Youth and Adult Education for Social Change in the Philippines: Linking Education with NGOs, Social Movements and Civil Society*

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FORMAL, INFORMAL, AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION programs play a crucial role in the promotion of human rights and social justice that leads to sustainable peace. Transformational education challenges traditional hegemonic powers and structures to bring about social change. This article documents the modest but longitudinal contributions to social change of a human rights and peace educational program by initially facilitating interfaith, intra-faith, and inter-ethnic dialogue in Mindanao, Philippines. Lessons learned in general and best practices in particular are presented at the end of the paper. For people engaged in development or advocacy activities of non-governmental organizations in the civil society as well as social movements engaged in social change, education provides a venue for reflection to link social practice and theory.

Many education programs are forms of human rights or peace education, though called by different names. Studies indicate that these programs are given a variety of names from "NGO Development Program" and "Participatory Leadership Skills Development" (Teleki, 2007), to "Education for International Understanding" (Toh, 2005), "Education for Sustainable Development" (Toh, 2005), "Values Education" (Toh, 2005), "Citizenship Education" (Keating, Kerr, Lopes, Featherstone, & Benton, T.,

2009), "Holistic Approach" (Müller, 2009) and "Education for Citizenship" (Blümor, 2008). One such program, though not labeled as human rights or peace education program and yet deals with both, is the "Philippine Youth Leadership Program" (PYLP).

In this connection, important social issues such as power relations, class, gender, ethnicity, and religion must be addressed in youth and adult education to advance a critical pedagogy that promotes social transformation. Informal training must uphold the philosophy of social justice and peace to advance the objectives of human rights, equality and non-discrimination.

Through informal education, participants should be engaged in the formation of individual and social transformation, community empowerment, and promote just power relations at home, work, in the society at large and in the world in general. Through critical pedagogy, participants should be able to continue the struggle against racism, sexism, inequality, and all forms of discrimination, and continue working for women's empowerment, human rights, fairness, justice for all, and peace. In short, education for justice and peace advances the objectives of human rights, equality, and non-discrimination. Clearly, our approach is not merely psychological, but social. We do not only think about solving interpersonal problems but actually seek to bring about changes in favor of social justice and human rights in order to attain just peace.

Philippine Context

The Philippines is a social context with profound socio-economic inequalities, racism, sexism, discrimination, violence, and conflicts. It is also a social context where rampant violations of civil liberties and civil rights occur.

Parliamentary Struggle. Those who form part of civil society as well as those in the public service who are actively involved in social movements demand an economic development that benefits the majority of the Filipino people. Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) try to facilitate the establishment of structures and frameworks that help organize the people into action. Some of them are inside the "belly of the beast" and directly or indirectly engaged in activities related to the media and the legislature, including campaigning and lobbying for policy change. Some are sectoral representatives in the legislature such as those for the women sector (e.g.,

Liza Maza of the GABRIELA Women's Party) and for the masses (e.g., Satur Ocampo of the Bayan Muna party).

Extra-Parliamentary Struggle, Civil Disobedience, and Repression. Many others resort to extra-parliamentary mass mobilization and acts of civil disobedience. Their cries for justice and against oppression were met with repression. Victims and survivors of human rights violations today include not only peasants, workers, women, students, the church workers, non-traditional politicians, and professionals, but also journalists and human rights defenders themselves. There is genuine concern for the protection of Filipinos who work for social justice against political killings, torture, enforced disappearances, and other human rights abuses. To learn more about these violations, read the reports of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Reporters without Borders, which document innumerable cases of political killings and other forms of human rights abuses.

Armed Conflict. Because of the consistent pattern of flagrant human rights abuses, many have decided to go underground and joined the revolutionary social movement. Some of the major revolutionary groups include the National Democratic Front, Cordillera People's Democratic Front, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The MNLF later joined the government and its armed forces were integrated into the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The National Democratic Front, the Communist Party of the Philippines, and its armed forces, the New People's Army, have publicly declared that they abide by international humanitarian law (IHL). IHL is sometimes known as human rights in armed conflict. Hence, the rebels still respect human lives (including civilians and people placed out of combat due to their physical health conditions) and properties. The Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army/National Democratic Front (CPP/NPA/NDF) and the Philippine government signed in March 1998 the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHR-IHL).[1] In 2001, the Tripoli Agreement on Peace between the GRP [Government of the Republic of the Philippines] and the MILF (TAP) was signed on 22 June 2001.[2] The playing field is level, as the government and its forces are bound by international legal provisions, including IHL.

