

2017 ANNUAL PEACEBUILDING TRAINING REPORT
*Making Peace Possible: Building Bridges, Weaving Connections
in Communities Around the World*
Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute



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Director's Message

On behalf of the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute, I wish to extend our heartfelt thanks and deepest appreciation to all the participants, facilitators, volunteers, partners and staff for making this year's Annual Peacebuilding Training an enriching and challenging learning experience in accordance with the Institute's mandate to build capacities of individuals and their institutions through education and training. Indeed, this success has re-energized our efforts to keep MPI at the forefront of peacebuilding training institutions in Asia-Pacific.

For the 2017 Annual Peacebuilding Training, MPI welcomed the largest number of participants in recent years, with 164 trainees in attendance over the three-week period. This was due in part to the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process of the Philippines and the Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace of the Government of the Solomon Islands supporting an exceptionally large number of personnel to attend the annual training. Together they represented 40% of the total number of participants. This signifies that MPI continues to expand its reach beyond the non-governmental sector to policy makers and their implementers who find MPI's annual training a valuable venue for learning and retooling.

This could not have happened without the dedication and hard work of its Annual Training Program Officer, Rhea Silvosa, who resigned from MPI at the end of July to pursue a Master of Global Affairs – International Peace Studies degree at the prestigious University of Notre Dame in the USA on a full scholarship. Rhea has left her mark on the Annual Peacebuilding Training Program by expanding its program areas, developing and refining its systems, and strengthening its relationships with MPI's alumni. MPI is deeply grateful for her excellent contributions to the Institute that have helped to maintain its relevancy and enhance its role as a leading training institution for peacebuilders from around the world seeking a safe space to learn,



reflect, and be renewed and transformed. At the conclusion of the MPI 2017 Annual Peacebuilding Training, in a special ceremony, MPI recognized Rhea and thanked her for all she has done for the Institute and its alumni, partners and network, and bade her farewell with many blessings.

Christine Vertucci, July 31, 2017



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Introduction

A melting pot of people and ideas; a safe space for learning and reflection; an oasis where one is refreshed and can recharge; a dynamic process of transformation and change; a living, thriving community of peacebuilders. These were just some of the words that described the individual and collective experience of those involved during the 2017 Annual Peacebuilding Training of the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute.

The different courses at MPI engage both participants and facilitators in a challenging process of learning and unlearning, and even relearning. It is a space to dialogue about competing ideas, to challenge perspectives and norms, and to discover creative ways of doing peace. Beyond the skills and theories, MPI ascribes equal value to creating spaces for personal encounters, where one recognizes the humanity of the other, thus confirming that human connection is at the heart of conflict transformation. Truly, MPI is sustained and has continued to flourish because of the trust and the dynamic engagement and support of those who believe in the vision that the Institute upholds.

Each participant, facilitator, staff and volunteer, as well as invited resource persons, partners and communities, contributed to weaving the MPI 2017 experience into a wonderful tapestry of memories that everyone will carry with them as they continue dreaming, struggling, and rediscovering how it is to make peace possible even in the midst of the most hopeless of situations.



A QUICK LOOK AT THE STATS

Participants: 164



National: 110
Male: 86

International: 54
Female: 78



Christians: 100
Buddhists: 4

Muslims: 46
Hindus: 1

Facilitators: 24

National: 12

International: 12



2017 Secretariat Team: 17

9 Filipino &
Volunteers
7 MPI Staff

1 International



Organizations Represented: 44



Academe: 12
INGOs: 6
GOs: 6

Faith-based Orgs: 7
NGOs: 6
Religious Insts: 7

The Annual Peacebuilding Training: 2017 Courses and Facilitators



MPI maintains a delicate balance of not only developing the mind but also the heart and hands of participants in its array of courses by imparting not only knowledge and skills, but also the positive values that reinforce transformational change. The Institute seeks to provide courses that are responsive to current realities and thus must meet the criteria of applicability, relevance, necessity and social impact to the participant's particular context and to peacebuilding work in general. Thus, MPI staff and members of its Board of Trustees review and select each course offered at the Annual Peacebuilding Training following an intentional screening process. Facilitators update and revise previously offered courses as needed. Feedback and suggestions from MPI alumni are also taken into account while the same rigor is observed in the design and development of new courses.

This year, MPI offered 14 courses, two of which were new and one that was a revised version of a previously offered course. Each course was taught by two and in some cases three facilitators. MPI invited 24 facilitators from the Philippines and abroad to teach these courses, six of whom were facilitating for the first time. New facilitators help sustain the dynamism of the group. Of the 18 returning facilitators, six of them have been with the Institute for 10-15 years.

MPI is proud of its notable roster of teachers and mentors, who all share an untiring passion for peace and justice. Undeniably, these facilitators are the lifeblood of the training. They are essential in ensuring an intensive and diverse learning environment for all the participants and they are an important factor in the continued growth and relevance of the Institute in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

MPI 2017 Courses and Facilitators

Week 1: May 8–12, 2017

From Understanding to Action: Designing Conflict Sensitive Interventions (FUA)

Joan McGregor and Phyu Sin Ngwethaw

Fundamentals of Peacebuilding (FPB)

Paulo Baleinakorodawa and Maria Ida L. Giguiento

Introduction to Conflict Transformation (ICT)

Wendy Kroeker and Michael Frank A. Alar

Mainstreaming Peace Education in Communities and Schools (MaPEC)

Orson Sargado and Kathy Matsui

Week 2: May 15–19, 2017

Be the Change: Designing Transformative Justpeace through the Power of Nonviolence (ANV)

Jonathan Rudy and Krizanti Cruzado

Conflict Resolution Skills: Mediation and Dialogue (CRS)

Paulo Baleinakorodawa and Wendy Kroeker

Conflict Sensitive Economic Governance: Peace-Enabling Approaches in Complex and Fragile Contexts (CSEG)

Francisco Lara, Jr. and International Alert Team Philippines

Interreligious Peacebuilding: Approaches for Cooperation, Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (IRPB)

