (of information dissemination) but we are also stakeholders". Recognition from the CSOs and the government helps a lot in furthering partnerships with these sectors. To be able to strengthen their work, regular meeting and assemblies among media practitioners should be organised. Appointments of focal groups to facilitate linkages must also be done.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations
Women participants of the Cheekah Session in Samar described the peace and order situation in the province to be unstable. They claimed that armed conflict in the region is caused by social injustice evidenced by the increasing gap between the rich and the poor and vast tracts of land being owned by a few. They also attribute the armed conflict to poverty, lack of economic opportunities and lack of basic needs and services such as education and health services. They opined that low morale and loss of confidence in the government has encouraged men and women to join the rebel forces.

They claimed that the armed conflict has caused displacement and destruction of both lives and property. Economic activities have been affected, contributing to increased unemployment and depletion of workers in rural areas. The armed conflict has contributed to feelings of insecurity and fear of being labelled as either pro-government or pro-rebel. Areas affected by armed conflict have been unproductive with people migrating to urban areas.

Women participants to the Cheekah Session reported that the unstable peace and order situation has caused fear and insecurity among them. Men migrate to urban areas to find jobs leaving them with multiple roles to play in the family with increased responsibilities.

Women in the Cheekah Session have reported experiencing forms of violence other than armed

conflict. They narrated experiences of marginalisation in the family, community and work. Except for a few, most women find themselves at the bottom of government structures. Additionally, at the workplace, community and family, they continue to experience discrimination and sexism. They report being denied the right to own properties even if the law allows it. They reported being denied the right to be gainfully employed because they are married and bear children.

In the privacy of their supposedly safe homes, women sadly reported experiencing physical abuse that they attribute to male insecurity triggered when female spouses do well at work. They report experiences of marital infidelity, as well. They talked about effects of domestic violence ranging from lowered self-worth to passivity and reluctance to fight for their rights. They claimed that women are not able to advance professionally to avoid conflict with their partners.

Fortunately, mechanisms are in place to protect women and prevent the violation of their rights. The government allocates a budget for GAD. There are women's crisis centres as well as laws (RA 9262, 9208, 7610) that protect them and prevent the violation of their rights. There are also grievance structures such as the Barangay Human Rights Action Office and the Women and Child Protection Desks found in all police stations region wide.

Women encounter challenges as they uphold and protect their rights. The government's inability to put policy into practice is perhaps one of the biggest frustrations shared by the women in this Cheekah Session. They questioned the utilisation of the GAD fund; lamented politicking that deters project implementation; expressed concern over the lack of political will, the patriarchal system, the lack of gender sensitivity in government, and the labelling that armed groups do that has caused fear in doing community or advocacy work. Most importantly, they lamented that the armed conflict or the unstable peace and order situation has prevented women from active involvement in socio-civic-political affairs and has deterred them from articulating their perspectives. Armed conflicts, in their words, have disrupted their programs, projects and activities. The women in this FGD are also challenged by the lack of financial resources to fund their work. They express sadness over the small number of women sitting in governance structures and have expressed concern over landowners using their resources to threaten the land reform advocates among them.

Despite these challenges, women participate in gender and peacebuilding work. This Cheekah Session aimed at knowing how various peace and development stakeholders effectively contribute to strengthening women's participation in peace and development work. In Samar, women, despite experiences of violence and conflict, function as community organisers. They conduct training from livelihood to health. They have aided in building women's confidence that they may be able to effectively participate in dialogues and meetings. They have formed cooperatives and other organisations to generate income or lobby a cause such as equitable land ownership. They engage in livelihood activities and take part in small-scale businesses. Indeed, CSOs perform various roles aside from providing services. They do networking, research, and advocacy and information dissemination. They serve as the peoples' watchdogs and monitoring force. A woman in government, Vice-Mayor Rosemarie Rodriguez, has helped legislate women's protection from armed violence and their participation in decision-making and peace processes. Women in LGUs like her have helped advance women's agenda in formal spaces and address immediate concerns of women in the community. Women in the police force work for women's protection by doing investigative work and providing immediate assistance such as shelter and food to victims of violence in coordination with the DSWD. Women in media report on air abuses committed against women and use their stature to participate in spaces meant to protect women and promote their rights. Like women in CSOs, they serve as watchdogs and monitors of human rights abuses willing to lend an ear to the abused and aggrieved.

This research also aims to know the support needed by women in CSOs, government and media to contribute to the implementation of the NAP. Based on this research, the following were initial recommendations specific to gender and peacebuilding work in Samar, Visayas:

- Conduct capability-building training particularly paralegal training and IHL/CAHRIHL training considering that Samar is an armed conflict zone;
- Train women police officers in Women and Child Protection Desks in handling VAWC cases and in counselling;
- Ensure larger representation of women in local peace mechanisms such as the Barangay Human Rights Action Centre, the Lupon ng Tagapamayapa and other local peace mechanisms;

- Conduct voters' education to encourage the nomination and election of women of substance to local government posts;
- Actively recruit women in the security sector particularly the police force;
- Fund activities of LGU, CSOs and media meant to protect women from armed conflict situations and increase their participation in decision-making processes and peace work; and
- Discard traditional adversarial paradigms and collaborate to ensure protection of women from armed conflict situations and increase their participation in decision-making processes and peace work.

Indeed, armed conflict and violence have adverse impacts on communities and families but women in Samar had a few stories to tell related to victimisation. They had more to narrate in terms of what they do and can do to rise above the situation. The Cheekah Session revealed that the participation of women in governance and leadership positions produce results; participation of women in media can make a difference; and active participation of women in CSOs empowers and builds. Supporting and strengthening what they do may just pave the way to sustainable, holistic and lasting peace in conflict-ridden but resources-endowed Samar. ◆

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Chapter 4

Women Peacebuilders in Maguindanao, Mindanao

HISTORY OF CONFLICT AND PEACE – MAGUINDANAO, MINDANAO

The Humanitarian Action Plan for Mindanao that was written up in 2011 gave an overview of the situation, history of conflict as well as current program interventions in Mindanao. To note the context of the conflict and peace situation in Mindanao in general and Maguindanao in particular, the Mindanao Regional Cheekah Session draws largely from this action plan, as it is most recent and reflective of the current state of Maguindanao. Of the six provinces in the ARMM Region Maguindanao is already considered to be the most impoverished. This vulnerability is considered to be the central culprit as to why the province faced the greatest number of displaced communities as a result of the 2008 conflict. Communities spoke of the destructions as damage to houses and community structures (OCHA, 2011).

The Mindanao HAP notes that while most IDPs in Maguindanao have spontaneously returned to their places of origin in 2010, there remains a residual caseload of IDPs, both those living in Evacuation Centres (ECs) and those living with host communities. The HAP also noted the challenges faced by the communities that continue to find difficulty in re-establishing their lives and livelihoods. The HAP likewise noted there needs to be basic social services that should be made accessible in the communities as well as human rights mechanisms to help uphold the rights of the people even in situations of armed conflict and violence. Basic services have been enumerated as access to food and nutritional support, access to potable water, proper sanitation facilities and health care, rehabilitation of community structures (such as health facilities, schools, farm-to-market roads and solar driers), shelter support and support for education and sustainable livelihoods (especially agricultural support). In the area of human rights and protection, an improved mechanism is needed for reporting human rights violations and child protection interventions (OCHA, 2011).

The provinces of Mindanao have been in a state of low-intensity conflict since 1968. The HAP notes that the conflict, as well as the effects of the clan feuds and natural disasters, has resulted in the constant experience of displacement of large numbers of people. It was noted in the HAP that the most recent major displacement occurred in August 2008 that had about 750,000 people displaced by armed conflict. Poverty as experienced by a large portion of the population is considered to exacerbate the effects of conflict. This experience of

being impoverished comes from a lack of access to basic services like access to potable water even malnourishment in various areas that is in contrast to the perception that Mindanao is one of the richest regions in the country in terms of natural resources, that are apparently not being enjoyed by majority of its people.

Muslims were the majority in Mindanao. It has been said that Islam reached Mindanao in 1380 from the Moluccas Straits and was adopted by a number of ethnic groups in the region, for example the Maguindanaoans, Maranaoans and the Tausug. The Muslims and a number of Philippine colonizers were noted to have a tense relationship. Even if the Spaniards ruled over the Philippines for more than 300 years, they never succeeded in controlling Mindanao, the most that it had in terms of control was its settlement in Zamboanga and from there they commanded the Basilan straits. The Americans colonized the Philippines for over 45 years; their attempt to consolidate the Philippines in one rule also had an effect on Mindanao, as settlers from the Visayas came and set up their homes in Mindanao. Migration to Mindanao continued to accelerate (OCHA, 2011).