Peace Talks. From time to time, either the rebels or the government unilaterally declare ceasefire, including, among others, in times of religious holidays, be they Christian or Muslim. However, people in NGOs, especially

social movements, sometimes call for all parties to the conflict to have a ceasefire, particularly when the armed conflict intensifies. When ceasefire takes place, this is the time during which revolutionary leaders sit down with government representatives in peace talks. Critical reflection leads to the laying down of the agenda on the table upon which the parties to the conflict base their dialogue.

While dialogue between the parties to the conflict is necessary, it is not sufficient. Aside from reaching principled compromise, action that promotes social justice would speak louder than words. Unfortunately, social injustice until now remains as the prevailing situation. Peace based on justice, therefore, continues to remain unreachable. For this reason, the struggle for justice persists.

Educational Intervention on Human Rights and Peace

The International Training Office (ITO) of Northern Illinois University was set up in 1981 in order to serve the international development community through training programs, technical assistance, academic linkages, and professional consulting.[3]

It is involved in bringing participants from all over the world for all types of short-term courses, from literature to women empowerment, engineering, and law. ITO serves the international development community through training programs. It provides assistance that addresses the societal and institutional needs of different sectors in the Third World countries.

The overall program of ITO aims to strengthen the capacities of international professionals and leaders from public, non-profit, or private sector organizations to become catalysts for change in their home countries. ITO accomplishes this mission through innovative training programs and outreach activities that address institutional, professional, and societal needs.

The specific objectives of the program are the following:

- To sharpen the participants' skills in conflict resolution/transformation, inter-ethnic and intra-faith dialogue, tolerance, leadership, coalition-building, and community activism
- To enhance the participants' appreciation of their similarities and differences through various interactive activities that will serve as avenues for open dialogue

- • To provide participants with tools for working collaboratively across ethnic and religious lines
- • To develop in the participants an appreciation of the cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity of Midwest America, in order to learn lessons about practices of multiculturalism that might be applicable in their own local contexts.

The program revolves around several themes: (1) conflict resolution, (2) inter-ethnic understanding, (3) inter-generational understanding, (4) intra-faith understanding, (5) community activism and volunteerism, (6) U.S. institutions that promote diversity and pluralism, and (7) leadership development and transformation. Resource persons act as lecturers or workshop facilitators. Faculty members and retirees from NIU who have served as resource persons included, among others, Susan Russell, Betty La France, Wei Zheng, Laurel Jeris, LaVerne Gyant, Avi Bass, and Chris Birks. Non-NIU resource persons either hold their training sessions at NIU or in their respective institutions in Illinois or Indiana. These themes are discussed in consideration of the actual historico-economic-socio-politico-cultural contexts of the issues. Thus the discussions focus on the real human rights problems facing the people in general and the participants in particular: income inequality, extreme poverty, racism, discrimination (against people of different color, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, ability, age, etc.), gender gap, refugees, fundamentalism in all religions, and social injustice in other areas. As a result, the call for human rights promotion and protection becomes more concrete, being in response to actually existing societal challenges. The peace education program at NIU involves three general learning objectives: knowledge, skills, and values.

Based on the objectives of the program, the evolving curriculum is composed of the following themes: conflict resolution, inter-ethnic understanding, inter-generational understanding, intra-faith understanding, community activism and volunteerism, contemporary U.S. institutions that promote ethnic diversity and religious pluralism, as well as leadership development and transformation. Not only have the themes changed through the years, based on the general titles of the grants and the recommendations of the funding agency, but also the specific contents of each theme, based on the actual needs of the participants and the availability and skills of the facilitators.

