



ANNUAL TRAINING REPORT

MPI 2013 ANNUAL PEACEBUILDING TRAINING

NOVEMBER 2013



The Annual Training is an intensive three-week training on peacebuilding and conflict transformation for peace and justice actors from all sectors of society that is conducted every year in Davao City, Philippines. It is the flagship program of MPI that was first organized in 2000 by Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development and Mennonite Central Committee. This is the report for the 14th Annual Peacebuilding Training that was held this year.

Director's Message



“Together, we have created a cornerstone in our goal to building a strong and committed global community of peace and justice workers.”

It is with great pleasure that I write this message to convey MPI's deepest appreciation to all the participants, facilitators, volunteers, partners, and staff for making this year's Annual Peacebuilding Training a remarkable feat in accordance with the Institute's primary goal to empower individuals and communities through education and training. Indeed, this success has re-energized our passion to keep MPI at the forefront of peacebuilding training institutions in the Asia-Pacific Region. We are once more encouraged to bring forth more innovations and greater contributions to the body of knowledge that is peacebuilding and to weave more threads into the web of interconnectedness that binds peacebuilders from all corners of the globe.

Together, we have created a cornerstone in our goal to building a strong and committed global community of peace and justice workers. As one alumna shares, "at MPI, we are given the opportunity to create a peace front," and I believe we have done so this year. The challenge now is to remain in this peace front by continuously speaking, writing and creating peace every moment of our lives.

Christine Vertucci

Christine Vertucci
Director

Introduction

The 14th Annual Peacebuilding Training of the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute (MPI) marked another year of high hopes and optimism. The annual peacebuilding training again was a sacred place where people of diverse backgrounds and faiths freely shared their ideas, questions, and aspirations and through these exchanges were transformed and inspired to continue their peacebuilding journey.

This year's annual peacebuilding training brought together 88 participants, 16 facilitators and 11 secretariat volunteers from 18 countries in Asia-Pacific, Africa, Europe and North America. From May 20 to June 7, 2013 in Davao City, Philippines, various members of civil society organizations, the government, the academe, interfaith institutions, youth groups and volunteer organizations were students together in the classroom and in the field learning and challenging each other in a dynamic environment.

At MPI's 14th annual training, 13 foundation, thematic and field-based courses on a variety of subjects such as conflict transformation, active non-violence, peace education, arts and peacebuilding, trauma healing and restorative justice were offered. New courses were also introduced that focused on faith-based approaches to community peacebuilding and the relation of peacebuilding to development. As part of its Special Events Program, MPI organized a public forum on *Digital Peacebuilding, Empowerment and Change* to meet the challenges of the cyber world and to explore the potential this vehicle has for peacebuilding at a global level.

MPI 2013 was a resounding success made possible by the enthusiastic participation of the trainees, facilitators and secretariat team. The dynamism of the learning environment contributed much towards creating an engaging setting for exchange and the building of friendships throughout the three-week training.

MPI 2013: A CLOSER LOOK

Course Offerings and Facilitators

For MPI 2013, the Institute concurrently offered four Foundation Courses in Week 1, one Field-Based and four Thematic Courses in Week 2, and two Field-Based and two Thematic Courses in Week 3. Out of the total of 13 courses, there were three new additions to the MPI curriculum:

- ✓ *Bottom-Up Transformation: Experiences and Practices of Grassroots Peacebuilding in Mindanao;*
- ✓ *Pursuing Development and Peacebuilding: Theories, Practice and Change; and*
- ✓ *Faith-Based Community Peacebuilding.*

In the development of its courses, MPI is guided by the principles of applicability, relevance, necessity and social impact. Each year the courses offered by MPI are carefully designed, revised and updated by the facilitators. They take into consideration the evaluation results of their respective courses and the needs of the participants articulated during the classes. In determining the course offerings for each year, the MPI annual training staff and the facilitators also consider the emerging peace and conflict issues, especially in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Below is a complete list of the courses and facilitators during the MPI 2013 training:

Week 1: May 20-24, 2013 (Foundation Courses)		
1	Introduction to Conflict Transformation (ICT)	Wendy Kroecker (Canada) and Michael Frank Alar (Philippines)
2	Fundamentals of Peacebuilding (FPB)	Paulo Baleinakorodawa (Fiji) and Maria Ida Giguiento (Philippines)
3	Peace Education: Concepts and Approaches (PECA)	Ofelia Durante (Philippines) and Essex Giguiento (Philippines)
4	A Force More Powerful: Theory and Practice of Nonviolence (FMP)	Jonathan Rudy (USA) and Miriam Suacito (Philippines)
Week 2: May 27-31, 2013 (Thematic and Field-Based Courses)		
1	Conflict Resolution Skills: Mediation, Negotiation and Dialogue (CRS)	Paulo Baleinakorodawa (Fiji) and Michael Frank Alar (Philippines)