From the perspective of Muslims their feelings towards settlers "as visitors extending their stay" also have their place in their parables. In the 2010, the CPCP research team of Isis International first came across this story from a Muslim elder Babu Umbai, during the focus group discussion coined as Cheekah Sessions or informal talk. The researchers had the privilege to converse with a community elder who narrated the story or a parable of visitors extending their stay and encroaching in the home of their host. Babu Umbai (Babu is a term for Muslim woman community elder), shared with us a story of a welcoming host who opened up their home to visitors who were travelling and needed a place to stay. As the visitors were welcomed they were fed, encouraged to rest, feel comfortable and treat the home as if it was theirs. The visitors should have been thankful and respectful of the host's generosity, but as they over extended their visit, they robbed the host of their possession, and slowly encroached and took over their land. The host was even forced out of his/her land. In this parable of Babu Umbai, she was able to share with us the tale and history of how the Moro sultanates lost their land to invasive visitors (Isis International, 2010).

In an earlier section of this regional situationer the experience of poverty was also described as a concern in the region. HAP cites indicators of poverty such as widespread unemployment and under-employment. In this condition, governance and effective implementation of laws face significant challenges specially if the dominant feeling is a sense of insecurity and poor human security persists. In the PAMANA Programme of the OPAPP it notes the following as the root causes of the conflict: (i) poor governance, injustice and abuse; (ii) political marginalisation and "inferiorisation"; (iii) threats to Moro and Islamic identity; (iv) the experience of government neglect and absence of government; and (v) exploitation and marginalisation of indigenous and cultural communities (OCHA, 2011).

Warring Groups in Mindanao
Fighting between Moros and settlers started shortly after the independence of the Philippines from the United States, with both Moro and Christian settlers forming militias. It was noted in the HAP that the "Muslims formed 'Blackshirt' and 'Barracuda' militias and settler militias were known as 'Ilaga'." Some Moro groups originally sought for secession from the Philippines. They later modified their aims to that of greater autonomy within the Philippines for the Moro people in the areas where they form a majority of the population (OCHA, 2011).

In the course of the history of conflict in Mindanao the Philippine government has fought with several armed groups. The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), was noted to be the first Moro insurgent group. It was founded in 1968 and launched an armed insurgency against the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) in 1972. Since then it had attempts of entering into peace agreements with the government from the time of Marcos. These peace agreements have however failed in reducing the level of conflict, due in part to the fact that it was implemented unilaterally by the government of President Marcos. To date the HAP notes that MNLF cadres have been incorporated within the structures of the GRP, particularly those of the ARMM, and some of its fighters have been integrated within the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The MNLF has not fought against the Government since this peace agreement was signed, but the MNLF still exists as a political movement.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), broke away from the MNLF in 1977 (over questions of strategy and personality differences between its leadership). The group was officially launched in 1984. The MILF has always maintained that that the Moro people have been unfairly treated by successive governments, disenfranchised of their land and subjected to economic and political discrimination. They seek recognition of the Moro peoples' status as a 'first nation' supplanted by settlers, as well as redress for perceived injustices in the treatment of the Moro people by the GRP, especially with respect to land titling. The MILF does not accept the present governance and security arrangements and rejects the ARMM or any form thereof as a solution. On breaking away, the MILF absorbed many of the fighters from the MNLF who were based in Mindanao and rapidly built its armed wing, the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF). Low-intensity conflict persisted between the BIAF and the Armed Forces of the Philippines throughout the second half of the 1980s and the 1990s (OCHA, 2011).

The roots of the conflict in Mindanao have always been a struggle for reclaiming the land, rights, and autonomy of the Moros. But now as talks of peace continue in Mindanao, one of the largest islands of the Philippines, they need to be able to acknowledge the rights and histories not only of the Moros, but also the Lumads (indigenous people), and the Christian settlers. Recognition of the rights of the Mindanawon is recognition of the history and struggle of the tri-people of Mindanao: Lumads (18 tribes), Moros (13 tribes) and the Christians(64 groups)(Balay Rehabilitation Centre).

The tri-people of Mindanao, for several decades now been affected by repeated internal armed conflict between the national military forces, the MNLF and the MILF. The most difficult war conflict points for the tri-people were the all our war in 2000, military campaigns in 2003, and very recently 2008 when the young Space for Peace Declaration first experienced a breach. These conflict situations result in a disruption of family and community life, when people need to leave their homes and move to cramped evacuation centres, livelihood is disrupted, and childhood and play is interrupted for children (Isis International, 2010).

But amidst stories of difficulties during conflict women took pride in sharing community efforts that they took part in – and they shared the significance of the formation of the G7 (seven villages in Pikit North, Cotabato) was a common story of hope for them. It spoke of the community's effort of trying to secure their spaces as communities so that their lives could be rebuilt. The G7 Space for Peace was initiated in 2003, and in the experience of women in Pikit it is an organisation that they identify with, a feeling of hope when lives can be rebuilt after conflict and a commitment towards unity and understanding as tri-people of Pikit. The women heavily invested in participating in this community effort, and you could hear some form of recognition from some community leaders when they see women volunteers and participants in Cultures of Peace Seminars. But despite the feeling of ownership in this community effort, women continue to figure in the margins. When pictures of these efforts are presented in formal spaces the women whom they say are very active, are never in the pictures, because male leaders often are the ones that figure in such historical documentation. Women's voices also figure in the margins, as an indigenous woman pointed out, "We are often called for multi-sectoral dialogues, and we come to show support for these, but I do not remember any instance when were asked what we thought of the war and its effects on our families."

In the last decade, policy actors have aimed at strengthening women's participation in various levels of peacebuilding. These policies have sought to strengthen women's representation in formal governance at the national and international level. At the national level of the Philippines there are pending bills like the Women in Nation Building Act that calls for a strengthened participation of women in political leadership, and at the international level there are watershed bills such as United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, that calls for the participation of women at all levels of peacebuilding. But even if these bills and conventions exist for women, concrete experiences of women leaders in the community speak of a different story.

Traditional notions of gender still prevail; this is owed to religious and cultural conservatism as felt by women in most parts of the Philippines including Mindanao. These thus result to a lack of representation in major spaces of decision making; invisibility in addressing reproductive health needs of women and girls; while gender based violence or violence against women continues to be an experience that is shared in whispers and kept a secret by women. The inability to talk about the violence they experience or observe from others may be drowned by the larger experience of conflict and war.

Women Peacebuilders in Maguindnao, Mindanao

The Regional Cheekah Sessions for Mindanao saw the gathering of fourteen (14) women coming from various age (age range: 27-62), civil status, religious and ethnicity backgrounds. These 14 women represented about twelve (12) organisations from local government, government agencies, civil society organisations, community based organisations and media representatives, details of which are as follows:

Government Agencies
- OSCC-ARMM
- Commission on Human Rights Region XII
- Dep Ed Datu Blah Sinsuat District
- DSWD Women Regional Kalipi

Local Government Units
- Nuro Upi Municipal Council

Civil Society Organisations
- Institute for Autonomy and Governance
- Kutawalo Council for Justice
- Mindanao Peoples' Caucus

Media
- GAD-DXUP FM
- Radio Mindanao Network

Community Based Organisation
- Teduray Lanbagian Women Organisation Inc. (TLWOI)

Given their varied representation and experience in doing gender and peacebuilding work they were able to share on their experience and perspectives in the experience of conflict and peacebuilding in informal sharing and through the creative activities.

The participants were divided into three groups and they were given time and materials to discuss and depict their experience of conflict with the use of the conflict tree as an analogy of the forms, roots effects of armed conflict in their communities with particular focus on the violations of rights women face and remedies available to them when these occur.

Experience of War and Violence

The women identified various forms of violence experienced by their communities and these could be clustered into several forms of violence: political, economic, physical/sexual and socio-cultural forms of violence.

Political forms of violence. The forms of violence they shared were: the violations arising from the GPH-MILF armed conflict, militarisation and political killings. The women shared that they saw the prolonged and uncertain negotiations between the GPH-MILF resulting in human rights violations that may be unaccounted for. As groups are watchful of the formal negotiation process, they fear for civilians suffering from human rights violations that go unreported. Militarisation in the perception of ordinary women is seen as a source of violence rather than protection or security. In highly militarised areas, they have also noted heightened fear and insecurity among civilians. Another form of violence that the women mentioned is that of political killings, one of the recent massacres their region has seen is election related that happened in 2009.