ACCESS-PYLP Training Program

Iᴛᴏ implements the Access to Community and Civic Enrichment for Students - Philippine Youth Leadership Program (ᴀᴄᴄᴇss-ᴘʏʟᴘ) training programs at Northern Illinois University. It has three major goals. First, it advances a dialogue and promotes greater mutual understanding among Muslim, *Lumad* (indigenous), and Christian youth from the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ᴀʀᴍᴍ) and surrounding provinces. Second, it creates a cadre of leaders that will work toward an enduring peaceful co-existence among all groups within the ᴀʀᴍᴍ upon their return home. Third, it promotes a better understanding of the United States—its people, culture, values, and civic institutions.

Aᴄᴄᴇss-ᴘʏʟᴘ has five specific objectives. First, it seeks to sharpen the participants' skills in conflict resolution and management, inter-ethnic co-operation and tolerance, leadership, coalition-building, and community activism. Second, it seeks to enhance the participants' appreciation of their similarities and differences through various interactive activities that serve as avenues for open dialogue. Third, it seeks to provide participants with tools for working collaboratively across ethnic and religious lines. Fourth, it seeks to develop in the participants an appreciation of the cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity of Midwest America by making use of ɴɪᴜ's proximity to Chicago, Springfield (the seat of the Illinois state government), and Indianapolis. Finally, it seeks to give participants access to community projects in DeKalb and in the Chicago areas so that they can gain first-hand experience in volunteer community work, civic participation and community leadership.

In general, both youth leaders and adult leaders have to obtain institutional endorsement as well as have character references. Both groups also need to have good English language skills, as the program is conducted in the U.S. Lastly, applicants must not have previous significant travel to the U.S. on a U.S. government-sponsored program. Upon their return to Mindanao, both the youth and adult leaders must agree to implement at least one community project and thereafter attend the follow-on activities, during which they present reports of their project implementation, reflect on the lessons learned, and concretely plan their work as a group in the immediate future.

Aside from the general selection criteria, there are separate sets of criteria specific to youth and adult leaders respectively. Youth leaders must be

students who are 15-17 years old. They must have demonstrated leadership skills. Likewise, they must have demonstrated interest in community service. Youth applicants must have strong academic and social skills as well. Furthermore, they need to have strong commitment to peace and unity.

For adults to qualify to attend the program, preferably they need to be teachers, NGO or community leaders who work with the youth and are not more than forty years old. They must be involved in peace-related or community projects actively. In addition, they must implement at least one community project.

Barefoot Facilitators

The program participants are trained to become "barefoot facilitators," a term I coined to refer to popular educators and trainers who, depending on the historical-social contexts, use whatever resources and methodologies are available, from chalk talk to high-tech gadgets to pursue educational objectives, and build structures from below in response to the problems and needs of the poor, oppressed and deprived. Barefoot facilitators engage co-learning partners in the communities in open dialogic exchanges that help raise their consciousness as well as that of the exploited in society. Under the program, the participants use heuristic "tool kits" in holding training that encourages inter-ethnic dialogue, promotes conflict resolution and addresses issues involving justice and peace.

The tool kit of barefoot facilitators helps them organize educational and training programs for social transformation. It contains the basic ideas of the educational activities that the barefoot facilitators adapt to the specific needs of the individual and the community.

Exposure and Immersion

Aside from attending sessions during which they learn new knowledge, learn new skills, and acquire new values, the participants also see realities and are engaged in exposure and immersion trips in the U.S. Prior to their on-site visits, participants have a volunteer community service learning orientation, which provides an explanation of the reasons behind doing volunteer service, what to do, what to avoid, what to expect, and what to do after the on-site trip.

Some places where participants go for their exposure and immersion trips include, among others, the following: homeless shelter, retirement center, soup kitchen, and food banks. They do a host of volunteer work, including the following: serving food for the homeless, tutoring homeless children, playing with homeless kids, entertaining senior citizens, or packing food donations to be sent all over the U.S. and select poor countries around the world. Such exposure and immersion trips give the participants an idea and a taste of what they can do in their localities, depending upon the actual local needs. Upon completing their volunteer work, they reflect on their work and on their own community needs, they prepare and work on their plans in the U.S. in preparation for the project implementation in the Philippines.