Shamsia Ramadhan, Jean Baptiste Talla and Myla Leguro

Understanding Culture and Identity as a Resource for Peacebuilding (UCIRP)

Joan McGregor and Baht Latumbo

Week 3: May 22–26, 2017

Arts Approaches to Community-Based Peacebuilding (AACP)

Babu Ayindo and Kyoko Okumoto

Bottom-Up Transformation: Experiences and Practices of Grassroots Peacebuilding in Mindanao (BT) (Classroom and Field-Based Course)

Dolores Corro, James Baay and MPI Partners

Contextualized Approaches in Peace Education (CAPE) (Field-Based Course)

Jose Dax Evaristo P. Tibus, Sr. Telma C. Argate and MPI Partners

Dealing with Trauma in Times of Conflict (DTTC)

Gladston Xavier and Florina Xavier

Human Centered Security: Reimagining Conflict Stakeholder Relationships (HCS)

Jonathan Rudy and Maria Ida L. Giguiento



MPI 2017 New Courses

Interreligious Peacebuilding: Approaches for Cooperation, Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (IRPB)

A diverse mix of 18 individuals from seven countries looked at the ways in which religion can be harnessed to promote reconciliation and social cohesion in any given context.

What was unique about IRPB?

- Explored the role of religion in promoting peace and its role in conflict and violence;
- Examined the different tools, theories and approaches of interreligious peacebuilding, and its application in various contexts; and
- Helped participants contextualize and plan for interreligious peacebuilding action in their respective communities.



Who were the facilitators?

Myla Leguro, who is the Program Director of Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) Advancing Interreligious Peacebuilding and is one of MPI's longtime facilitators as well as the President of its Board of Trustees, was one of the three facilitators for this course. She was joined by two outstanding colleagues from CRS, **Shamsia Ramadhan**, who is based in Kenya and heads a multi-country interreligious peacebuilding project as its Program Manager, and **Jean Baptiste Talla**, CRS' Advisor for Africa and member of the Africa Justice and Peace Working Group.

“Interreligious peacebuilding is something new. It taught us to dig down deeper and find commonalities where both conflicting parties can work [together].”

Human Centered Security: Reimagining Conflict Stakeholder Relationships (HCS)

An interesting group of 17 participants from six countries gathered together to explore the challenging world of a “people first” security. The majority of these individuals were high government officials and NGO personnel directly involved with project development and management.

What was unique about HCS?

- Provided a nuanced understanding about the concept of security and human centered security;
- Looked at best practices and successful implementation of a human centered security approach; and
- Gave space for participants to design take-away plans that enhance human security in their respective areas.



Who were the facilitators?

Teaming up to develop this course were two experienced facilitators who have taught at MPI for many years. **Jonathan “Jon” Rudy** is the Senior Advisor for Human Security at the Alliance for Peacebuilding. He currently works as the Peacemaker-in-Residence at Elizabethtown College in the USA and is also on the Fulbright Roster of Specialists. Jon’s partner, **Maria Ida “Deng” L. Giguiento** is a member of the Project Reference Group that drafted a curriculum that looked at security through a human security perspective. Deng is the Training Coordinator for the Peace, Justice and Governance Program of Catholic Relief Services Philippines and has also served MPI as a member of its Board of Trustees.

“What I like best about the course is that it provides an important lens on security which is centered on the importance of people or citizens. It provides understanding and appreciation of citizens’ core security needs and challenges in a real given situation.”

Contextualized Approaches to Peace Education (CAPE) (Field-Based Course)

A close-knit group of eight participants representing three nationalities visited schools and engaged with key stakeholders in Central Mindanao to learn best practices as well as the challenges encountered in the actual implementation of peace education.



What was unique about CAPE?

- Explored the integration of peace education in the pedagogy of both formal and non-formal educational settings;
- Looked at the challenges and best practices of how peace education is being institutionalized in Central Mindanao; and
- Provided opportunities for participants to directly interact with and engage communities, schools, teachers and students involved in peace education.

Who were the facilitators?

MPI invited two new facilitators, who reviewed and updated this course according to recent developments in peace education. An alumnus of MPI, **Jose Dax Evaristo P. Tibus** works with Catholic Relief Services Philippines in advancing peace education in Mindanao. **Sr. Telma C. Argate**, who co-facilitated this course with Dax, is a Campus Minister at the Notre Dame University in Cotabato City and is a member of the Oblates of Notre Dame, a congregation of consecrated women founded in Cotabato City. Her passion for peace education led her to work with various sectors: communities, the academe and civil society, and motivated her to develop resource materials in teaching peace education.

Foundation Courses

MPI courses are classified into three categories: foundation, thematic and field-based. Foundation courses are courses that explore and provide the basic parameters, approaches and processes encompassed in the field of peacebuilding. For MPI 2017, four foundation courses were offered during the first week of the training.

Feedback from the Participants:

The mapping and field force tools enabled me to enlarge the 'field of engagement' ensuring that no one is left behind and that no 'stones are left unturned' so we mitigate error and non-sensitivity to culture and context. We take extra care and caution that our intention does no harm.

The course has taught me how to analyze conflicts by working closely at [its] stages and [using tools such as] conflict mapping, the ABC triangle; [and looking at] the driving and hindering factors. It empowered me to look at my advocacy work more deeply and how far am I going as a peacebuilder.

From Understanding to Action: Designing Conflict Sensitive Interventions (FUA)

Twenty-two individuals from seven countries representing diverse backgrounds and experiences explored various approaches used in designing conflict sensitive interventions and their importance in peacebuilding work.

What was unique about FUA?

- Enhanced understanding of the range of interventions undertaken at different levels in complex and fragile situations;
- Equipped participants with various conflict analytical tools for assessing situations in order to design conflict-sensitive interventions while also taking into account the Do No Harm concept; and
- Gave space for personal and organizational assessment.

Who were the facilitators?