Economic forms of violence. The women also noted examples of economic violence, These are: structural violence which refers to the systems, institutions and policies that meet some peoples' needs, rights or wants at the expense of others; development aggression, cattle rustling, burning of properties, kidnapping, human trafficking and child labour. Structural violence such as poverty is seen both as a cause of and a result of armed conflict. Development aggression was also noted to be equally as violent as compared to armed conflict situations. Some examples of development aggression are illegal logging and mining operations in properties owned by the indigenous people that are commonplace and continue to violate their rights even within conflict situations. The women also reported that kidnapping and hold-up crimes have been rampant affecting the economic activities of business people who are often of Chinese descent in North Upi, being held hostage and robbed by rival cartels. Raising cattle was also a source of livelihood for many families and so the common practice of cattle rustling especially during the elections is seen to hurt the livelihood of many families. This practice is often exacerbated by armed conflict and tension between political rivals. Burning of properties was a noted experience of indigenous tribes during conflict and this contributed heavily to worsening their impoverished situation.

Physical forms of violence. The physical forms of violence the women mentioned were: massacre, harassment, hold ups, killings, political killings, rape/sexual abuse and domestic violence. In the beginning of the report of the groups, the first group noted that both men and women are victims of killings and massacre. Harassment is a common experience in the community especially when intense armed conflict occurs that causes families to leave their homes contributing to their experience of temporary and/or permanent displacement. Massacre is also seen as a form of violence that particularly targets vocal and assertive leaders and members of the community, a strategy used to permanently silence them. The women also noted gendered nature of physical violence in the form of rape, sexual abuse and domestic violence as these are experienced more by women. The women note that the incidences of sexual abuse that they observe are closely linked to the growing availability of pornographic materials in the community which they also note as another form of abuse of women even within conflict situations. Women in the group who are familiar with reported cases of abuse note that women have become vulnerable to sexual abuse even when riding Skylabs (a common form of transportation in Maguindanao). They also noted that more and more recorded rape cases have minors as victims. The discomfort they felt in sharing these incidents was evident during the time of the small group discussion as well as when they were sharing these in the plenary.

Socio-cultural forms of violence. The women also shared other forms of violence that may be clustered as more socio-cultural in nature. Some of those mentioned was the experience of discrimination against women, growing concern over the practice of child labour, and the collective experience of fear. Discrimination whether against women or indigenous communities was noted by the women as worsening the experience of poverty and further challenges access to resources (closely linked to economic forms of violence). The women also note that the experience of killings, massacres and visibility of military forces contributed to the growing fear among the citizens of the community. The community's experiences of the killings and massacres have also threatened the peace and security at the personal level and that of the community. Other forms of socio-cultural violence were the growing practice of child labour and incidents of discrimination against women. In sharing the growing practice of child labour the participants note that they see this as tied to the experience of poverty within families; sometimes leaving them with very little choice in making the younger ones work. Discrimination against women was also a shared observation by the participants seen in the availability of materials that portray women as sex objects and the participants see this as a practice that contributes to how women are discriminated and eventually abused.

Root Causes of Armed Conflict and Violence

The research team notes that the few root causes of armed conflict and violence shared by the women are the very roots mentioned by existing literature as the roots of the conflict in Mindanao. The women note that diverse political agenda/interest, resource based (mostly land) conflict have contributed to the worsening armed conflict in the region. Resource based conflict has left Muslim and indigenous communities disinherited of their homes, culture and land. In the past decades they have also noted that resource based conflict has been made worse by development aggression in the form of illegal logging and mining. These forms of aggression continue to rob people of their lands and culture that contribute to worsening poverty of these communities and the destruction and degradation of their environment.

Having a number of indigenous women in the group also enabled the research team to have an

understanding of their situation. In the various group presentations, the indigenous women shared their experience of discrimination and their perspective of how indigenous leaders were cheated off their land primarily because they were "illiterate" and did not receive the "proper" education.

They also noted more recent observations of growing gender-based violence in the region that exists consistently with or without conflict. The growing incidence of gender-based violence has been attributed by the women to the proliferation of pornographic materials and easier access to drugs. The women further shared that the availability of pornographic materials to the youth has caused them to be more aggressive in expressing their sexual desires to the point of reported cases of assault against peers and siblings for sex. Drugs and other vices such as alcoholic drinks also affect how people act in the community.

Effects of Armed Conflict in the Communities

The responses of the participants on their analysis and observation of the effect of armed conflict in their communities can be clustered into three areas: political, economic and socio-cultural.

Political Impact. Armed conflict also has an impact on the political rights and empowerment of their community. The impact on their political rights were noted by the women as follows: unprotected basic rights, having limited access to education and not having control on the use of their resources because they were not consulted on the use of their lands while bearing witness to the environmental degradation brought about by the abusive use of their resources. They see very little respect for natural resources because they observe a negligence or inability to protect the environment and their natural resources. Specifically, consultations with communities regarding development programs are not practiced during conflict situations enabling developers and corporations to exploit resource within the domain of the indigenous tribes. The lack of education was noted by the participants to be contributory to their inability to protect their land.

Economic and Environmental Impact. The experience of poverty and the lack of access to basic services were noted by the women to be both the source and impact of armed conflict and violence to their community. The economic and environmental impact that the women noted were: poverty, inaccessibility of social services (due to insecurity), displacement/dislocation, evacuation and environmental degradation (and with no prior consultations on the use of ancestral

land for illegal logging and mining activities). The lack of personal and community security also led to the inaccessibility of different social services like health centres and education. These social infrastructure are faced with internal problems of having limited resources such as medicine, educational materials and even personnel. Access to basic services are not the only problem, the need to leave their homes during times of conflict also causes communities to experience displacement and disruption in their economic activities. As was noted in the earlier section on political impact of conflict, non-consultation on the use of their resources also causes environmental degradation and abuse of natural resources. Conflict situation is also seen to worsen the non-practice of consultations with communities regarding development programs. This instead becomes an enabling environment for developers and corporations to exploit resource within the domain of the indigenous tribes.

Socio-Cultural Impact. The experience of conflict and violence also has an impact on the social relations and prevailing culture in the communities where the women belong whether it is a culture of violence or silence borne about by the feeling of insecurity. Some of the impact they mentioned are: rido (clan conflict), growing culture of violence and aggression, breeding mistrust within the community resulting to heightened sense of difference and intolerance worsening the culture of violence and aggression, high dropout rates among the schooling children, trauma and fear manifested through culture of silence, increased dependence on dole-out donations by the government and other institutions, and impact on dignity. The women shared that they see the practice of rido or family/clan feuds gaining strength in the communities in Mindanao as a practice of resolving conflict. The rido is only one form of how they see a growing mistrust among tri-people communities (Christians, Indigenous People, Moros) with biases strengthening differences, these are also seen to worsen the culture of violence and aggression. The experience of massive displacement for long periods of time that is disruptive of livelihood activities also have an effect on the communities of people with an increasing dependence on the dole-out donations coming from the government and other institutions. The worsening culture of violence and aggression also result or breeds a culture of silence in the region with people choosing not to divulge what they know due to fear of being tortured and killed. Armed conflict has also bred fear and trauma among members of the community. The growing fear is also seen by the women to have an impact on self-worth

of community members especially the women. The women also shared that they are bothered about the growing feeling of disempowerment when communities get used to the experience of conflict. Community members come to accept it as their reality which they can do nothing about but accept with all its consequences.

Women's Rights Violations

It was also important to establish the gendered experience of conflict from the perspective of women. Their responses in this session were clustered into the categories of political, economic, physical, individual agency, holistic sense of security, socio-cultural, physical, psychological, gender/sexual based, that women encounter before and after conflict.

Violation to Political Rights. In responding to the question of specific rights of women that may have been violated before, during and after the experience of

conflict the participants responded with an awareness of women's rights as guaranteed and protected by international codes (and conventions) and national laws. Yet they cited various manifestations of how these rights are not upheld given the lack of government protection. They have cited socio-cultural views on women that hinder them from exercising equality because from experience they have no right to become leaders. Access to equal opportunities and equal protection of rights are challenges before and after conflict. They experience challenges that hinder their right to own property that also has an effect on their sense of independence and economic empowerment. Participants have also shared observations of how victims of violence have a hard time asserting their rights and in seeking justice.

Violation to Economic Rights. The lack of access to rights is also reflected in their responses related to economic opportunities available to them as well services that women can avail of. Economic rights were a particular area of concern that women raised. The women noted that they already experience a lack of economic opportunities during times when there is no conflict. The concern for economic opportunities comes from wanting to secure the everyday livelihood for their families to cover the basics of food and education for their children. During times of relative peace they already find it difficult to secure their financial needs, but this is an experience that is several times harder during times when they recover from economic challenges brought about by conflict. Women noted that they have limited access to economic opportunities and livelihood programs which is why women find it harder to recover from conflict because of their challenges access to economic opportunities.