Instructional and Learning Strategies

Both content and process are important in animating workshops. The substantive elements of workshops must focus on different issues involving human rights, social justice and sustainable peace. Participants may immensely enjoy and successfully absorb the fun processes of ice-breakers and team-building activities, but more importantly they must remember the substantive aspects of collaborative social work and inter-ethnic or multicultural community transformation that they have to use when they return home. Fun is important; but substance must not be sacrificed for fun. They need to be reminded about that.

The methods vary and can be used to convey different messages since they are not bound to specific contents. For instance, "Concentric Circle" is simply an approach that is used to convey the message of dialogue, negotiation, enquiry, or conciliation. While both substance and form are vital to the success of a workshop, interaction and fun are only the means and not the end in view. Fun and interactive activities are important, but with no substantive message conveyed the workshop is substantively a failure. In like manner, a boring and condescending lecture on conflict resolution by an authoritarian speaker who disrespects the participants is a dismal failure.

To ensure the success of the interactive sessions, material and the needed technical support are provided. Some resource persons use audio-visual equipments as well as training supplies such as flipcharts, marker pens, scissors, colored paper, and yellow sticky note pads.

Workshop participants are always reminded to keep in mind the situation on the ground in their own specific communities. Workshop participants can learn a lot about abstract concepts, interpersonal conflict, or the U.S. situation. But they must be grounded on the economic, political, social, and cultural contexts in which they live. Whatever the workshops are, the facilitators must make the participants keep in mind and stress how the learning experiences apply to their local situation. Resource persons and workshop participants can be active co-learners as the former conducts interactive activities, while the latter share how the lessons they learned can be applied to their local contexts. To make sure this is done, resource persons must ask questions during the Question and Answer (Q & A) session on how the participant can apply their knowledge on the ground considering their specific social contexts.

Furthermore, when workshop participants reflect on the day's activities in their journal entries, they must be reminded to write about how and what they have learned apply to their own situation. Interactive and participatory process is important; but more important is the substance (namely, human rights, social justice, and peace).

Debriefing is quite essential for a successful human rights and peace program.

Once a week for five weeks, we facilitate a study circle where all the participants share their thoughts and plans. There are no professorial lectures for students, but dialogue among participants. Discussion and debate are the main tools through which understanding emerges and critical consciousness awakened. Topics are based on the synthesis of knowledge, skills, and values learned at NIU as well as actual needs and issues with which the participants are confronted in their communities.

When everything is said and done, participants must be versed in strategic planning, organizational grassroots management, program planning, fund raising, coalition building, communications, and public relations. When participants go home, they must not just "talk" (such as re-echoing ice breakers and team-building activities) but "do" things. When they go back to their social contexts, they must do social action and concretely work to build interfaith or inter-communal coalitions, collaborate, and adopt causes that advance social justice and human rights.

Challenge

We challenge our alumni to promote peace on a daily basis. We challenge them to do a hitherto difficult act of dialoguing with people of various ethnicities, languages, religions, genders, and economic backgrounds. There is no shortcut to peace, which is a lifelong process and work. Everyone can build peace, block by block, by taking the first step of getting out of comfort zones. Taking the first step to realize social justice and act for social change erects the building blocks that bring about lasting peace. This means speaking out against anti-poor, discriminatory, racist and sexist remarks and defending people who are poor, people of all colors, and people of all genders. Yet, there are still more things to do. We should not only be exposed to people of all backgrounds but also work with them, and work for justice not at one time but as a way of life. Then and only then can we have a world where social justice and peace prevail and endure. We may not be able to witness such a world in our lifetime. But we have to start here and now. Go forth and take this challenge! That's our call to action.

Declaration of Commitment

One of the concrete outputs of the participants of each batch is a posttest instrument called Declaration. Members of each batch collaborate and collectively work on producing a post-program document. They decide on the title and content of their declaration. During their post-program theater production on the occasion of their "graduation" ceremony, participants dramatically present their declaration. Their declaration is a statement of their commitment to continue their work to promote peace based on justice. The content of each year's declaration is a testimony to the depth of their understanding of the causes of the context of armed conflict as well as their profound commitment to work for social change based on justice and peace.