Joan McGregor and **Phyusin Ngwethaw** co-facilitated this course. Joan is a freelance conflict transformation practitioner with more than 20 years of experience in this field. She was previously the Peace and Conflict Advisor at Responding to Conflict (RtC). Co-facilitating with her was Phyusin, who is the Executive Director of a local NGO in Myanmar and is also an MPI alumna. This was her second year facilitating at MPI.

Fundamentals of Peacebuilding (FPB)

One of the biggest classes in MPI 2017, FPB was composed of 28 participants from six countries that came together to learn the complex world of peacebuilding.

What was unique about FPB?

- Gave a comprehensive overview of the peacebuilding field;
- Tackled the theories, analyses and practice of peacebuilding at different levels: interpersonal, communal, and societal, as well as the dilemmas and challenges of the field; and
- Helped participants develop a strategic framework for peacebuilding.

Who were the facilitators?

Maria Ida “Deng” L. Giguiento, who also facilitated the HCS course, could boast of being the only facilitator who has been with MPI’s annual training program since it started in 2000. She co-facilitated FPB with MPI’s first and only facilitator from the Pacific, **Paulo Baleinakorodawa**. He is the Director and Founder of Transcend Oceania in Fiji and has been facilitating at MPI since 2008.

“The topics are relevant to my work, the methodologies used were effective wherein ideas from different perspectives were shared. Aside from that, this course reminds me that with the work that we are doing, the peacebuilding lens should always be present, especially as we are working in conflict affected areas.”

The Bobaar Incident:

For several years now, the FPB and ICT classes have run a combined simulation exercise that has now become a source of great excitement and “aha” moments for those involved. It also has been an opportunity for participants to practice skills learned in the classroom.

Titled as “The Bobaar Incident,” the simulation centers on two indigenous tribes: the Motsham and Centrix, living in and near the imaginary town of Bobaar. It is a narrative that reflects real-life situations in many parts of the world: a conflict over equal access to resources, freedom of self-expression, and attempts to come to a peaceful resolution.

Introduction to Conflict Transformation (ICT)

ICT was the largest class this year, with 30 participants from eight countries who came together all eager to learn how to look at the world using the lens of conflict transformation.

What was unique about ICT?

- Presented a comprehensive introduction to the field of conflict transformation;
- Focused on the theoretical understanding of conflict and conflict transformation, including the application of conflict transformation in peacebuilding; and
- Provided opportunities to practice and enhance skills on conflict transformation.



Who were the facilitators?

Recognized as one of the most dynamic teams of MPI facilitators, **Wendy Kroeker** and **Michael Frank A. Alar** have facilitated ICT since 2012. Wendy is a faculty of the Canadian Mennonite University and the Co-Director of the Canadian School of Peacebuilding. She has been with MPI since 2003. A consultant on peace process support and conflict transformation, Mike is also an MPI alumnus. Before becoming a facilitator, Mike was a former member of the MPI Annual Training secretariat team for a number of years.

Mainstreaming Peace Education in Communities and Schools (MaPEC)

A captivating group of 24 participants from seven countries, most of whom were educators, shared and discussed ways of integrating peace education in their respective contexts that would contribute toward building a culture of peace.

What was unique about MaPEC?

- Focused on peace education as mandated by UNESCO Programme of Peace;
- Explored implementation of peace education in both schools and communities; and
- Helped participants develop their own peace education program that could be implemented in their respective work.



Who were the facilitators?

This was the second year that **Orson Sargado** and **Kathy Matsui** co-facilitated this course. Orson is the Head of Office of Catholic Relief Services Philippines, and also serves as a member of MPI's Board of Trustees. Kathy is a Professor at the Department of Global Citizenship Studies at Seisen University in Tokyo, Japan, and teaches courses on conflict resolution and peace-related subjects. She also facilitates at the Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute (NARPI), which is a sister institute of MPI.

“ I like the interactive learning approach [that is] not more on lecture but on contextualizing the topics. I also like the part where other participants were given a chance to share their experiences and expertise as it adds to the content of the topics. ”

Thematic Courses

There were eight thematic courses offered this year, five of which were in Week 2 and three in Week 3. These are courses that provide a more in-depth perspective and analysis of particular thematic topics in peacebuilding and its application, and offer opportunities for skills development and practice. Thematic courses build on the learning gained by the participants in Week 1.

Arts Approaches to Community-Based Peacebuilding (AACP)

In this class, 15 participants from seven countries, who were working at different levels of society as teachers, government officials, students, NGO workers and members of religious institutions, discovered the artist within themselves.

What was unique about AACP?

- Explored different arts-based approaches in peacebuilding;
- Developed appreciation for arts and its role in peacebuilding; and
- Enabled participants to develop their own arts-based projects that could be applied in their own contexts.



Who were the facilitators?

Considered a pioneer in the field of arts and peacebuilding, **Babu Ayindo** has been involved in exploring arts-based approaches in various contexts. He is a consultant in the design and facilitation of conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. Co-facilitating this course with him was **Kyoko Okumoto**, a Professor of Peace Studies, Conflict Transformation and English Literature at Osaka Jogakuin University in Japan, and the Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute (NARPI).

Be the Change: Designing Transformative Justpeace through the Power of Nonviolence (ANV)

A tight-knit group of 13 representing seven nationalities explored together the concept and application of active nonviolence in achieving peace and justice.

What was unique about ANV?

- Focused on the theories and strategies of active nonviolence;
- Highlighted personal transformation as a starting point for any nonviolence approach; and
- Helped participants design active nonviolence strategies according to their respective contexts.



Who were the facilitators?

Jonathan “Jon” Rudy, a facilitator from HCS, is known for providing program support in strategic peacebuilding, training, and advocacy for nonviolent change. He has been with MPI since 2002. Teaching this course with him was **Krizanti “Kriz” Cruzado**, an MPI alumna and former Disaster Response Advisor for Mennonite Central Committee in Nepal. This was her third year facilitating at the annual training.

Conflict Resolution Skills: Negotiation and Mediation (CRS)

A class comprised of 17 participants from eight countries, coming from different backgrounds, learned and practiced the demanding skills needed for conflict resolution.

What was unique about CRS?