Access to services was also pointed out by women to be a challenge before and after conflict. During times when there is no conflict women note that they have difficulty accessing health facilities. Communities where women reside have no health facilities so it is difficult for them to treat the illnesses of women and their children. During times of conflict and households would need to evacuate their homes and women note that what they lose are their basics. Evacuation centres are noted to be ill-prepared in providing for decent basic facilities such as comfort rooms. A number of women have experienced challenges of child birth during times of evacuation because there are no decent birthing facilities in the evacuation centres.

Challenge to Personal Development and Sense of Security. Education is noted one of the basic rights and services guaranteed by the constitution and international law regardless of gender. Yet women participants have articulated that one of the challenges they face for personal development is the lack of education. Women note that they have limited programs that they can access to hone and help develop their skills. This condition also contributes to their economic disempowerment.

Women participants also talked about the feeling of insecurity on so many levels which runs contrast to international frameworks like human security. Women enumerate various sites of insecurity from their household, their workplace and community. This comes from the insecurity they feel from the experience of conflict as well as the experience of intimate violence. The women note that this contributes to their physical and psychological insecurity. Because of this, they fail to enjoy leisure activities whether with their families and friends, let alone by themselves. A prevailing sense of fear hinders them from engaging in basic activities or time for rest and relaxation. This lack of sense of security comes from the experience of physical and emotional abuse, during conflict or the experience of intimate violence from intimate partners. The women note two forms of effects on women brought about the lack of sense of security. For some women it has pushed them to leave their homes and for some it has pushed them to passivity and despair in not having any control of their situation.

Socio-Cultural Effects. Participants have shared that they noticed how women are prone to dropping out from school due to the uncertainty of conflict situations. On the practical side they see school operation as being disrupted especially during the time of conflict and subsequently having to evacuate their homes and their communities. Schools are commonly used as evacuation areas which affect the class schedules of students. As for attitude the participants note that they observe women to be less future-oriented because of the unpredictable conflict situation, as such they have also become reluctant to plan out their future. Making their houses homes and a place for rest are far from their minds. They noticed that a number of women in their communities do not bother with things such as fixing their homes and seeking for permanent sources of income. According to some of the participants' women see these things as temporary as they will be destroyed by the clashes between warring groups.

Physical and Gender Based Violence. Women note that evacuation centres are not places for rest or development especially for women. Evacuation centres lack basic facilities such as toilets. The constant experience of conflict, evacuation and displacement has been noted to be factors that also hamper women's growth.

Other responses in this category spoke of the participants' observation of growing incidents of gender-based violence that exists even prior to conflict. As some of the participants were also community leaders, they also shared their observation of increasing cases of violence against women and children being reported in the area. Sexual abuse is also a growing concern among women as an experience within various sites of the home, community and even as a consequence to conflict. When asked why they think this is a growing incident in the area they point to the availability of pornographic materials even in the community.

Mechanisms Available to Women in Upholding their Rights

In noting the experience of rights violations it is also important to note whether the participants also knew of mechanisms available for redress. Participants noted the availability of laws and policies at the international, national, and local community levels that even thread into indigenous mechanisms of redress. Economic and peace programs were also another category of intervention where government and civil society organisations collaborate. Women specific policy interventions were also noted in this section. Some of those mentioned also thread into ways of doing or efforts towards more conscious inclusion of women. In all of these women participants note that as women experience various forms of rights violations also came the stronger will to be active in protecting and upholding these rights.

Policy Intervention

These experiences, however, have made women more assertive in protecting their rights. In asserting these rights women note how these rights are enshrined in international treaties and laws as well as national policies. At the international level they cite International Humanitarian Law (IHL), UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325 and 1820), to be basic laws or policies that protect women and communities during armed conflict and violence. At the local level what is available to them are the recently passed Magna Carta of Women (RA 9208); and the Anti-violence against Women and Children (RA 7610) as national laws that protect the rights of women and children at all times. Aside from the availability of these international and national laws are other mechanisms like the Joint Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities between the MILF and the GPH, Bantay Ceasefire and Sagip Sibilyan (Save the Civilians) program.

The women also shared the existence of indigenous mechanisms for redress like the tribal conflict resolution mechanisms, laws for women, and projects in collaboration with CSOs, local government programs, and established peace zones (that eventually contribute to a growing sense of security). Indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution are now being recognised by local governments. It is now part of the acknowledged legal system in communities where conflicts are initially settled within tribes prior to being brought to higher courts. Women's laws and codes are also crucial mechanisms that protect women's rights.

Integration of Women in Program Implementation

Identified mechanisms that help protect women's rights are the inclusions of women in planning, implementing, and monitoring of projects in the community, participation of women in community dialogues, and their representation in local governance structures. According to the group, these spaces should be further looked into and developed to ensure meaningful involvement of women. They recommended that women should be acting as a collective to address the challenges of resistance, death threats and harassment.

Other Programs and Mechanisms

Participants also noted that projects and programs of both government agencies and CSOs help uplift current situation of women in the community. Examples given are the Bahay Kubo Project of the Upi Women's Federation, the Visayan Forum and Microsoft, and the barangay affairs office which offers immediate assistance to members of the community. A growing number of organisations are helping communities' access different social services giving emphasis on women's health and skills development. Established peace zones also affect the sense of security of women.

Challenges Encountered in Accessing these Mechanisms

Challenges faced by women in accessing these mechanisms such as various policies and programs are largely rooted in: nepotism, lack of political will, improper budget allocation, corruption, culture of silence and absentee officials. Nepotism is practiced in the province affecting the administration and implementation of community projects and programs. Many powerful clans treat local politics as a family enterprise to the detriment of their constituents. Lack of political will is also seen in the program implementation in their community. Oftentimes, the local budget is improperly allocated and there are instances that GAD funds are being corrupted by city officials. Another challenge confronted by the mechanisms is the culture of silence prevalent in the community, given they also fear speaking against these corruption and other lapses in governance. Absentee officials also worsen the state of the community. Political leaders stay in more developed areas unable to serve and monitor the condition of their constituents.

Challenges seen to affect the efficiency of these mechanisms are: stringent requirement to access services, weak implementation of projects,

unsustainable livelihood projects, and the non-involvement of women in consultations. Government requirements such as birth registration should be promoted to the indigenous people for them to have equal access to basic social services like primary education. The unawareness of these prerequisites often worsens the quality of life of indigenous communities inducing child labour and other forms of violence. There is also a weak implementation of projects as pointed out by the group. The Pantawid ng Pamilyang Pilipino Progam (4Ps or CCT) for instance, has been tainted with corruption allegations with ordinary women unable to receive the conditional cash grants. Such has led to domestic violence with husbands physically assaulting their partners due to their failure to receive money despite their efforts to comply. According to the group, there are other government-initiated programs that are deemed unsustainable and useless. A possible cause for this is the low attendance of women in community consultations due to their unawareness of such organised events.

Women's Participation in Peacebuilding

The Regional Cheekah Session also had a space to discuss and identify the involvement of women in upholding their rights and creating peace in the community. The activity "Women in the News" allowed the participants a creative form of sharing their stories of participation, mainly through various ways of news reporting.

Through various media programs such as Diretso Balita Pangkakabaihan, and Bantay Boses ng Sambayanan and Cheekah Boses ng Masa, the participants were able to share various spaces available for them to contribute in gender and peacebuilding as well as the challenges they face in doing this work.

Women in Local Leadership

A number of participants represented in the Cheekah Session are those working as leaders at the community level. One participant shared on the experience of leading the Committee for Women and Family, as Committee Chairperson in their barangay. In this space she is able to monitor rape cases and oversee various community projects for women. A major challenge encountered in her work is the ignorance of some women and higher political officials regarding the laws and codes that protect women's rights. Because of this, women are unaware of the mechanisms they can use in times of distress and government officials, conversely, misallocate the budget intended for gender projects and other programs, one of which

is the Pantawid ng Pamilyang Pilipino Program or what is more known as the 4Ps. Once, she came into conflict with their city mayor when she revealed the number of rape cases in her community, questioning her knowledge on women's laws and policies that protect women's rights. When it comes to monitoring sexual abuse, she argues that there is a slow process of investigation done by the authorities and no established crisis centres to cater to the needs of abused women. Several cultural factors also impinge the full protection of women's rights. According to her, most rape cases are solved through amicable settlements and do not undergo the proper judicial process of tackling criminal cases. She also sees the possible exploitation of female minor victims who are being represented by their families in amicable settlements. She explains that some parent and family members would agree on certain conditions for personal gain.