As historical and social contexts change, the learning and social needs also change in response to the concrete settings. We remind our alumni that should they plan to re-echo the U.S. program in their communities, they need to modify the workshop activities to fit the social demands, gaps and needs on the ground. A barefoot facilitator is flexible, including in terms of the use of time, to meet the specific needs of different community partners and programs. Nothing is set in stone.

Peace as Content

For the first program in the academic year 2003-2004, I started to use the definition of peace used by the United Nations' University for Peace based in Costa Rica. This often-quoted framework is shared with the participants during the first couple of days of the five-week long program. "Six dimensions of a holistic framework for peace education, which—though developed in the Philippines context—[Swee-Hin Toh, UNESCO Peace Education Laureate] [is considered to have] international relevance" (Brenes, 2003, p. 6). Below is an illustration of the peace concept of the University for Peace, which in fact originated from the Philippines.

Fig. 1. United Nations Elements of Peace

Interactive activities that deal with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are inserted in the discussion of peace to emphasize the importance of human rights. For the academic year 2008-2009, the participants cited an article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a framework that guides the writing and planning of their plans for action for social change.

Evaluation

The impact of the program on the participants is gauged using different types of pretests and posttests. Quantitative tests in self-administered ques-

tionnaires generate quantitative data that show the extent of participants' new knowledge, skills and values that promote human rights, justice and peace. In addition, participants write three essays: one pretest, another midterm and a final one. The three essays narrate their growth as well as doubts.

In addition, participants keep a daily journal. During the first couple of years of project implementation, journals were handwritten. Participants invariably end up burning the midnight oil on the eve of their departure to write all of their missing journal entries. Upon completion, the sole hard copies of their journals are submitted to the project administrators.

In the next couple of years, however, these journals will be uploaded to an online group. The required outputs include pretest, midterm, and posttest essays as well as their daily journals. Optionally, participants also upload their poems, art work, and select photos.

Upon their return to their respective communities, the participants (now the alumni of the program) also fill out online survey questionnaires to gauge changes in their knowledge, skills, and values. Invariably, evaluation results yield positive changes on the individual participants/alumni as well as on their schools, communities, and places of work, based on the impact of their interpersonal interactions as well as project implementation. On the whole, the human rights and peace education program provides outcomes that promote incremental but lasting changes. See table below for the components of the program.

Table 1. Logic Model for Human Rights and Peace Education Program

Items	Resources	Activities	Outputs	Program Outcomes	Long-term Impact
Criteria	Material, financial & human resources needed to accomplish our set of activities	Formal, informal and non-formal learning activities	Physical product or service delivery	Specific qualitative personal changes as a result of the learning experiences	General and lasting changes
Elements	Human Resources (Staff, Lecturers, Workshop Facilitators) and Material Resources (Audio-Visual Equipment, Training Supplies)	Workshops, Lectures, Field Visits, Volunteer Community Service, Theater Production and Performance	Project Proposals and Action Plans, Community Projects, Training Manual, Book, Photo Documentation, Evaluation, Reports	Increased knowledge, enhanced skills for conflict resolution, and heightened respect for human rights and justice which will lead to peace	Personal transformation and transformation in the community to which one belongs (e.g. school, office, and residence)

Initiatives for Mindanao

ITO has implemented a number of educational programs at Northern Illinois University that benefit Mindanao, linking human rights to conflict resolution (Table 2).

Table 2. ITO Mindanao Programs

Year	Academic Year	Program Title
Year 1	2003-2004	Access to Community and Civic Enrichment for Students (ACCESS) Philippines Project "Bridging the Gap: Engaging a New Generation in the Southern Philippines in Inter-Ethnic Dialogue and Conflict Resolution"
Year 2	2004-2005	
Year 3	2005-2006	
Year 4	2006-2007	Philippine Youth Leadership Program: Engaging a New Generation in the Southern Philippines in Inter-Ethnic Dialogue and Conflict Resolution
Year 5	2007-2008	
Year 6	2008-2009	
Year 7	2009-2010	Philippine Youth Leadership Program: Building a New Generation of Citizens as Catalysts for Social Change

ITO does not claim to have the capacity to solve "all the problems" in the Philippines. On the contrary, its efforts are small attempts at sowing the seeds of justice-based peace in the lives of Mindanaons who get involved in its activities. Note, however, that unless the root causes of the armed conflict are addressed and solved, peace will not be forthcoming. NIU only provides a venue in which participants from Mindanao engage in dialogue, critical reflection, envision a just and peaceful Philippines, and prepare their plans for action. Other than that, it does not claim to achieve anything more grandiose.