- Focused on imparting skills on negotiation, mediation and dialogue, including its conceptual framework;
- Provided skills on facilitation and other conflict resolution methods; and
- Included large and small group discussions, role plays, interactive exercises, and case analyses.

Who were the facilitators?

Paulo Baleinakorodawa, who co-facilitated FPB, and **Wendy Kroeker**, who co-facilitated ICT, worked together to teach this course. Paulo is known for championing initiatives on engaging men and boys to transforming aggressive forms of masculinity for gender equality in the Pacific. Wendy is a PhD candidate at the Arthur Mauro Centre at the University of Manitoba under the Peace Studies program.



“ I liked the content of the course which was helpful for conflict resolution and transformation. Also, the facilitation skills of the facilitators and the process of facilitation.

The course is very useful in our work because we have projects with the community and we also work in developing the skills of community leaders and arbitrators of local government for conflict transformation/resolution.

Conflict Sensitive Economic Governance: Peace-Enabling Approaches in Complex and Fragile Contexts (CSEG)

Composed of 19 participants from the Philippines and the Solomon Islands, the CSEG class delved into complex socio-economic and political issues using a political economy framework and how this impacts decision-making in governments, businesses and other key institutions in a particular locality.

What was unique about CSEG?

- Focused on the theoretical framework and the practical skills on conflict sensitive economic governance;
- Improved capabilities in using different tools: risk assessments, conflict-mapping, political settlements, peacebuilding accompaniment; and
- Enabled participants to design their respective *change projects*.



Who were the facilitators?

The CSEG course was a collaborative effort between MPI and International Alert Philippines headed by its Country Director, **Francisco “Pancho” Lara, Jr.**, as the lead facilitator. Pancho is famous for his work on shadow economies and violent conflict, and conflict and political settlements, among others. He was ably supported by their Advocacy Officer, **May Che Capili**, and other International Alert staff. International Alert is a London-based international organization known for its peacebuilding and conflict resolution work.

Dealing with Trauma in Times of Conflict (DTTC)

A class of 14 participants from seven countries joined this course and together created the safe space necessary for exploring this sensitive topic.

What was unique about DTTC?

- Focused on trauma healing: basic understanding, tools and skills in handling and breaking from the trauma;
- Explored personal trauma as an important component in understanding others' traumas; and
- Touched on healing and reconciliation processes.

Who were the facilitators?

This was the second year that this warm and affable couple from India,



Florina and **Gladston “Ashok” Xavier**, facilitated the DTTC course. Ashok is the Head of the Social Work Department of Loyola College in Chennai, India, while Florina works for Church’s Auxiliary for Social Action, a national humanitarian organization, based in the same city.

“ [The course] tackled all the topics that have been on my mind before I joined the course. It answered all the questions that confuse me about trauma. It was able to bring out the best in ourselves in expressing our thoughts about the course. ”

Playback Theater: Harnessing the Power of Arts in Trauma Healing

At the Annual Training, two thematic classes at times collaborate to provide participants a richer experience and understanding of how approaches overlap and complement each other in building peace. Such was the case when the class from AACP and DTTC joined and did various workshops together.

Particularly, both classes explored how playback theater can be harnessed in the process of healing trauma. In this process, participants were given a space to tell their stories while another group enacted it on the spot, thereby showing the flexibility and creativity required if one is to become a practitioner of trauma healing and the critical role that the arts can play in this field.

Understanding Culture and Identity as a Resource for Peacebuilding (UCIRP)

Participants with varying levels of experience and from different sectors of society composed the UCIRP's class of 20. Together, they deepened their understanding of the role of culture and identity in peacebuilding and how this can help them be more effective in their respective work.

What was unique about UCIRP?

- Explored the interplay of culture and identity as it relates to conflict and peacebuilding;
- Probed understanding of one's culture and identity and how these can become tools for building peace; and
- Practiced cross-cultural communication as an approach in working in multi-cultural societies.



Who were the facilitators?

This was the second time that the course was offered and facilitated by the same two facilitators: **Joan McGregor** and **Baht Latumbo**. Baht is connected with Balay Mindanaw, a well-known peacebuilding organization in Mindanao and part of MPI's network, and is an independent consultant and trainer in conflict transformation. Joan, who also facilitated the FUA course in Week 1, has been with MPI for four years.

“*The course was excellent overall but I think the combination of introspective processing (looking at peace within) and outside application made it meaningful, interesting and applicable.*”

[The course is] very useful, especially cross-cultural communication and understanding the potential of culture, identity and belonging in the peacebuilding process.”

Field-Based Courses

The field-based courses enable participants to engage with real communities, and with individuals and organizations directly involved in the implementation of peacebuilding initiatives that put into practice the theories and concepts of conflict transformation. These courses look at the diverse peacebuilding experiences of grassroots peacebuilders in Mindanao and allow participants to reflect on their learning from the classroom in light of their experiences in the field. Two field-based courses were offered during MPI 2017.

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

A diverse but small group of 12 people from eight countries comprised the participants of BT and together discovered and learned from the myriad of grassroots peacebuilding practices and initiatives in Mindanao.

What was unique about BT?

- Combined classroom and field learning;
- Explored the different grassroots peacebuilding practices in Mindanao; and
- Visited and engaged actual communities in Central Mindanao implementing community-based peacebuilding efforts.

Who were the facilitators?

With extensive community-based experience in Mindanao, **James Baay** and **Dolores Corro**, both staff of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Philippines, co-facilitated this course. James is a member of CRS' peacebuilding team and takes the lead in the development and implementation of its peace training platform in Mindanao. Dolores is the Program Manager of CRS' Peace Governance for Transformation in Mindanao Project. This was the first time that she facilitated at MPI.



SPOTLIGHT: Getting to Know One of Our Facilitators

Like every hero, each peacebuilder also has a backstory that provides an inspiring narrative when she begins to stand up and struggle for peace and justice. For what is a peacebuilder but a hero garbed in ordinary clothes. For our protagonist, it was a composite of experiences growing up as a young white South African woman during the apartheid era with her family, toiling to make ends meet. Her involvement with a youth group widened her perspective about the terrible injustices taking place in her country and spurred her into action. She realized that, if there is to be a shared future for her and the people of her country, she must take part in the process of building it.