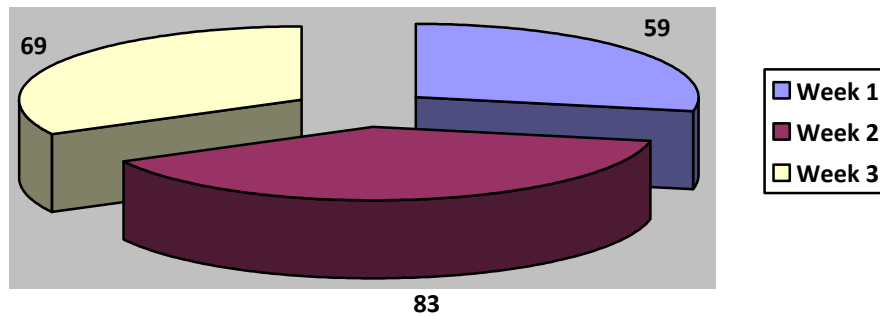
2	Strengthening Peace Education Training Skills (SPE)	Wendy Kroeker (Canada) and Miriam Suacito (Philippines)
3	Arts Approaches to Community-Based Peacebuilding (AACP)	Babu Ayindo (Kenya) and Kyoko Okumoto (Japan)
4	Trauma Healing and Reconciliation in Divided Communities (TH)	Al Fuyertes (Philippines/USA) and Amy Simons (USA/Philippines)
5	Bottom-Up Transformation: Experiences and Practices of Grassroots Peacebuilding in Mindanao (BT)	Myla Leguro (Philippines) and Jonathan Rudy (USA)
Week 3: June 3-7, 2013 (Thematic and Field-Based Courses)		
1	Asian Faces of Justice: Restoring Harmony and Accountability in Asian Communities (AFJ)	Jeremy Simons (USA/Philippines) and Myla Leguro (Philippines)
2	Pursuing Development and Peacebuilding: Theories, Practice and Change (PDP)	Babu Ayindo (Kenya) and Al Fuyertes (Philippines/USA)
3	Faith-Based Community Peacebuilding (FCPB)	Pakigdait, Inc.
4	Indigenous Peoples' Peacebuilding Mechanisms (IPPBM)	Betty Tagle-Cabazares and Kinaiyahan Foundation, Inc.

MPI 2013: IN FIGURES AND COMPOSITION

Participants

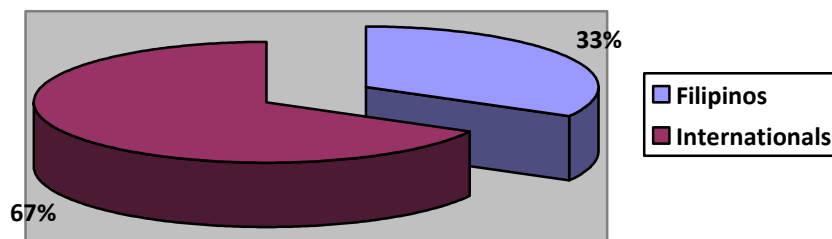
The MPI 2013 Annual Peacebuilding Training was attended by a total of 88 participants. The statistics on the distribution of participants per week, origin, gender, religion and organizational background are provided in the next pages.

Distribution of participants per week



Out of the 88 participants, 59 participated in Week 1, 83 in Week 2, and 69 in Week 3. MPI allows the participants to determine the number of weeks they wish to attend. Participants have the option to take from one to three courses during the training period. From the chart above, it can be surmised that the majority of participants preferred to take thematic and field-based courses rather than the foundation courses offered in Week 1 where there was the lowest number of participants.

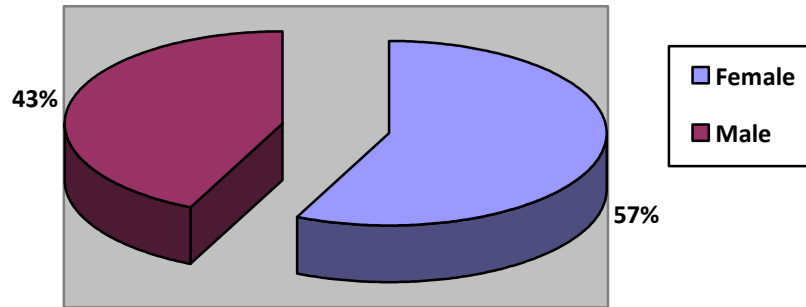
Origin



This year, the number of international participants increased. Out of 88 participants, 59 persons or 67% were Internationals while 29 persons or 33% were Filipinos. A factor seen as contributing to the decrease in the number of Filipino participants is the lack of available funds from outside donors to support trainings.