Another important work in leadership with the council is to take part in creating and promoting local ordinances that protect the rights of women especially indigenous peoples. As a local official, she sees the need for the establishment of clinics for women and more collaboration with private institutions in delivering social services. She also aids in active research to address underdevelopment and corruption in their community.

Being a council member in their tribe was also shared in as a space for women. In participating in the local council she is able to help out in the peace situation of their community by providing counsel and offering solutions in conflicts happening between and among members of the tribe. She contributes in strengthening indigenous mechanisms by taking part in their tribal conflict resolutions.

Women in CSOs

Women in various peace NGOs were also represented in this space. A common experience is their work in leading and joining protests and mass calls for ending abuse against women. Campaign work with the public is matched with advocacy work in promoting laws and policies that protect women collaborating with other organisations in the community. In committing to NGO work they note that attending workshops and seminars deepen their understanding of women's issues which they share with the community. These capacity building opportunities, however, are very limited and are only accessible to some women.

Another area of CSO work on gender and peacebuilding is studying indigenous mechanisms of governance which they think is helpful in creating

a culture-sensitive and gender-sensitive governance structure for ARMM. Apart from this, their research work can serve as a database and reference for government agencies and other organisations.

Women in Government Service

There were also participants who shared their experience in being in government service; in this case, being part of the Commission on Human Rights. She shared that their office is conducting training to promote awareness, especially in indigenous communities, of national law systems and processes to not compromise the rights of victims of any criminal act. She explains that people need to report so that they can help in investigating the cases and settle them accordingly. She adds that there are infrastructure already in place to provide psychosocial services to victims of violence. However, human resources are lacking for them to be operational. Her office is also reaching out to people and have established hotlines for easier reporting and communication of cases.

Organisational Contribution and Partnerships for Gender and Peacebuilding: Contributions, Challenges and Recommendations

For the last session, the participants were asked to review their experiences within their organisations and assess its strengths and weaknesses. Participants were divided according to their line of work.

Government Agencies

The following government agencies were represented in the small group discussion, and they noted their work as well. The OSCC-ARMM, helps the indigenous people with their problem for example land and cultural conflict. The Commission on Human Rights Region XII, is the Ombud for women under the

Magna Carta for Women. The Dep Ed Datu Blah Sinsuat District, Training: community, school serves as evacuation centres, mediator with armed groups to maintain peace in the community. Then the DSWD Women Regional Kalipi, Kalipunan Ng Liping Pilipina are actively joining the different activities of women whether government or nongovernment. They look into all forms of violence against women. They assist the DWSD in implementing all the projects. DWSD women are observing human rights violations and the women are usually coordinating with agencies and all nongovernment to help victims of natural and human-made calamities. The Nuro Municipal Council was also represented and shared that they do work in support of local organisations on how they can handle their organisations better. They noted their contribution, assessment of needs and recommendations as summarised in the following table:

CONTRIBUTION

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

SUPPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS

GAD ARMM Code

Out of School Youth

Ordinance on Early Marriage

Livelihood

Free birth registration

Financial support

Capability-building

Documentation

Funding agency

Information drive

Media/press

Monitoring

Implementation

Networking

Transparency

Evaluation

Cooperation and participation

Assessment

Monitoring

As local officials, they have contributed in the articulation of the GAD code in their areas. They also provide programs to cater to the needs of the community such as livelihood projects for women and alternative learning systems for out-of-school youth. Free birth registration is also a service given to the indigenous people for them to access other government provided social services.

Financial support, capability-training, and documentation are the areas of their work that need to be strengthened. Allotted budget like the GAD fund should be well-appropriated. Capacity-building for government officials is also needed to further their work in protecting women's rights and to also make their participation in local governments as women leaders more meaningful. The suggestion to strengthen documentation mechanisms mirrors the efforts of local women legislators to promote accountability and transparency and curb corruption in local government structures. They are also exploring ways of tapping other funding agencies and not relying solely on government funds. Furthermore, community information drives needs to be intensified as it is their

responsibility to the community in order to promote social services they provide.

In being asked the kind of support they get from other sectors they note it as follows: coverage, networking, and assistance in implementation and monitoring of projects. Media helps out in disseminating information on issues concerning the community. They also help in the monitoring of government projects and further promote transparency of project funds. They collaborate with other organisations to strengthen programs and services delivered and this can be done through strengthening partnerships with other institutions.

To strengthen their work, the group recommends that promotion of transparency in LGUs be intensified. Moreover, they should also look at ways to increase participation and cooperation of their constituents in community projects and programs. An institutionalised monitoring and assessment mechanism is an important suggestion that would help the effectiveness of all projects being implemented.

CSOs

There were three CSOs that were represented in the group. There is the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG) that contributes to peacebuilding by engaging the military in a capability program for peace and security sector reform. It is also focused on increasing the capacity of ARMM for governance. A program to protect the rights of IPs in the ARMM will be undertaken next year for baseline data gathering, cultural mapping, and empowerment for securing the recognition of IP rights and ancestral domain. The Kutawato Council for Justice and Peace, is a peace and human rights organisation. As such they document cases of human rights violations, conduct seminars/workshops on gender awareness, culture of peace and facilitate interfaith dialogue among tri-people in Mindanao. The Mindanao Peoples' Caucus helped establish the WCPD in all police units to assist women and children victims/clients. They have also committed to intensifying their campaign on gender-sensitivity and equality. Lastly there is the Teduray Lanbagian Women Organisation Inc., Upi. This is an indigenous women's organisation for Teduray women that they consider to be the bridge for women to learn about their culture as well as rights of indigenous women that value equality. They endeavour to push this by information dissemination, lobbying and education.

The representatives of these groups have summarised their contributions, needs and recommendations, these have been summarised in the following table:

CONTRIBUTION

AREAS OF IMPOVEMENT

SUPPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS

35 community leaders

700 individuals

Physical structures with equipment

Action research

Capability-building for security sector

Gender-sensitive program of IPs

Networking

Complementation of resources and programs

Deepening knowledge of 1325 and 1820

M & E of GPB

Lobbying doable laws and program

Budget

Recognition of customary laws

Establishment of women crisis centres

Networking/complementation

Enrichment workshop

One major contribution of CSOs in the community is the increased participation of women in gender and peacebuilding work. Ms. Froilyn Mendoza of TLWO shares that they have trained 35 community women leaders and have recruited 700 individual members. They have also established equipped physical infrastructures accessed by women. CSOs also conduct action-researches in the community and continue providing capability-building training and workshops to various groups (women, security sector, and indigenous people) on various topics (gender-sensitivity, human rights, IHL, UNSCR 1325 and 1820, peacebuiding and active nonviolence). Inter-faith dialogues and conflict management are also conducted.

One of the work areas that need to be improved is networking among CSOs. Complementation of resource and programs should also be strengthened creating more collaborative engagements on advocacy areas that overlap. A need to deepen knowledge and

understanding of 1325 and 1820 is also necessary for meaningful promotion and participation in advocacy work. Monitoring and evaluation of gender and peacebuilding projects is a crucial area for improvement. Lastly, the lobbying of doable laws and program in the community should also be strengthened.

Budget allocation, cultural-sensitivity and social infrastructure are the primary support they mentioned to be receiving. There is already awareness to implement the laws protecting the rights of women (GAD code, Magna Carta) and indigenous people (RA 820). Establishment of social infrastructure like women crisis centres in communities are also provided for.

The CSO group recommended that more networking opportunities should be tapped and more capability-building training and workshops should be conducted. CSOs are suggested to help one another in terms of resources and project implementation. Training workshops that develop their skills should be sustained to strengthen partnerships.