Project Planning

The programs in Mindanao are the result of the participation of Mindanaoan educators in the ACCESS-PYLP. The first major component of the ACCESS-PYLP, held in the U.S., includes learning new knowledge, skills, and values that promote peace based on justice in the Philippines. The second most important component is the preparation of a project plan in the U.S. that will be implemented in the Philippines. Initially, Jaya Gajanayake was the main trainer. Later, Wei Zheng took over the teaching responsibility. As with Gajanayake, Zheng is most effective in her learner-centered pedagogy. In

the span of a one-whole-day workshop sessions, participants learn hands-on how to engage in environmental scanning, SWOT analysis, strategic planning, organizational development, and action planning. Thereafter, participants create individual plans as well as regional plans. Towards the end of the five-week program, participants present their community plans and I lead in providing constructive critique, which is a very daunting task, as I have to simultaneously listen to their presentations, understand, think, and propose ways of making their projects doable, measurable, concrete, and uncomplicated.

Community Projects

At NIU, the participants present their project ideas and their plans on how to implement them in the different communities. Some have overly ambitious projects. Hence, revision or a total change of project plans is needed upon their return to Mindanao. The participants, now alumni, are involved in the implementation of various community projects. They represent a variety of projects that respond to the needs of different communities. Table 3 contains various categories of community projects, which emerged from the list of different types of volunteer work that the alumni have undertaken.

Table 3. Community Activities Undertaken upon Returning to Mindanao

Categories of Activities
Arts, Culture, and Games
Relief for Evacuees or Internally Displaced Persons due to Armed Conflict
Environmental Projects
Hygiene
Indigenous Peoples' Alternative Tour
Income Generating Projects
General Literacy-Related Projects: Basic Literacy, Books, Tutorials, Library
Neighborhood
Sports
Others

The different categories of activities listed above can be further classified into three major types of projects that promote change. They include (1) relief, (2) advocacy, and (3) development projects. In order to help victims

and survivors, relief projects need to be implemented as soon as a human-made or natural disaster happens. Human-made disasters include mass internal displacements of whole villages. Natural disasters include floods and typhoon-caused damages. The second type of projects, advocacy, includes consciousness-raising to advance equality, non-discrimination, human rights, social justice, and peace. The third type of projects, development, includes income-generating projects, environmental projects, and the production and marketing of local products. Table 4 below provides the activities being undertaken within each category.

Table 4. Relief, Advocacy and Development Projects Implemented in Mindanao through the Years

Relief	Advocacy	Development
Human-Made Disaster Relief, such as for Armed Conflict Evacuees, Internally Displaced Persons or "Internal Refugees" (in layperson's language), including teaching displaced children in situation of armed conflict (CSAC)	Popular Education on Citizenship, Human Rights, Social Justice & Peace (through Workshops & Art Work)	Alternative Tourism
		Cooperatives
		Dole Outs & Donation of Books & School Supplies
	Interfaith, Inter-Ethnic, & Intergenerational Dialogue, Games, Sports & Other Forms of Interaction	Environment: Mangrove Planting, Tree Planting, River Bank Clean Up
		Income-Generating Projects
		Hygiene
Natural Disaster Relief, such as for Survivors of Floods, Typhoons, and Other Calamities	Equal Rights	Income-Generating Projects
	Multiculturalism & Diversity	Neighborhood Projects
	Literacy-Related Projects: Day Teaching and Games	Waste Management, Recycling, Composting, Garbage Can Production
	Formal education on human rights & peace in school curriculum	Production and Marketing of Products (products with peanut or coconut as base)

Networking

Since the first year of the implementation of this project, the alumni have been clamoring for the establishment of a formal network. As a U.S. based institution and "outsider," we decided not to be directly involved in setting up the network. The birthing of a network must be initiated locally, organized locally, and grown locally. At hindsight, we believe we really did the right thing in letting the "baby" grow into an independent being, not dependent on the mother institution that cultivated it. As of this writing, there are one hundred ninety-nine alumni who are part of the network; they in turn recruit local partners to get involved in their continuing network-related projects, which build and sustain a critical mass. See Table 5 below for an analysis of the network.