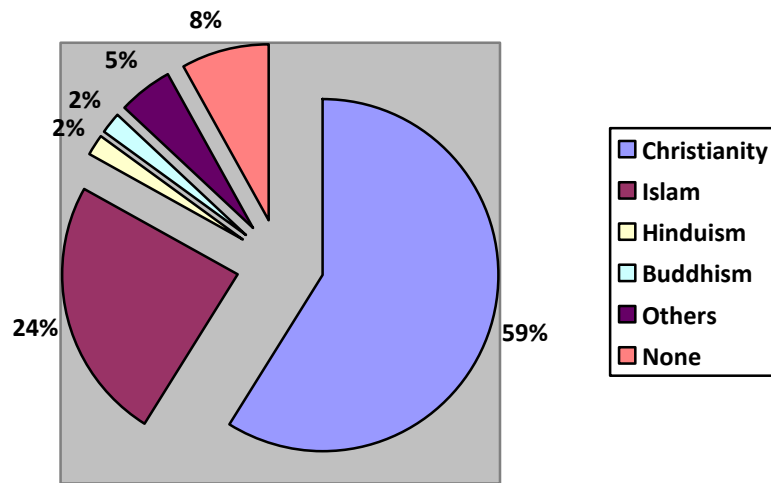
International participants came from as far as Kenya and Nigeria in Africa; Germany and the United Kingdom in Europe; USA in North America; Papua New Guinea in the Pacific; and Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Myanmar, and Nepal in Asia. Participants from the Philippines came from different urban areas in the country such as Butuan City, Cagayan de Oro City, Cotabato City and Iligan City in Mindanao; Dumaguete City in the Visayas; and Baguio City, Quezon City and Manila in Luzon.

Gender



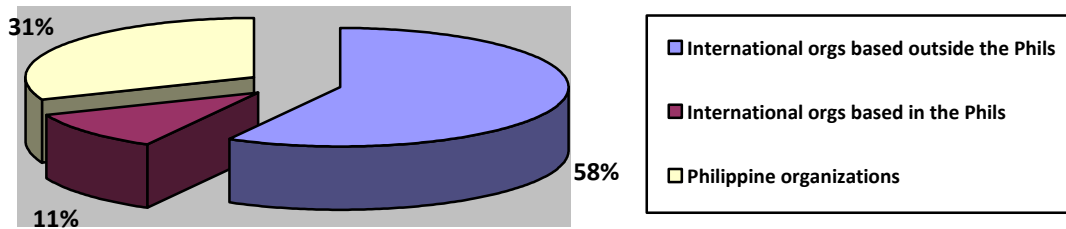
In terms of gender, female participants were higher in number compared to males: 57% of the participants were females while 43% were males. Interestingly, applications submitted were also predominantly female.

Religion



The majority of the participants were Christians, followed by Muslims with only a small number of Hindus and Buddhists. Some of the participants indicated other religions and others did not mention any religion.

Background



Regarding organizational background, 58% of the total number of participants worked for organizations outside the Philippines. This was much higher than last year where there were only 38% from organizations outside the Philippines. One contributing factor for this increase in international participation is that MPI improved its marketing strategy by placing an advertisement on the website of Peace and Collaborative Development Network which has a membership of over 30,000 persons.

For the remaining statistics, 31% of the total number of participants worked for Philippine organizations or institutions and only 11% for international organizations based in the Philippines.

Philippine organizations and institutions represented at MPI 2013 included the following:

- 1) **Non-governmental organizations:** Balay Mindanaw, Child Protection Brigade, Kadtuntaya Foundation, Inc., Lin-awa Center for Culture and Arts, and Surigao Sur Organization for Human Development, Inc. (SSOFHDEV, Inc.);
- 2) **Governmental organizations:** The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, and the Department of Social Welfare and Development;
- 3) **Academic institutions:** De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde, Mindanao State University - Iligan Institute of Technology through their Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao, Silliman University, and Southern Christian College; and
- 4) **Interfaith organizations:** The Interfaith Council for Peace in Mindanao.

The international institutions and/or organizations outside the Philippines represented in the training included the following:

- 1) **Asia-Pacific:** Building Community Voices in **Cambodia**; Peace in China from **China**; The Peacemakers in **India**; Alauddin University, East Java Inter Religion Forum, GITJ Synod, IAIN Sunar, Lapar Sulsel Savy Amira WCC, LPLAG (Interfaith Cooperation Forum), UIN Alauddin Makassar, all of which were from **Indonesia**; United Nations Development Programme, IARQ-Amman Office in **Jordan**; Justice and Peace Commission in **Myanmar**; Sansthatgat Bikas Sanjal in **Nepal**; Mt. Hagen Catholic Diocese in **Papua New**

Guinea; Commission on Justice and Peace from the **Solomon islands;** Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute (NARPI) in **South Korea;** and Mennonite Central Committee in **India, Indonesia** and **Vietnam;**

2) **AFRICA.** PRECISE in Kenya and the University of Ibadan in Nigeria; and

3) **North America:** George Mason University in the USA.