Media

Media organisations were also represented in the Regional Cheekah Session. They mainly represented local radio stations like the GAD-DXUP FM, which popularize advocacies on women's rights; human trafficking and discrimination. Some of the services they offer are education/livelihood; trainings/seminars on women's rights; and women's empowerment. They also help in information dissemination especially in the area of women's values. A local IP radio station anchor was also represented, who shared on their work in terms of how they advocate for peace and development, rights of women IPs, culture of women and other IP information through radio. A major radio network such as the Radio Mindanao Network, was also represented. They have noted how they have been consistent in ensuring a space to talk about women's issues. They ensure the varied perspectives by interviewing representatives from NGOs including those from militant groups provided they strongly represent the needs of women. On a larger scope they have also contributed to sharing interviews from GPH_MILF peace panels to give updates on the peace talks for the benefit of the public. Their contributions, needs and recommendations have also been noted and summarised in the following table:

CONTRIBUTION

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

SUPPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS

Support to information dissemination

Project implementation

Financial support

Moral support

Skills and technical know-how

Conduct more trainings and seminars

Close monitoring

Conduct more livelihood training

More bridging activities

More encouragement

Financial aid / NGO

Sponsoring NGO

Bridging to other NGOs/CSOs

Sponsoring enhancement training

Sponsoring educational tour

Sama-samang paggawa

Pagkakaisa

Pagkakaroon ng regular meeting

Igalang ang opinion ng bawat isa

I-enjoy lang ang ginagawa

The media representatives see themselves as primary communicators of information to the community. They promote services and information to make women aware of the available programs. As an established institution, they also aid in project implementation and provide financial and moral support to other agencies and institutions. Media can also provide skills and technical know-how through workshops and seminars. These efforts can be strengthened by receiving and conducting more skills training as well as assisting in livelihood projects organised by other organisations. This can help strengthen networks and encourage more collaboration among various sectors. Monitoring mechanisms should also be strengthened when it comes to the programs and projects they implement. Motivation and encouragement of women is also an area for improvement.

Financial support is still a primary challenge to the sector. Lack of sponsors prevents them from conducting more enhancement training and educational tours. CSOs have responded to these challenges and continue to partner with the media through funding their programs and projects. However, there is still a need for more networks and collaborative engagements to overcome these. Agencies working for gender equality and peace should act as a collective in order to create bigger contributions, according to the group. They also recommend annual planning and evaluation meetings to hear the experiences and opinions of women from different sectors. Lastly, they encourage that women in media enjoy their work and be more passionate about it. ◆

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Chapter 5

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Conclusion

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
The Philippines is one of the first countries in Asia to launch a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. The Philippine NAP was launched on March 25, 2010. The effective implementation of these women, peace and security plan also lies in a sound understanding of the environment for which it will be implemented. The research and the findings it has gathered provides a timely assessment of the current situation, strategies and practices already employed by gender, peace and development stakeholders in government, civil society and media.

The summary of findings presents the voices of women stakeholders as they shared their perspectives in their experience of violence, its gendered impact on women and particular women's violations they feel need urgent attention amidst the experience of conflict. The findings have also surfaced ways women's participation is supported by women stakeholders in gender, peace and development. Their practice speaks of mechanisms supportive of their efforts as well as challenges they experience. The recommendations drawn by the research team comes from those shared by the women themselves as they shared their current contributions of their respective organisations, the areas of work in need of improvement and concrete recommendations to address and improve these. In articulating the recommendations, the research team (as stakeholders themselves) was also mindful of including their voices and perspectives on how to strengthen the national and regional participation of women for them to be effective partners in the implementation of the Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Summary of Findings

Experience of Violence across Regions
Kalinga in Luzon is still affected by the armed conflict between the government and the Communist Party of the Philippines. However, the experience of violence is stronger when tribal and sub-tribal wars erupt. Tribal and sub-tribal wars occur when another party feels aggrieved, most of the time because of disputes over resources such as land or boundary lines; other times because of the desire to maintain a family or tribe's honour or reputation. These kinds of conflict are aggravated by the proliferation and widespread availability of firearms. Clan conflicts divide families and communities, disrupt livelihoods, and affect food production pushing communities further into poverty. They indicate inclination of people to guard personal interests over the interests of the larger community. Conflict has also been named as one of the main push in the experience of migration as a way of to escape from threats to security and seeking more stable economic opportunities.

Samar in Visayas experiences political, economic, cultural and psychological forms of violence. The province continues to be affected by the armed conflict between the government and the Communist Party of the Philippines. However, another political form of violence, such as that which stems from political rivalries, confronts the people of the province, as well. Structural violence is also experienced through poverty and the lack of basic social services. They also noted cultural forms of violence such as the experience of marginalisation because of class and gender as well as forms of gender based violence with women experiencing domestic and sexual violence. They see the roots of this violence in ideological differences, the experience of poverty and various forms of social injustice (including gender). They have also named poor governance as contributory to worsening the experience of conflict. The armed conflict in Samar has caused displacement, worsening poverty because of the disruption of economic activities, and destruction of lives and property. The Samarenas also noted feelings of insecurity among media personnel because of political labels given to them by either party to the armed conflict.

For Maguindanao in Mindanao, the women from Maguindanao named two major forms of violence in their province and this is political and economic. Political forms of violence were named as rooted in political rivalries and armed conflict between government and the MILF. They also noted the experience of indigenous communities of development aggression (i.e. development via extraction industries) resulting in environmental degradation and destruction of their ancestral lands. They attribute conflict and violence to resources particularly the fight for ancestral domain; to historical injustice and a lack of recognition of cultural identity expressed via the struggle for self-determination, as well as to differences in political agenda and increased militarisation that contributes to fear and security among civilians. The armed conflict has limited their access to basic social services and has caused, as well, massive displacement, trauma, and disruption of social activities such as schooling, disruption of economic activities such as farming and death and destruction.

Gendered Impact of War/ Violence on Women

The gendered impact of war and violence on women has been articulated in various aspects of political, economic/environmental degradation, socio-cultural roots and impact of gender, physical, and psychological and gender/sexual based experience of violence.

1. *Political Subordination.* The experiences shared by the participants from Kalinga, Samar and Maguindanao spoke of the experience of political marginalisation in terms of women's leadership and a lack of access to basic rights and protection. They observed that women occupied very little space in leadership and were rarely appointed or elected in high level positions. As such, they are mostly at the bottom of governance structures. They see that as being rooted to the perception that political leadership is a male domain and as a manifestation of gender inequality. Another manifestation of political subordination is the poor implementation of laws that should be ensuring women's participation. They experience a lack of government protection because laws that exist are not properly implemented and are not efficiently monitored. These conditions make it more difficult for women victims of violence to access existing mechanisms for redress making it more difficult to seek justice.

2. *Economic Marginalisation and Environmental Degradation.* Women experience economic marginalisation manifested in the lack of economic opportunities and access to basic services. Women in Kalinga and Samar noted how conflict disrupts economic activities such as managing small cooperatives. Women in Samar noted how it was difficult to recover and find jobs because of double standards in hiring. Women in Maguindanao shared difficulties in accessing basic health services before and during conflict. Before conflict they already experience not having access to facilities that can treat the illnesses of women and their children. They also shared how the difficulty of access is further exacerbated by conflict when evacuation centres lack basic facilities as decent and secure comfort rooms or the lack of birthing rooms even when experience has shown that many women give birth even during conflict and evacuation.

3. *Socio-cultural Roots and Impact of Gender.* Even in times of conflict and war women continue to experience internalised and social marginalisation. Women are said to have internalised their role of being the nurturer of their family. The Kalingan women spoke of this internalised marginalisation by way of constantly sacrificing the needs in order to provide for the needs of the family. Social marginalisation has been described as not being seen as capable of holding leadership positions in the community that was a consistent experience of women in Kalinga, Samar and Maguindanao. Samarenan women described being marginalised even by way of their access to information. The experience of marginalisation because of traditional gender roles and constant experience of conflict has impacted planning their future, continuing school, holding a job and making a home.

4. *Physical and Psychological Insecurity.* The women also talked about the physical and psychological impact of violence and conflict on women. They spoke of physical insecurity because of the constant experience of conflict and needing to evacuate from their homes, and having to contend with very inhumane conditions in the evacuation centre. This impacts the women psychologically, as these results in the feeling of helplessness, passivity and acceptance of their fate; with some becoming unproductive at work. A few have reported losing family members but do not have the space to acknowledge the loss and grieve properly. Women in media, particularly those from Samar, have also expressed concern about their safety. Political labelling by either party to armed conflict has elicited tremendous fear and insecurity.

5. *Gender Based Violence.* Various forms of gender based violence were a shared experience of women in the different regions; these were sexual abuse, rape and domestic violence. All these were noted to exist outside of conflict but exacerbated by the experience of conflict. Women who try to participate in areas of community work often experience domestic violence as partners demand that they play their traditional roles at home. Domestic violence is used as way of keeping the women in their place. Women in Maguindanao expressed concern over growing sexual abuse as a consequence of conflict. Rape and incest were also noted to be growing concerns in the community as women noted greater access to pornographic material.