Table 5. Longitudinal Analysis: A Network of Partners through the Years

Year	Leaders	Sex		Religion				Sub-Total	Total
		Male	Female	Islam	Roman Catholicism	Other Christianity	Indigenous		
2003-2004	Youth	10	16	12	13	0	1	26	33
	Adults	3	4	3	4	0	0	7	
2004-2005	Youth	12	14	12	11	3	0	26	34
	Adults	6	2	4	3	1	0	8	
2005-2006	Youth	9	14	10	8	3	2	23	31
	Adults	7	1	5	3	0	0	8	
2006-2007	Youth	8	12	8	9	3	0	20	26
	Adult	4	2	2	1	2	1	6	
2007-2008	Youth	7	15	10	11	1	0	22	27
	Adults	3	2	2	2	1	0	5	

2008-2009	Youth	4	16	8	9	3	0	20	23
	Adults	1	2	1	1	1	0	3	
2009-2010	Youth	10	11	14	7	0	0	21	25
	Adults	3	1	3	1	0	0	4	
Seven Years Total	Youth	60	98	74	68	13	3	158	199
	Adults	27	14	20	15	5	1	41	
	Youth & Adults	87	112	94	83	18	4	199	

[1]There are records that show that Islam arrived in 1310 with the arrival of Tuan Timhar Muqbalu in Sulu. Mr. Nelson Dino, a Tausug-Buranun Muslim Filipino from the Sulu archipelago, stated in an interview however that Islam came to Sulu in the 7th Century A.D. Muslims in Sulu and Palawan archipelago and Zamboanga include Tausug (Buranun), Sama, Yaka, Jama Mapun, Mulbug, Palawani, and Kalibugan. In mainland Mindanao, Islam arrived around the 14th Century during the reign of Sharif Alawi. Muslims in mainland Mindanao consist of Maranao, Maguindanao, Iranun, Kagan, and Sangir. Islam reached Manila in the 14th Century with the arrival of Sharif Ali Barakat from Brunei in Sulu, then Manila (Fi Amanillah). Many parts of what we now call the Philippines had been Islamized prior to the arrival of the Spaniards and Christianity. But some members of these Islamized ethnic groups converted to Roman Catholic or other Christian faiths later on. Thus, for example, some participants in the program who are ethnically full or part Tausugs (one of the ethnic groups) have self-identified as Christians. Today, some Filipinos who, for instance, are ethnically Tagalog or Kapampangan who have converted to Islam are now Muslims and are called "Balik Islam" (back to Islam).

[2]Some indigenous people in Mindanao have converted to Christianity and have self-identified as such, and therefore listed as Roman Catholic or Christian.

Technology and Social Networking

The participants cultivate relations with people in the U.S. of diverse ethnicities, religions, gender, and other differences through face-to-face interaction. But that is just the point of departure, a successful one at that. Upon returning to their communities as alumni, they face new challenges.

Technology helps and is a "friend" in the networking work. Participants and alumni are connected to each other through a variety of ways, all of which involve some kind of technology. Initially, all participants at NIU are connected through a web-based group. From there, they connect to one another mostly through cellular phone calls and text messaging. Alumni are likewise connected through various Internet chat rooms, on-line "phone"

conversations, Skype, Internet video chats, Facebook, Twitter, myspace, and Linkedin, all of which are accessible free of charge. In addition, many of their activities while at NIU as well as in their communities are shared through short video clips on YouTube. While it is true that not everyone has a computer at home, more and more schools, in the remotest islands in Mindanao have computers that are connected to the Internet to which students have free yet slow access. Some alumni use the local Internet cafés to connect with PYLP folks. Ethernet communication facilitates friendly greetings as much as serious discussions about human rights violations occurring at the moment and about joint projects that promote interfaith dialogue and the like.

