

## REPORT ON PROJECT ACTIVITIES

**PROJECT TITLE:** Interfaith volunteering for young people to increase interreligious understanding and promote peace in the Southern Philippines

**PROJECT CODE:** 14-A-031

### Purpose of the Activity

The original project was for Peace Direct's local partner Kapamagogopa Incorporated (KI) to train and place 10 young Muslim professionals (50% women) in predominantly Christian CSOs and peacebuilding organisations in Mindanao in the Southern Philippines. These young people, who often find it difficult to gain paid employment due to inter-religious animosity, would gain valuable work experience, increase awareness and understanding between them and their host organizations and the communities they serve in conflict affected and conflict vulnerable areas.

The project's aim was to increase the awareness among the local community of the peace building role and positive contribution made to society by young Muslims and to contribute to change the negative perceptions of the Muslims in Mindanao.

Due to a shortage in funds, Niwano's grant covered the intensive four week training of this cohort of young people, and additional placement and follow up costs were found from other donors.

### Content and method of the activity & course of actual events

Nine volunteers (6F, 3M) participated the one month Volunteers' Development Training in Lanao del Norte. The training aimed to capacitate the volunteers in basic peacebuilding and development was delivered through five modules. Each module has its focus area, where the volunteers' emotional, spiritual, mental, intellectual and physical capacities are further developed. The trained volunteers were very appreciative of the knowledge and skills that they received. They acquired better understanding of volunteering for a peaceful co-existence of the people, plays as an inspiration to further enhance themselves to serve others.

The modules of the training are as follows:

Values Formation and Enrichment Workshop

Community Organizing and Community development Training-Workshop

Networking and Peace Advocacy Training-Workshop

Project Development, Monitoring and Evaluation Training-Workshop

Communication Enhancement and Public Speaking Skills Training-Workshop.

The nine volunteers then participated in five day Community Immersion. The immersion is part of the volunteer training which aims to help the volunteer understand the situation in the community as to they will be working with them for the next 12 months. The volunteers found the experience interesting and were able to build relationships with the communities they were working in and learn more about each other's cultures.

- The volunteers together with their parents, KI staff, KI alumni and partner organization gathered in Iligan City to celebrate KI's 10th Batch of volunteers' culmination program. The program was conducted to give recognition to the volunteers' hardship, sacrifice and perseverance in successfully completing the one month training. The program which aims to commence their journey as a volunteer was made even successful by the inspirational message given by the guest's speaker and alumni volunteer.
- Right after the launching program, the newly pledge KI volunteers participated in the Engaging the Security Sector: Focus on Coordination mechanism of GPH-MILF Peace Process. The two day forum-workshop which aims to cascade information and to increase awareness about the ceasefire agreements were participated by more than 200 people. The nine volunteers served as the rapporteur & documenter during the group activity of the Open Space technology (OST) workshop have successfully documented issues and its corresponding recommendations that has surfaced during each group discussion.
- KI sent its new volunteers to their respective Host Organizations.

Ms. Nadjera Alauya to Pailig Development Foundation in Iligan City

Ms. Norhana Talib and Ms. Habiba Pangarungan to Maradeca, Inc. in Marantao Lanao del Sur

Ms. Normalah Taher to Al-mujadilah Development Foundation Inc.

Ms. Somaya Bilong, Ms. Amal and Mr. Omar to Lumbatan Women and Youth Group.

### Achievements of the Activity

For the last ten months of their placements, the volunteer were able to directly and indirectly reach 17,725 (9,645 F; 8,080 M); including 654 people with disabilities (394 F, 260 M), 319 young people (175 F, 114 M) and 870 children (550 F, 320 M).

Specifically the volunteers were able to perform the following:

- Documented eight major activities such as forum on House Bill 450 or Filipino Sign Language Act in Cebu City and Forum on HB511 or the “Basic Laws of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region” by the Bangsamoro Youth Coalition for Peace and Development
- Organized an Islamic Seminar in celebration of Ramadhan to over 13 communities in Lanao del Sur.
- Distributed more than 600 food packed among depressed communities in Lanao del Sur.
- Organized or facilitate disaster drills to over 870 pupils in Cebu City
- Conducted trainings on disaster preparedness in different barangays in Cebu City.
- Relief campaign to the victims of fire outbreak in Cebu City.
- Interpreted 12 activities where some this are training on Filipino Sign Language and Deaf Culture Sensitivity to Federation of Differently-Abled Talisaynon Inc, Starkey Hearing Foundation, Senior Citizen lists for Northern Cebu, Department of Education teachers in Cebu City and among others.

### Future areas to be pursued

Our partner KI plan to continue their work with a new cohort of volunteers in the coming year. However, they are also working on a new project bringing together women and young people in the disadvantaged and war torn area of Lumbatan. This area was a historic strong hold of MILF combatants and remains the poorest province in the Philippines. Infrastructure including roads

and markets were disrupted during the conflict leaving the local population without the tools to earn an income and lift themselves from poverty. The project wants to work with these groups to provide livelihood training and improve their conflict resolution skills.