A glimpse at the life of Joan McGregor, one of MPI's most cherished facilitators, is to realize the resiliency of the human spirit and to know that we have the power to determine our own destiny and our own personhood. For Joan, this was to be continually engaged in working for a just and equal society, one that recognizes the interconnectivity of all people and the importance and contribution of each individual.



In 2001, Joan started working for Responding to Conflict (RtC) in the UK, an experience which she recounts as formative, healing, and challenging. RtC provided a supportive place for her. It was through RtC that she first came to facilitate at MPI in 2014. Ever since that time, Joan has been involved in supporting MPI in conceptualizing and developing new courses for the annual training. In November 2016, Joan, together with International Alert Philippines, designed and co-facilitated MPI's first customized training on youth political leadership. In July 2017, the University of Birmingham in the UK, honored her MPI more than 20 years of engagement in the field of conflict transformation by awarding her an Honorary Doctorate. Truly, it was a well-deserved acknowledgment.

In her new capacity as a freelance consultant, Joan continues to work with communities and groups of people informed by her belief that those who are most affected by conflict and violence are best placed to find the solutions to their situations.

MPI 2017 Secretariat

Behind the great curtain of the MPI 2017 Annual Peacebuilding Training was a group of dedicated people who worked tirelessly to ensure that the training ran smoothly and any concerns were addressed quickly and efficiently. Most importantly, the MPI 2017 Secretariat team, composed of MPI staff and recruited volunteers, provided vital support in attending to the needs of both participants and facilitators. Prior to the training, the team participated in a teambuilding and orientation activity, including a workshop on cross-cultural communication with MPI facilitator Joan McGregor, which strengthened their teamwork and prepared them for the challenges and demands that they would face at the annual training.

MPI recruited 10 volunteers this year. One was a promising undergraduate from Eastern Mennonite University in the USA and the youngest in the group. The rest were Filipinos coming from different places in Mindanao, with one volunteer from Luzon. These young professionals—teachers, development workers, peacebuilders and students—took leave from their regular schedules to commit their time and service to MPI. By serving as either class assistants, documenters or photographers during the training, they were given opportunities to learn different peacebuilding concepts and theories, enhance their training and organizational skills, and be immersed in an environment of diversity. MPI hopes that by providing this venue for learning and exchange for talented young people, it will contribute to developing future leaders, peacebuilders and change agents who possess a heightened appreciation for diversity and its potential in building inclusive and peaceful communities.

The successful completion of the MPI 2017 Annual Peacebuilding Training, in large part, can be attributed to the collective and individual effort of the MPI 2017 Secretariat team and their unwavering commitment, passion and dedication to the vision of the Institute.



MPI 2017: Other Developments

Martial Law Declared in Mindanao

The Philippine Government declared martial law for all of Mindanao late in the evening of May 23, a day after the start of the third week of the annual training. The declaration was prompted by an eruption of fighting and violence between government forces and a militant group called the Maute in Marawi City, which is located in northwestern Mindanao and considered to be the premiere Islamic city in the Philippines.

On that day, two field-based classes, *Bottom-Up Transformation (BT)* and *Contextualized Approaches in Peace Education (CAPE)*, were travelling to partner communities in Central Mindanao for a learning immersion. In the morning of May 24, MPI decided to request that the two field-based classes immediately return to Davao City. MPI was fortunate to have had participants who were working in the peace process offices of the government and who had contacts within the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). They assisted MPI in coordinating with the PNP and AFP personnel in the area to ensure that both classes returned safely to Davao City that afternoon. The planned visits of the *Arts Approaches to Community-Based Peacebuilding (AACP)* class to local artists in downtown Davao were canceled. Furthermore, there were a number of adjustments made in the conduct of the courses in Week 3 and other annual training activities since MPI seriously considered the security of all participants, facilitators, volunteers and staff up until the conclusion of the training.

MPI can only be grateful to its facilitators whose flexibility and response to the situation were admirable and to those individuals who supported the Institute in its time of need. Truly, it was amazing to see how each person became a source of support and courage in times of crisis.

MPI 2017: The Participants



MPI's 2017 Annual Peacebuilding Training welcomed the largest number of participants in recent years. This was in part due to a few sending organizations supporting an exceptionally large number of staff and partners to attend this year's annual training.

The **Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP)** of the Philippines selected and sent 49 people—the largest number of participants MPI ever received from one organization—to attend courses spread over the three weeks. The **Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace of the Solomon Islands Government** supported 17 of its officials to participate for the entire three-week period. Through the Youth Political Leadership Program that MPI and **International**

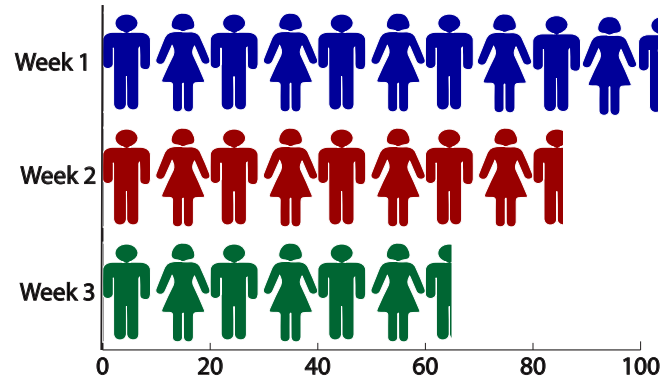
Alert Philippines co-developed, 15 youth leaders from Mindanao participated in Week 1 with support from International Alert Philippines. In addition, International Alert Philippines also sponsored the participation of nine individuals from among its partner organizations and local government units in Mindanao to attend the *Conflict Sensitive Economic Governance (CSEG)* course in Week 2. **Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Philippines** also supported three of its staff and nine individuals from its partner communities in Central Mindanao to enroll in one course in the 2017 Annual Training.