The international organizations based in the Philippines represented were: Catholic Relief Services Philippines in Davao City, Civil Peace Service (forumZFD) in Davao City, and GIZ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit based in Butuan City.

Secretariat Team

As part of MPI's education and training direction, the Institute provides opportunities for young people who are interested in peacebuilding to become voluntary members of the Secretariat Team during the annual training. MPI chooses individuals who have been actively involved in community-based programs; possess an openness to work in a multi-cultural setting, are willing to work under pressure and during odd hours; and have the ability to work in a team and think on one's feet. These potential peacebuilders are exposed to different nationalities, religions and cultures which enhance their awareness of the diversity in the Asia-Pacific Region, teach them to be more culturally sensitive, and enable them to experience peacebuilding from different perspectives. Through hands-on work as secretariat volunteers, they are equipped with the necessary skills to run a training of this size and magnitude.

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For the MPI 2013 annual training, young professionals, development workers and university students composed this year's Secretariat Team as class assistants, class documenters, a social/special events coordinator, a photographer and translators. All but three of the volunteers were Filipinos who came from the cities of Cotabato, Davao and Iligan in Mindanao. One international was from Germany who has been engaged in Philippine solidarity work for many years and currently lives in Davao City. He was

joined by the two interpreters, one from Indonesia and the other from the USA, who translated for the Indonesian participants.

The Institute conducted a teambuilding activity before the training to enable the volunteers to know each other's strengths and weaknesses, to foster a spirit of cooperation and unity, and to create an effective team in spite of the diverse backgrounds of the individuals. Activities were conducted that built trust and support so that each volunteer would work together well and respect each other's differences. At the end of the one-day activity, the volunteers felt more cohesive as a group and ready for the challenges ahead.

In order to nurture a spirit of teamwork and camaraderie during the training, the volunteers participated in a daily debriefing that was held after the classes. Issues that were discussed included what problems they encountered, how these were solved, questions that were raised by the participants and facilitators, and their participation in the classes. Sometimes the class assistants and even the class documenters are invited to participate in some of the classroom activities which become an extra learning experience for the Secretariat Team!

True to the objectives of the teambuilding activity, the Secretariat Team was commended by the facilitators and participants for their dedication and service during the MPI 2013 Annual Peacebuilding Training,

Classroom-Based Courses

After 14 years since it was first organized, MPI continues to develop dynamic and innovative courses that respond to the ever changing landscape of peacebuilding in the Asia-Pacific Region and beyond. It is important for MPI to keep abreast of new and critical peace and justice issues, and continue to expand its reservoir of theoretical and practical knowledge in peacebuilding and conflict transformation in order to remain relevant as an institution that aims to empower individuals and their communities through education and training.

Overall, two key elements describe MPI's classroom-based courses. First, a safe space for respectful dialogue among participants and facilitators coming from diverse faith, ethnic, cultural, and political traditions is created within the "classrooms." Second, the courses are elicitive in nature. This means the facilitators employ more participative approaches to learning such as workshops, group discussions, exercises, role-plays, group assignments, simulations, field visits and etc. rather than prescriptive such as conventional lectures and presentations. In such an interactive learning environment, participants not only learn from facilitators and vice versa, but participants also learn

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them invited local and international resource persons with extensive experience in the field to share lessons learned and challenges they have encountered. Others visited a local community in the outskirts of Davao City that provided a glimpse of what sustainable farming, fishing, animal raising, and etc. would look like. Some also visited a group of local performing artists and were treated to a number of their socially-relevant performances. Lastly, one group also visited the sanctuary of Kublai, a renowned visual artist that hails from Davao City, to better understand the link between arts and peacebuilding.

In Week 1 of the training, a workshop on the basics of Aikido, a Japanese martial art that is described “as the way of a harmonious spirit” was incorporated in the *A Force More Powerful: Theory and Practice to Nonviolence* class. Two *sempais* (masters) from the Ai – Ren Aikido Dojou taught the class several self-defense stances that aim not to inflict pain to an attacker but rather “to unify their life energies.” The workshop demonstrated that nonviolence is in fact more effective in unifying conflicting parties than the use of violence.

from each other's experiences and knowledge which in turn builds and strengthens a sense of solidarity among them.