Women's Rights Violations

The gendered experience of conflict and violence impacts on several areas of women's rights and everyday experience in the political, economic, individual agency, sense of security and socio-cultural practice that manifest and condone the inequality experienced by women. Their gendered experience of conflict is manifested in the violation of their political rights to equal opportunities and freedom of choice. Women lack the awareness of basic laws that are supposed to be protecting their rights. Women are also in need of access to economic opportunities to help them recover from the experience of conflict and yet they have difficulty in accessing employment, economic resources such as land and property. These impact their right to achieve financial independence from families, spouses and partners. Even as women speak of the experience of resilience and being able to bounce back from difficulties and challenges, practice of individual agency is still challenged. Even if women try to fulfil all of the roles expected of them, people around them are not always mindful in recognising these. Women are deprived, as well, of basic opportunities for growth and improvement such as education sessions or capacity building activities.

Women also experience a great sense of insecurity not just when they experience conflict but also in providing for the daily needs of their family. This experience challenges how they seek growth, peace and development for themselves as they contribute to the building of peace and development in their own communities. Women are very hopeful of a culture supportive of women's growth but what they encounter is the opposite. They live within a culture that supports traditional notions of gender that is far from supportive of women's personal development. The various cultures that women come from are sadly supportive of double standards that continue to challenge women's access to the basics including education and health facilities. It also sadly condones other practices of abuse by the family, co-workers and even the community.

Women Responding to Gender Issues: Mechanisms Available and Challenges Encountered

Despite the challenges they encounter women continue to respond to the gender issues that they have identified even with the lack the formal training in gender as applied to peace and development issues. The spaces that have been available to women are their participation in local governance, government service, and development work and community leadership.

1. *Women in Local Governance.* Women in the different Regional Cheekah Sessions shared how they, as incumbent public officials in the local community council, municipal and city leadership, monitor various abuses against women, oversee community projects and assess how these should benefit women. They also take the opportunity to promote national laws and local ordinances for women. But even as they try their best to respond to women's needs in times of conflict their credibility to do so is often questioned not because of their capacity but because they are women. They also face challenges in raising awareness on the existence of various forms of abuse against women. They encounter the resistance of the community who would rather not speak of these experiences and continue to be silent about it.

2. *Women in Government Service.* Different government agencies were represented by women in the Regional Cheekah Sessions; these were the Philippine National Police (PNP), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Department of Education, and the National Commission for Indigenous People's Rights (NCIP). These agencies are involved in direct service provision to women in terms of protection of their rights, relief assistance during times of evacuation, livelihood programme provision and looking after the special concerns of marginalised sectors like indigenous people. They try to continue to be responsive to the needs of civilians particularly women. They also face the difficulty of being ill equipped in terms of capacities and material resources. The different government agencies have varying capacities in understanding gender issues within conflict and peace situations. Some

agencies such as the Philippine National Police that worked towards establishing WCPD in various police precincts had the benefit of gender sensitivity trainings. Other agencies that are saddled with various concerns face the challenges of being ill-equipped in addressing the women's issues amidst this conflict.

3. **Women in CSOs.** Also responding to the urgent situation of women within armed conflict is the steadfast support and partnership coming from CSOs, NGOs committed to the development work within the context of conflict and peace. They take part in advocacy and awareness work on women's rights that should be held even in the most difficult circumstances. Their advocacy range from awareness raising on gender issues, awareness of laws and policies for women's protection to enjoining communities in protest and mass action to end abuse against women. Other organisations also share their services and partner with other organisations in delivering basic social and economic services, as they initiate and organise livelihood opportunities. But they also face challenges in capacities in continuing to provide these. Similar to government agencies, not all have the benefit of strengthened capacities prior to diving into service provision. They also face the challenge of financial limitations that threaten their capacity to continue on with their work.

4. **Women in Community Leadership.** Local community leaders have found it helpful to partner with CSOs in giving assistance within communities. They also found an effective space as mediators of conflict within their respective communities. In doing this they found themselves drawing on indigenous forms of conflict resolution, that have been tested as they mediate on resource based conflicts within the community. A challenge they face however is trying to use these mechanisms to address gender issues as well. This is where they are faced with cultural conservatism and blindness to gender issues. To effectively push for these concerns, they have expressed the need to be more exposed to gender training that are culturally sensitive or mindful in addressing cultural challenges in gender.

5. **Women in Media.** Women media representatives who attended the Regional Cheekah Sessions are mostly exposed in radio and community media. In these spaces they have shared how they have maximised their radio programmes and community medium in drawing attention and visibility to

gender issues. Their programmes have been used both to talk about various forms of abuses against women especially gender based violence. They have also maximised the platform to share current services and programmes that service the need of women. The challenge they experience however is the lack of capacity building activities on gender and media work especially in the context of peace. They also see collaboration and partnership to be a challenge as they are not always seen as partners in development work. These they do while also facing threat to their own security as visible spokespersons of these sensitive gender and conflict issues.

Implications on Policies, Program and Practice for Gender Inclusion in Peacebuilding

The Women, Peace and Security framework that was used to craft the UNSCR 1325 and adopted in the Philippines through the National Action Plan offers a comprehensive frame of understanding for gender issues vis-à-vis urgent issues of conflict and violence. It has stressed on the sensitivity needed to continue to address the gendered impact of conflict and violence as well as gender based violence as a weapon of conflict. These policies also appreciate the possible contribution of women through greater participation in formal leadership as key to continuous mindfulness in addressing the particular needs of women given the situation as well as shaping holistic and sustainable peace.

The success however of effective implementation of policies is for it to be grounded to current needs of ordinary people at the immediate as well as the long term. As the research team crafted the following recommendations for a programmatic way to institutionalise the gender perspective into holistic peace and development work the concerns raised by the participants for the Regional Cheekah Sessions were in the foreground of crafting recommendations for strengthened practice, effective program and policy implementation at the local level. These three aspects were seen to be part of effective mechanisms for Women, Peace and Security at the regional and local levels.

Strengthened Practice towards Women, Peace and Security

◆ ***Pursue peace negotiations that are inclusive of gender concerns.*** Women participants appreciate current practices in pursuing peace. They said that the experience of war has deterred them from visioning and planning for the future. Armed conflicts have pushed them to experience displacement, trauma and fear for the safety of their

children. True and lasting peace was part of the conditions for which women feel secure in various aspects of their lives. However these processes need to be mindful of traditional notions of gender that challenge women in various aspects of their lives.

◆ ***Support ceasefire monitoring mechanisms.*** The Bantay Ceasefire in Mindanao has been reportedly helpful in monitoring ceasefire agreement Its work in keeping the peace should be recognized and supported. Such work requires not only courage and will, but funds. Logistical support will enable peacekeepers, many of them women, to effectively monitor violations to the agreement made by parties in armed conflict to respect human rights and international humanitarian law. . Monitoring structures such as this can be replicated in Luzon and Visayas where women monitors can report on violations to the CARHRIL agreed upon by the government and the National Democratic Front.

◆ ***Engendering Peace Journalism.*** Community media, as we found, is not solely an information dissemination or entertainment tool in communities. They are problem-solving outlets, transparency and accountability watchdogs and tools to improve community relations. Our media participants raised the concern about their lack of awareness on women's rights as well as on women, peace and security issues. Engendering peace journalism recognises the role of media practitioners as partners in peacebuilding. It also offers a sound frame for media practice that is responsible, accounts for the needs and concerns of the people and the role media plays in shaping perceptions of men and women. Practicing principles of engendering peace journalism is thus a substantial and essential part of media responsibility and public vigilance.

◆ ***Multi-sectoral Dialogues.*** Moro and IP women experience marginalization as a consequence of their sex, ethnicity, religious belief and socio-economic class. Our participants have talked about the culture of silence among women in the face of cultural roles imposed on gender, patriarchal thinking, their lack of education and a culture of aggression. Multi-sectoral dialogues can surface concerns and needs of these traditionally marginalized women. Our participants from North to South have interestingly all articulated the need to dialogue with the security sector particularly the police. They believe that their role in peace and security can be strengthened if there was some form of cooperation with the law enforcers. The practice of dialogues as a way

of problem analysis and crafting solutions is good practice. However for it to be representative of the needs of all it needs to have all groups represented so that all concerns are raised, heard and considered

◆ ***Achieving Gender Equality as a goal of Good Governance.*** Governments currently involve women in programs, projects and activities; give training on empowerment; and institute lending programs to enhance women's livelihood skills. These are scattered efforts that can be improved by targeting gender equality as a goal of good governance. Ensuring good governance as a practice was seen to be contributory to crafting and implementing policies, programmes and services. But these can only be crafted when those in leadership positions recognize and believe in gender equality. Our participants from North to South talked of the need to provide gender sensitivity and gender equality training for local government officials, police officers, and even for tribal leaders who are traditionally male. The usage and maximisations of the GAD budget was also often cited as a way to make available financial resources to address gender concerns. However its implementation and usage also lies in appreciating the need to look in gender issues as peace and development concerns and be mindful of the use of existing resources to achieve these.