MPI 2017: The Numbers

Participants per Week

From May 8 to 26, the 18th Annual Peacebuilding Training of MPI gathered a total of 164 participants, one of the highest numbers of participants in MPI's history. The majority of the participants participated for one week and most of those were in Week 1 with 104 participants. This was followed by Week 2 with 87 participants and Week 3 with the lowest number at 66.

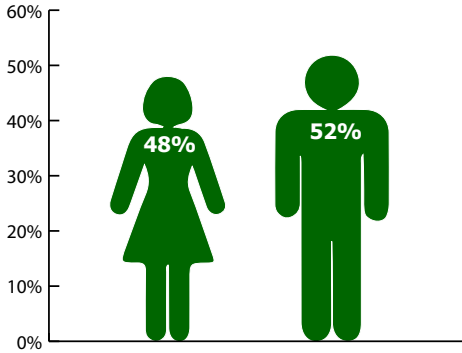


National vs. International

This year, the number of Filipino participants exceeded that of international participants. For the past five years, the trend had been the reverse, with internationals comprising between 55 to 60% of the total participants. For 2017, of the 164, only 33% were international participants, while Filipinos accounted for 67% of the overall composition.

The number and composition of participants at the annual training, for the most part, largely depend on the availability of funding among organizations and how this is allocated.

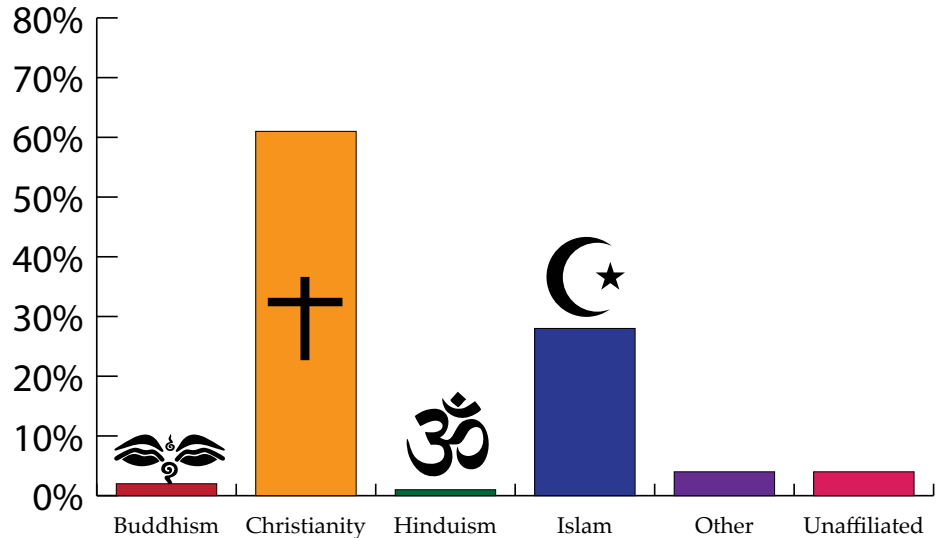
Gender Distribution of Participants



There was only a 4% difference in terms of gender composition of the participants this year with males representing 52% and females 48% of the total number of participants.

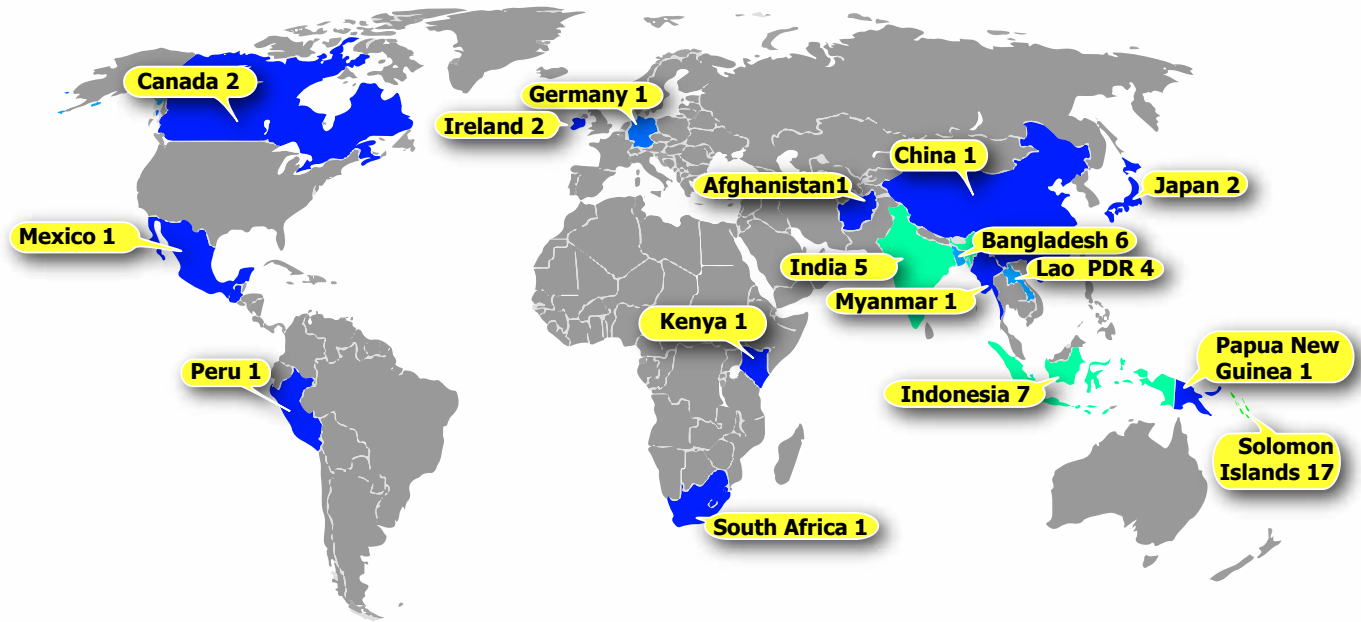
Participants by Religion

Sixty-one per cent of the MPI 2017 Annual Training participants were Christians followed by Muslims at 28%. This is consistent with the trend in past annual trainings.