This year, 10 varied classroom-based courses were offered and taught by distinguished facilitators from Asia, particularly the Philippines, and other parts of the world. The facilitators employed different learning approaches in their courses. Some of





In Week 2, the class of *Conflict Resolution Skills: Mediation, Negotiation and Dialogue* invited three resource persons from the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, one of the world's leading organizations in the field of conflict mediation; Initiatives for International Dialogue, a Philippine-based advocacy institution promoting human security, democratization and people-to-people solidarity; and a local Mindanao community. The three guests shared about their own experiences in doing negotiations, dialogues and conflict resolution initiatives respectively. They also briefly engaged in a question and answer period with the participants from the class. Most of the discussions zeroed in on the role of a facilitator/mediator in peace talks between conflicting parties on an international, national and local level. Ali Saleem, Country Representative of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in the Philippines, stressed that the greatest challenge to doing his work is the reality that there is so much work and so little time and hence the need to think creatively as one approaches each situation.

Another class in Week 2, the *Arts Approaches to Community-Based Peacebuilding* had a whole day trip to experience the richness of the culture of Mindanao. The group met two prominent names in the arts community of Davao – the Kaliwat Performing Artists Collective and the visual artist Kublai Milan. The performing artists from Kaliwat and Kublai expressed that because of their desire to be of service to society, they consider their art not just art per se but as a way in which they can support their advocacies and place in a larger context their messages of respecting and promoting human rights, nurturing and protecting the environment, and preserving traditional culture. Their goal is to encourage dialogue and action within societies through their own form of art.



Facilitators employ more participative approaches to learning such as workshops, group discussions, exercises, role-plays, group assignments, simulations, field visits and etc.

In Week 3, the class *Pursuing Development and Peacebuilding: Theories, Practice and Change* set a full-day visit to a cooperative and learning center in the outskirts of Davao City. The center, which is called Moral, Economic, Technological, Socio Spiritual Aspirations Foundation, Inc. or METSA, has grown to become a small community that has successfully initiated sustainable forms of livelihood such as farming, fishing, and animal husbandry. The participants were able to experience even just for a day how to plant rice, climb coconut trees and harvest coconuts, catch fish and ride a carabao (water buffalo). For the participants, these activities were a learning experience on the importance of establishing self-reliance in a community through alternative development.

Also in Week 3, the *Asian Faces of Justice: Restoring Harmony and Accountability in Asian Communities* class invited two resource persons to share about the traditional justice systems that are embedded in their communities and how they help restore harmonious relationships – one, a woman leader of one of the ethnic groups in Mindanao called the Monuvus that has extensive experience in documenting the indigenous justice system of her tribe, and second, an expert on Islamic justice systems from Mindanao.

Complementary to these activities and other input from the facilitators shared through lectures and presentations, each course had relevant materials such as handouts (both hard and soft copies) that were distributed to the participants.

Overall, the classroom-based courses were both very informative and exciting because of the balance between the amount given to lectures and presentations and participatory activities. This is in part because of the facilitators who made an effort to create a dynamic and productive learning environment. In the end, the participants felt the true meaning of openness, sharing, and engagement.

Field-Based Courses

MPI values the different areas in which opportunities for learning exist such as that outside of a classroom. Oftentimes, the greatest lessons are found from those who are directly working on the ground and who are actually practicing the peacebuilding and conflict transformation tools and concepts that the participants discuss inside the classroom. It is for this reason that MPI continues to offer field-based courses every year. Aside from this, the Institute also wants to highlight a few of the myriad grassroots peacebuilding initiatives existing in the different parts of Mindanao as it believes there is so much to gain from these initiatives.

This year, aside from the field-based course on *Indigenous Peoples' Peacebuilding Mechanisms*, which is a mainstay at MPI, there were two new field-based courses that were designed and offered in partnership with local organizations that have been working with communities in Mindanao. The two courses focused on 1) interfaith dialogue and 2) community-conflict resolution and governance.



Bottom-Up Transformation: Experiences and Practices of Grassroots Peacebuilding in Mindanao

This classroom cum field-based course was an MPI innovation designed by integrating theoretical and practical learning into one course. The course was facilitated by two of the distinguished facilitators of MPI, Myla Leguro and Jonathan Rudy. For the field immersion aspect of the course, MPI partnered with three local peacebuilding organizations: Pasacaday Manobo Association (PAMAAS) in Magpet, North Cotabato; Integrated Mindanaoan Association of Natives (IMAN) in Datu Montawal, Maguindanao; and Tulunan Community Development Center (TCDC) in North Cotabato. The course sought to distill lessons, emerging strategies, and also challenges in addressing violence, transforming conflict, and rebuilding communities from the perspective of grassroots peacebuilders.