◆ ***Grounding in People's Needs and Concerns.*** Solutions to tribal and sub-tribal conflicts, concerns about children's health and schooling, development aggression and environmental destruction that will impact their economic security-these were the primary concerns raised by the participants of this research. Hence, there is as need to constantly look into current conditions before guidelines and recommendations are enforced specially in designing and implementing government services. It is important to be aware of current challenges that may affect proper implementation, or specific challenges of marginalised groups in availing of these.

◆ ***Strengthened Partnerships for Gender, Peace and Development.*** Our participants expressed concern about the lack of space for collaborative engagement among government, media, CSOs and community women. That lack of space breeds enmity and feelings of suspicion as our participants from the Visayas Cheekah sessions had described. Collaborative engagement as was seen in the Visayan experience helps in achieving more effectively peace

and development goals. Women, Peace and Security will not be achieved by one sector alone. Thus, effective collaboration between various stakeholders in gender, peace and development in government including local government and local government agencies, civil society, communities and media should be forged and strengthened.

- **Strengthen protection mechanisms.** Our women participants shared disappointment over SGBV cases settled amicably because of the ignorance of the law or the culture of shame, among other reasons. They lauded the existence of women and children's desks in police stations and other protection mechanisms. However, they articulated the need to strengthen these protection mechanisms. Police personnel should be trained on VAWC. Women's crisis centers have to be established in strategic areas. The number of police personnel has to be increased in vulnerable areas and their visibility be enhanced. Our Mindanao participants highlighted the importance of creating and strengthening peace zones and the importance of engagement with the security sector on Security Sector Reform (SSR), as well.

- **Education for tolerance.** The issues of tribal and sub-tribal conflicts and rido have been discussed in these consultations. Participants raised the need to educate for tolerance. A specific suggestion floated was the promotion of a collective identity (i.e. Kalinga identity) over clan affinity.

Effective Programs Grounded on People's Needs

- **Substantial Budget for Social Services.** In all of the Regional Cheekah Sessions participants were consistent in saying that access to basic social services such as basic health, reproductive and maternal health education and employment are challenged before, during and after conflict. Ensuring that sizeable budget is allocated to cover these basic social services and that allocations are spent for the intended purpose will allow people to recover from the devastation of conflict and violence.

- **Knowledge on International Standards for Gender Equality, Human Rights Law and the CARHRIHL.** All stakeholders were seen to benefit from raising their capacities on international human rights laws, UDHR, CARHRIHL and CEDAW. Our participants are from conflict-affected areas and expressed desire for increased knowledge on laws operating in times of war. They articulated that para-legal training would be useful in giving support to women affected by armed conflict and

other situations of distress. Training on these should also be complemented with knowledge on their implementation at the national and local level by means of policy development at the national level.

- **Capacity Building on Crisis Intervention for Gender Based Violence.** With increased incidents of gender based violence at home and in communities. Training for CSOs and GAs on initial crisis intervention to respond to gender based violence should be given to help them give this service. A network of support services to address gender based violence would help make available services like basic counselling service, crisis intervention, access to justice, and shelters for survivors of GBV. This makes for a genuine support system for awareness on women, peace and security at various sites of their lives.

- **Training on Basic Livelihood Skills.** In our conflict analysis sessions, our women participants were able to identify causes of their insecurity. One of these is economic insecurity. They were also able to identify the skills that could help address these concerns. Training on entrepreneurship and accounting, they said could help capacitate them to take on leadership roles in livelihood creations.

- **Women, Peace and Security at the International, National and Local Level.** The development of a localised action plan on women, peace and security was also highly recommended if the NAP is to be grounded on people's needs. Our participants have raised issues about the lack of representation, participation and involvement of women in consultations and decision-making processes in the local levels that relate to peace and security. They spoke about male resistance to women's leadership be cause of the "pambahay ang babae" (the place of the woman is in the home) notion. For a local policy intervention to be effective it needs to have an appreciation of international standards of women's rights as well as grounding to women's needs and concerns related to their sense of peace and security at the personal, home and community level.

- **Strengthened GAD Fund Implementation.** The GAD fund has been a mechanism for making resources available for gender and development work in communities, departments and localities. This has been a mechanism that has existed for over ten years now but it has been going on without a systematic and progressive implementation. It is a strong recommendation from this research that its usage and implementation be reviewed

and monitored in relation to its use in women, peace and development work. All stakeholders in gender, peace and development need to raise their understanding of state obligations on achieving substantive gender equality; framework on women, peace and security; and available mechanisms for achieving this. The GAD fund for all government agencies and LGUs is one available mechanism for achieving substantive gender equality within the context of conflict should its original intent and targets be reviewed.

- **Media Practitioners as Effective Stakeholders in Women, Peace and Security.** Given the current threats to media practitioners who are targeted for their advocacies and practice their security concerns should also be responded to. They can continue to be effective stakeholders in raising the public's awareness on women, peace and security issues if they too have the grounding to understand these through consistent capability training on GPD areas of concern such as holistic peacebuilding, engendering peace journalism, GST, CEDAW, IHL and HR and Policy Development for Women (Philippines). These capacities can also be maximised through collaborative engagement with CSOs and government.

- **Support for Cooperatives and Alternative Livelihood Programs for Women.** Our participants shared that the need to put food on the table, provide for the family's needs such as health and education takes precedence over their desire to participate in peace and security programs, initiatives and structures. They are aware of the culture of dependency that dole-outs create. Creation of alternative livelihood programs and support for the formation of cooperatives could help give these women the financial independence they desire.

Policy Development for Women, Peace and Security

- **Institutionalise Monitoring Mechanisms for Women's Participation.** In support of the laws that were passed and implemented, monitoring mechanisms should likewise be crafted to ensure inclusion/participation of women. Its indicators should be able to measure the women's participation not only in numbers and percentages but for the quality of how they are able to participate.

- **Monitoring mechanisms to implement laws.** Our participants commended the existence of many women-related laws and polices but bemoaned their lack of implementation. The institution

of monitoring mechanisms where women's participation will be made mandatory could help assess if policies are put into practice and if these make an impact on women's lives and well-being. Studies and research should also be encouraged to look into the effectiveness of the laws that have been crafted. This would inform policy makers to look into conditions that hinder and facilitate the effectiveness of the laws.

- **Engender Local Systems for Conflict Resolution.** Local and indigenous systems for conflict resolution have long been recognised to effectively contribute in resolving conflict and building peace within communities. Council leaders should also be enjoined as partners in achieving substantive gender equality so that existing local systems can also effectively address discrimination and marginalisation of women as they strengthen their understanding of cultural roots of gender inequality.

- **Institutionalise Monitoring Mechanisms for the Inclusion / Protection of Women.** In support of the laws that were passed and implemented, monitoring mechanisms should likewise be crafted to ensure inclusion/protection of women. Its indicators should be able to measure the women's participation and protection not only in numbers and percentages but for the quality of how they are able to participate. It should also look into the hindering and facilitating factors that push women and their families to put forward complaints that pertain to sexual violence of women.

- **Monitoring Women's Participation in Formal Leadership.** Affirmative action in favour of women is a good strategy to ensure the participation of women in the workplace and in leadership. However it needs to set-up gender quota of 30% or more in observance of international standards of measures of women's leadership. These standards need to trickle down into the local government, community systems of governance, indigenous councils and even CSOs. Assessments of the quality of participation of women should also be a part of effective monitoring to ensure that achievements and constraints to women's participation are surfaced and responded to.

- **Creation and Enforcement of Policies on Good Governance.** Our participants spoke of nepotism and corruption in government service. They lamented the lack of political will to implement laws or deliver basic social services. They spoke of political rivalries that have caused armed violence.

They spoke of political preferences where those who have government connections get rewarded. In this kind of political culture, women are at the losing end. Laws to ensure good governance such as those against political dynasties have to be crafted and implemented.

- ◆ ***Stringent Gun Control Programs and Anti-Gender Based Violence Programs.*** Conditions that encourage and condone gender based violence should immediately be addressed. Gun proliferation has been named by the participants of the Regional Cheekah Session as one of the factors that exacerbate gender based violence because guns are available and are used to threaten women. Although there are programs that monitor gun ownership and control, more stringent monitoring and implementation should be institutionalised to make this effective. The protection of women from gun violence and their participation in controlling gun proliferation should also be underscored in programs and policies that will be adopted. ◆

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