Participants by Country

Excluding the Philippines, there were 17 other countries represented at the Annual Training. These are shown below with the corresponding number of participants present by country.*



*** A note on Participants by Country:**

South Africa and Kenya were the two countries representing Africa at the MPI 2017 Annual Training since the main sending organization that sponsors participants from countries in Africa was not able to do so because of budgetary constraints. However, Southeast and South Asian countries were again well represented because of the presence of organizations and institutions in these regions, such as **Mennonite Central Committee** and the **United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia**, that are willing to support their own staff and partners to participate in the Annual Training.

Organizations by Sector

Forty-four organizations from six sectors sent participants to MPI 2017, with the academic sector topping the list with 12 organizations.

Faith-based 7 **INGOs 6**
Academe 12 **NGOs 6**
Government Institutions 6
Religious Institutions 7

MPI 2017: The Other Side of the Annual Training

Opening Ceremonies



A vigorous, rhythmic beating of the drums signals the onset of every Opening Ceremony of the MPI Annual Peacebuilding Training. Subscribing to the importance of ritual, the Opening Ceremony held every Monday of the week is a symbolic rite that formally acknowledges the presence of each person and the resource each represents in the creation of the wider MPI community. Each beat beckons participants, class facilitators and secretariat alike to enter its hallway of learning for the beginning of another life-changing experience. The anticipated Parade of Nations serves as the centerpiece of this ritual.

Three different cultural groups opened the program and captivated the audience with their beautiful traditional songs and dances that reverberated throughout the hall. The young and energetic boys and girls from *Kabilin Mindanao* charmed the audience in Week 1 with their festive colorful dances. The *Kaliwat Performing Artists Collective* in Week 2 and *Kalumon Performing Ensemble* in Week 3 awed the participants and facilitators with their soulful songs and dances that narrated the varied stories of the Indigenous Peoples of Mindanao. An invited inspirational speaker—**Phyusin Ngwethaw** in Week 1, **Myla Leguro** in Week 2, and **Babu Ayindo** in Week 3—accepted the formidable task of challenging the participants to fully immerse themselves in a week of profound learning, to be open and honest to what they may discover, and to make connections and form relationships with other participants that would last beyond the training.

Cultural Celebrations

A commemoration and affirmation of community and the diversity it represents is at the core of each cultural celebration of MPI. Beyond the actual classes, it is a space where each person finds meaning and makes new connections and sees what diversity means in the concrete. Conducted every Wednesday night, participants, facilitators, secretariat volunteers and staff come together to enjoy the songs, dances, and games performed by their newfound friends and to view video presentations that depict the beauty and special places of their respective countries.



This year, Filipino participants proudly displayed the beautiful traditional attires of different Indigenous tribes through a Fashion Show. A participant from Mexico shared tequila shots for those willing to try this popular liquor. Participants led country trivia contests and performed community traditional dances and songs. Truly, each night displayed the distinctive culture and identity that make up the vibrant community created during the annual training. Most importantly, this was a time when participants fostered friendships and strengthened their relationships established during their classes.



Open Sessions

The Open Sessions held during the evenings provide participants and facilitators the opportunity to organize workshops and sessions on particular topics of relevance and interest to them. At MPI, spaces are maximized for learning and deepened engagement among participants, and the open sessions are another avenue where this takes place.



Two open sessions on Mindanao were organized in Week 1 and Week 2. The first session focused on providing participants a history of Mindanao. The group listened attentively to **Bro. Karl Gaspar's** comprehensive presentation, which covered nearly 500 years of history. A notable anthropologist and researcher, Bro. Karl showed the complexity of the Mindanao narrative and why the peoples of this land are still mired in conflict, poverty and inequality.

In Week 2, **Guiamel Alim**, a well-known Muslim civil society activist and grassroots peacebuilder, addressed the current political and economic situation in Mindanao. He described the peace processes currently underway in Mindanao and assessed their effectivity and whether the deadlines set will be met. As the Chairperson of the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society and a member of the Independent Technical Working Group on Transitional Justice, Guiamel challenged the participants to be engaged in these complex issues which still need to be resolved to bring peace and development to Mindanao.



On Tuesday of Week 2, **iEmergence, Inc.**, a local organization based in Davao City, but with roots in Canada, led a session on Asset-Based Community Development, a methodology that makes use of appreciative inquiry in a process that aims to discover stories from which people could imagine a common vision of a desired future. The activity provided participants a new way of looking at community development and to value differences and diversity.

Closing Ceremonies

As all the participants were warmly welcomed at the start of the week, it was but fitting that they were sent off at the Closing Ceremony at the end of each week with as much warmth and fellowship. The Closing Ceremony was also a time for each class to share collectively their learning and insights with the wider MPI community in a creative and artistic manner. A key part of the program was the testimonials given by selected participants that shared their stories and reflections of their experience at the training and their gratitude to learn in such a nurturing and supportive environment.



Although the Closing Ceremony signaled a time to say goodbye, it also signified new beginnings for those who would return to their respective home countries, carrying with them the knowledge and realizations they gained from the training. As always, the evening was brought to a close with laughter, singing and dancing and the intangible sense of interconnectedness that a mere parting could not erase.

“ I could say that MPI is not only a school, it is also a safe place where learners, peacebuilders could come together, gather and share laughters and tears, songs and dances, insights and inspirations from one another. It is also a refuge where peacebuilders could recharge and be energized again to respond to the call of time. ”

– Testimonial of Framer from the Philippines

“ To be a peacebuilder, whatever the situation is, you have to show yourself as somebody who can be mature enough to overcome those kinds of challenges. ”

– Testimonial of Chris from Solomon Islands

Weekend Outings

On weekends, the MPI 2017 Secretariat organized outings for the participants to give them a time to rest and relax from the rigors of their intensive daily classes. These outings took the participants to different places in Davao City where they were able to appreciate the beauty and diversity of the city.