Initially on the first day, the facilitators provided the participants an overview of strategic peacebuilding approaches, theories of change and practices of grassroots peacebuilding in Mindanao inside a classroom setting. Then the next four days were allotted for visits to the communities in Central Mindanao which have experienced sectarian violence and undertaken community-based peacebuilding efforts.

All of the nine participants that joined this course were internationals. These participants had the opportunity to engage with key leaders and local people in the communities to learn about local initiatives in interreligious dialogue, zones of peace, peace education, peace advocacy, conflict resolution and peace governance. Indeed, in the end, the participants brought back with them rich and meaningful stories and experiences from their time in the field.

Faith-Based Community Peacebuilding

Faith-Based Community Peacebuilding was a new field-based course developed in partnership with Pakigdait, Inc., an interfaith peacebuilding organization that has been working in transforming conflict-ridden communities in the provinces of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur for more than a decade.



Interfaith is not about religions but rather it is about life and discovering the humanity in others.



The course was designed to focus on providing an overview of the various concepts of interfaith grassroots peacebuilding in the province of Lanao del Norte, particularly that of the Four Paths to Reconciliation and the Four Pillars of Grassroots Peacebuilding, and the sharing of faith-based community peacebuilding experiences of Pakigdait and other key actors in the area such as from the academe and security sector.

In this course, 10 international participants learned through on-site lectures, community visits and personal testimonies about how “interfaith space” is created for people of diverse faiths, specifically that of the Christians and Muslims, that work together to support conflict resolution, healing, and reconciliation.

At the end, the participants together with Pakigdait and Carino Antequisa who facilitated the wrap-up session synthesized the whole course into one inspiring line, “*Interfaith is not about religions but rather it is about life and discovering the humanity in others.*”

MPI 2013: OTHER ACTIVITIES

Documentation of New Courses

MPI has a practice to document the new courses that are offered at the annual training. This year, there were three new courses that were added to MPI's curriculum:

- ✓ *Bottom-Up Transformation: Experiences and Practices of Grassroots Peacebuilding* that was facilitated by Myla Leguro and Jonathan Rudy in Week 2;
- ✓ *Pursuing Development and Peacebuilding: Theories, Practice and Change* that was facilitated by Babu Ayindo and Al Fuyertes in Week 3; and
- ✓ *Faith-Based Community Peacebuilding*, a field-based course that was facilitated by one of MPI's local partners, Pakigdait, Inc.

MPI believes that it is important to have a written record of the new course offerings not only for the archives but also for use by future facilitators of the course and those interested in knowing how MPI conducts its classes. MPI assigns a documenter who is a member of the secretariat team to record the methodologies, strategies, and tools used by the facilitators. The documenter is also asked to record the discussions, stories and insights that are shared during the week-long course. This documentation will become the basis for improving the course in the future and for providing the facilitators with the means to gauge the effectiveness of their course design and possibly to develop new course materials.



Filling the participants with creative energy and determination to get to know their fellow students better and to share their cultural narratives

Social and Cultural Events

1. Opening and Closing Ceremonies

Every year, MPI invites cultural performers from Mindanao to open and close each week of the annual peacebuilding training as a way to show the participants from different parts of the Philippines and the world the culture and beauty of Mindanao dances, songs and costumes.

At the MPI 2013 training three different groups were invited to perform – the Kalumon Performing Ensemble, SiningTala Dancers, and the Kaliwat Theatre Collective. The participants enjoyed these creative and energetic performances and even joined the cultural troupes in the dancing, singing and celebration of diverse cultures and ethnicities. It was a wonderful way to start each week filling the participants with creative energy and determination to get to know their fellow students better and to share their cultural narratives and traditions.