Participants visited Malagos Garden and Wildlife Sanctuary during the first Saturday. They were greeted with an afternoon rain shower upon their arrival. But this did not stop them from exploring the wonderful sights of the area, such as the bird sanctuary and the butterfly garden. They also visited the first-ever Chocolate Museum and did enjoy a delicious warm cup of chocolate. The following Saturday, the group joined an island tour and discovered the beautiful white beaches and cool, clear sea waters of Samal Island. Indeed, it was an opportunity to be refreshed and unwind from the demanding training schedule and to be readied for the final week of the training.



MPI 2017: The Public Forum

The Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace of the Solomon Islands Government was created as a response to the ethnic crisis that took place between 1998-2003, which almost destroyed the country and resulted in displacements, killings and other violence committed by the conflicting parties. Presently, the Ministry is initiating interventions to deal with the root causes of the past conflict and to bring about reconciliation and healing among affected communities. To assist it in these efforts, the Ministry signed a Memorandum of Understanding with MPI in 2016 to increase the capacity of its personnel and other government officers in peacebuilding concepts and approaches. This facilitated the participation of 17 Solomon Islands nationals to MPI 2017.

The experience of the Solomon Islands and the remarkable role of the Ministry in dealing with the conflict and injustices of the past and designing current programs to address its conflicted history offer insights and learning that deserve to be heard. Thus, the MPI 2017 Public Forum provided the venue where Ministry personnel shared their experiences and exchanged ideas and suggestions with other MPI participants as a way to foster mutual learning.



Peter Mae, the Under Secretary of the Ministry for Policy, Planning and Programme Development, was the main speaker of the event. His presentation, entitled *Rebuilding Solomon Islands: Leaving Crisis to Peaceful Coexistence through Peacebuilding Interventions*, described the crisis that took place in 1998, and the processes undertaken by the government and its people that led to the creation of the Ministry. He highlighted the support offered by different sectors in the country, including key stakeholders from the region, emphasizing that indeed, peace is everyone's business and that people need to act together to ensure that

these processes are honored and implemented. Peter also outlined success stories and the lessons learned from years of working with the community and the different levels of government. Towards the end of his presentation, he shared the

long road that still lies ahead for the Ministry and the many obstacles that they have to face to reach their destination.



Three respondents from the MPI 2017 participants then shared their reflections and insights gleaned from Peter’s message. **Win Zeyar Kyaw** from Myanmar pointed out how dissimilar the situation was in his country in its intervention regarding ongoing ethnic and religious conflicts. Even though a National Reconciliation and Peace Committee had been established, Zeyar lamented the lack of political will for its implementation.

Petsy Jessy Ismoyo from Indonesia provided a brief analysis of the various ethnic and identity conflicts currently taking place in the country and underlined the need for reviving local values and adopting cultural-based approaches in designing peacebuilding interventions. She also added the

importance of utilizing media in any peacebuilding effort.

Lastly, **Mark Anthony Torres** from Mindanao admired the immediacy of the interventions conducted in the Solomon Islands. He went on to emphasize the importance of time and how this can affect the course of any conflict including the intended interventions, and here, he shared his own short reflection of the Mindanao experience. Mark agreed with Peter about the importance of engaging various actors and how the role of women and youth can play a critical role in peace efforts.

This was followed by an intense and lively exchange among the participants, the respondents and the main speaker. As a way of closing the forum, MPI facilitator Paulo Baleinakorodawa provided an in-depth analysis of what it entails to make peace possible using a peacebuilding lens. Stressing the inherent capacity in people to build peace, Paulo drew upon the key points from the presentations and from his extensive experience working with communities in the Pacific in peacebuilding efforts.

MPI 2017: What the Participants Are Saying

Seventy percent of the 109 participants who responded to the question regarding their overall experience at the MPI 2017 Annual Training in the Institute Evaluation rated their experience as excellent, while 27% rated it as good and only 3% rated it as fair. Participants appreciated the cultural celebrations and the opportunities provided for individual/group interactions as well as the general orientation that was conducted each Sunday for new participants. The ratings for meals and snacks improved this year, but clearly it still needs improvement along with accommodations and the weekend outings. On a happy note, the secretariat team's hard work certainly was recognized based on the participants' excellent rating of 69%.



Participants also wrote helpful suggestions and recommendations which MPI will seriously consider for next year's annual training. Additionally, MPI alumni generously shared how they are making use of the learning from the training. For the most part, alumni echoed one another in expressing that the concepts, frameworks, and the processes learned have been integrated into their respective projects and programs and they were also able to design new activities and plan new training sessions. Apart from improving existing programs within their organizations, some also underlined how the MPI experience changed them personally, transforming their perspectives and providing them with a new worldview. For the majority of the participants, the MPI 2017 Annual Peacebuilding Training was a treasure trove of new materials, theories and approaches on peacebuilding along with the necessary skill-sets to apply in real life settings. Equally important were the newly discovered friendships and the big MPI family to which all participants now belong.

Conclusion

Do not be afraid to dream of a world that is free of violence and injustices, of a world that upholds the values of truth and mercy, of love and justice; a world that embraces diversity, one that finds meaning in our shared humanity. We have to dare to envision a world that is yet to be. Each of our actions is contained within our imagination, for the process of building and creating starts with imagining.

How do we make peace possible? How can we begin reimagining each of our societies that, for a long time, have been fraught with violence, and have struggled with injustice, distrust and fear? There are no quick answers to these questions. But we hope that the learning environment offered to you by MPI has given you not only the knowledge and skills of peacebuilding, but also the courage to imagine and dream of constructive change processes that will truly transform communities, never at the expense of another.

Do not be weary or disheartened by doing your part, performing your role. The process of building a just, peaceful and inclusive society is one that is complex, multilayered and involves an array of processes. It takes a lot of hands working together and complementing one another, and a lot of hearts and minds that work at transforming structures and rebuilding and healing relationships. There is no task too big or too small in building peace.

Most importantly, whatever happens, persist, resist, and continue to find creative ways of breaking barriers and transforming our world for the better.

Acknowledgments

Brot
für die Welt
Bread for the World

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