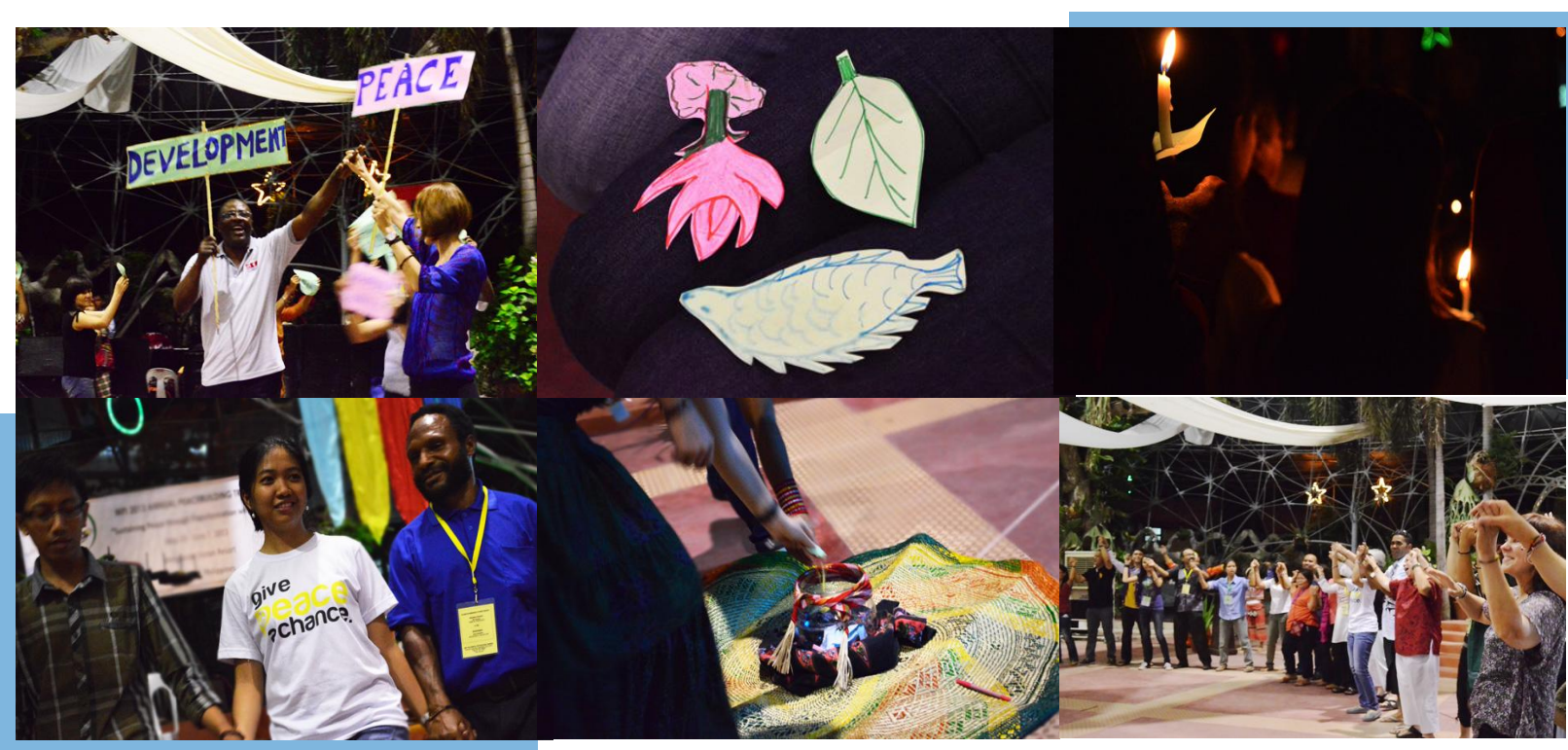
An important part of the Opening Ceremonies is the traditional Parade of Nations which symbolically ushers the participants into the sacred space of openness and respect. The Parade of Nations is a way to welcome each participant and the country he/she represents.

The traditional Parade of Nations...symbolically ushers the participants into the sacred space of openness and respect.

These ceremonies were also graced by three inspirational speakers who, because of their MPI experiences, became more deeply committed peacebuilders. These were Elvira Ang Sinco, a member of the MPI Board of Trustees and alumna in Week 1; Jonathan Rudy, one of MPI's distinguished international facilitators in Week 2; and Lina Sagara Reyes, a MPI alumna who became a writer for peace in Week 3.

During the Opening Ceremony of Week 2, there was a tribute to the late Emmanuel "Eme" Amancio who passed away in early 2013. Eme was a member of the original team that established MPI in 2000 and one of its first facilitators. The special commemoration was led by one of his esteemed colleagues, Al Fuentes.

During the Closing Ceremonies, each class was tasked to encapsulate the essence of their course in some kind of presentation that creatively showed what they learned and how they would apply it in their organizations and communities when they return to their areas and countries. Testimonials were also given by a number of participants who thanked MPI for this training and expressed their commitment to continue their work for peace. It was also a time to bid farewell to those participants who would not be returning for the following week and to send them off with a collective blessing of peace.





2. Cultural Celebrations

One particular manifestation of the sacred space that is created at MPI is the celebration of diverse cultures and identities. These Cultural Celebrations are meant to give recognition to each culture and identity present in the annual training and to provide them the avenue to exhibit their histories, ways, traditions and beliefs through songs, dances, poems, art, food and even games. Through this cultural affirmation, MPI was able to foster understanding, friendship, and a deeper appreciation for diversity among the entire MPI community.

Cultural Celebrations are meant to give recognition to each culture and identity present in the annual training.

For 2013, MPI gave the participants the option not to present at the cultural celebrations. This was done in order to give leeway to those who had little time to prepare for a presentation prior to the training and to give more emphasis on making the celebration not a task for the participants but a light

moment for everyone to enjoy. Despite making it optional, many participants still expressed their desire and interest in signing up for the cultural celebrations. The countries that presented were the following: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Germany, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, USA, Vietnam and the Philippines.

The Philippine contingent started the ball rolling for the Cultural Celebrations in Week 1 of the training. They gave the other delegates a taste of what it is like to dance, play and eat like a Filipino. They dubbed their night as “*Experience Philippines: Sayaw, Laro and Kain! (Dance, Play and Eat!)*.” The whole community moved their bodies to the

unique Filipino rhythm and beat; jumped, ran and laughed like a Filipino child; and tasted some of the sumptuous Filipino native and street foods.

During the second week, the delegates from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and USA treated the community to a night of traditional dancing and singing while a participant from Nepal brought everyone to a meditative state when she said a prayer in her mother tongue. Despite all the dancing and the singing, the highlight of this night was the native organic coffee that the participant from Papua New Guinea brewed for everyone to taste. The perfect blend of the bittersweet taste of the coffee was a great way to end the night.

Games, trivia, nursery rhymes and laughter filled the third and last cultural night. Participants from Cambodia, China, Germany, Kenya and Vietnam prepared fun games and trivia for the whole community to enjoy. It was an excellent way to culminate the Cultural Celebrations as everyone felt the energy flow from one peacebuilder to another. A great sense of camaraderie and oneness was truly created.

3. Weekend Outings

To break the monotony of classroom lectures, MPI sees to it that the participants enjoy their weekends while in Davao City. At the end of the first week, the participants explored the pristine and white sand beaches of Samal and Talikud Island. For the second weekend, the participants explored Eden Nature Park and enjoyed the cool breeze, fresh fruits and vegetables, and the view from the mountains.



4. Peacebuilding Forum

As part of MPI's Special Events Program, a public forum on *Digital Peacebuilding, Empowerment and Change* was organized on June 1, 2013 as a way to foster mutual learning and exchange between Internationals and Filipinos. Fifty individuals from the annual training and Mindanao



organizations attended this event. The forum was organized in collaboration with NewsDesk Asia, an online-based media group in Davao City.

Four different speakers from the university, community and social media from Cambodia, Indonesia, the USA and the Philippines described how they were able to infuse social media with their peace initiatives and how this impacted their peacebuilding work. Through these presentations and a question and answer period, this forum was able to raise the awareness, understanding and interest of the audience about how social media can be used as an effective and powerful tool in advancing peace initiatives and working for social transformation in their communities.



MPI 2013: TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Evaluation of MPI 2013 Annual Training

At the end of the annual training, the participants and the facilitators evaluate the overall Institute and the courses which they have either facilitated or taken as a way to measure the effectiveness of MPI's annual training program.

For MPI 2013, the outcome of the training evaluations was both inspiring and humbling. Out of the 75 respondents, 67% gave the MPI 2013 Annual Peacebuilding Training an overall rating of excellent while 28% gave a rating of good. Participants considered the training well designed, organized and systematized.

They emphasized that the exchanges with diverse people, the safe space in which they could share ideas, insights and opinions, and the varied learning styles employed in the classroom were elements that made the training meaningful and useful. The respondents added that the facilitators were very knowledgeable, inspiring, and

At the end of the training, everyone was renewed in heart, mind and spirit...

energetic in the way they conducted their classes. These were instrumental in achieving the objectives of the annual training.

MPI has once again proved that it is an innovative training institute that not only provides skills and resources for peace advocates, but also strengthens their commitment to peacebuilding and facilitates solidarity ties between diverse people.

On the practical side, respondents offered ideas for new courses and other ways that MPI could respond to their needs. Among the suggested courses for next year were the following: advanced trauma healing; resource-based conflict in tribal communities; leadership and governance; media and communications; gender, peace and justice; and conflict analysis and mapping. MPI values these recommendations and seriously considers them in its curricular development.

Conclusion

The 14th Annual Peacebuilding Training re-affirmed the uniqueness of MPI as a place where participants, facilitators, volunteers and staff can feel safe and secure even in the midst of new experiences and challenges to their own worldviews, and use this environment for learning and self-transformation. Everyday stories of different cultures, beliefs, and traditions were exchanged. Everyday challenging questions were raised in the classrooms, during meals, and in the evenings that sparked thoughtful consideration and reflection. Everyday learning took place that led to understanding. At the end of the training, everyone was renewed in heart, mind and spirit and fortified to continue the journey of building a just and peaceful world.

Note: Some of the photos used in this report are from the participants of the MPI 2013 Annual Peacebuilding Training.