Lessons Learned and Best Practices

At NIU, lessons have been learned and best practices were developed during the period from academic year 2003-2004 to the present, 2009-2010. The leadership curriculum included inter-ethnic dialogue, human rights, social justice, conflict resolution methods, conflict transformation, community activism and volunteerism, as efforts to bring about peace. However, we learned that a human rights framework helps the participants organize their thoughts and make concrete plans for social change.

Actual experience in handling the program taught us first hand that teaching and learning could not be context-free. For a program to be successful, we need to start by studying the "Mindanao Situation" by way of lectures and workshops. Instead of "teaching down," we try very hard to make sure that the participants bring their knowledge, skills and values "to the table" as starting point for discussions. The local knowledge of the Filipinos is discussed alongside the applicability to the local contexts in the Philippines of concepts, theories, and approaches in the U.S. With constant dialogue between participants and lecturers, lectures are ensured not to be too abstract and workshops not infantile. In this way, the participants can have ownership of a program whose content and methods are appropriate to their actual needs.

In terms of recruitment, in-country coordinators, especially Naga Madale, try hard to make sure that through the years we reach and recruit people from the farthest villages and islands to attend the U.S.-based program. While Muslims and "non-Muslims" are primary target participants,

we try very hard to make sure that indigenous persons take part in the program.

In addition, there is annual update and revision of the training manuals of the participants. An online group connects all—participants and training staff. All written assignments are uploaded online to this electronic group. Examples of uploaded assignments include pre-test, midterm, and post-test essays; project plans; art work; photos; and daily electronic journals (e-journals). Also, an annual book that documents the changing context, the project plans, photo essays of implemented projects, annual declarations of commitment, art gallery, and photo gallery are produced and copies sent to all participants.

As part of dissemination work, libraries of major institutions in different parts of the world receive hardcopies of these publications free of charge. In addition, all publications have electronic version. These e-books are down-loadable for free by all interested parties (visit www.niu.edu/CSEAS/current_initiatives/PYLP/PYLP_Publications.shtml.

The PYLP program takes into consideration the existing conditions on the ground. Preliminary sessions deal with in-depth social investigation of the context that led to the armed conflict situation. Educational intervention in the U.S. provides an opportunity for participants to learn knowledge, skills, and values that promote social justice, human rights and peace. More importantly, the participants prepare their respective project plans that they implement in their own communities a couple of months after their return. A team of two persons from the U.S. (usually Susan Russell and another person) go to Mindanao to join the alumni in follow-on activities where the latter share stories of, and reflect on, their implemented projects in particular and on the direction of their continuing peace work in general. In 2009, Mokaram Rauf of Council of Arab-Islamic Relations (CAIR) Chicago joined Russell in attending the follow-on activities in Mindanao. Our alumni adore Lina Ong and Russell. They also like and are impressed with Rauf, as he showed his selfless devotion and genuine concern in doing volunteer community service in the villages, mingling with the common folks, and joining community work, instead of showing himself off as an expert. The program in the U.S. is tweaked annually based on the recommendations and other comments from all stakeholders, especially the alumni. The flowchart be-

low presents a holistic model of the training program grounded on actual experience.

Table 6. Grounded Model of Human Rights & Peace Education based on Actual Practice on the Macro, Meso & Micro Levels

Home or In-Country		Host Country (U.S.)		Home or In-Country				Host Country (U.S.)
Macro-Context	Selection of Micro-Participants	1 Formal & Non-Formal Educational Intervention	2 Micro-Planning for Meso-Action to Promote Social Change	3 NGO Community Projects	Evaluative Reflec-tion on Practice	Social Impact		Program Revision
				Informal & Popular Education Interven-tions	Meso-Net-working	Changing Context		

Birthing of Similar Programs

Under the very able administration of Ong, Northern Illinois University successfully implemented the ACCESS-PYLP since academic year 2003-2004. Due to the successes of ITO work, the ACCESS-PYLP program "gave birth" to human rights and peace programs for other parts of the world: (1) Cyprus and (2) Southeast Asia in general.

Cyprus. In 2006, Ong directed a very successful Bi-Communal Cyprus Program for Youth. I wrote the project and budget proposal that Ong copy-edited. Richard Orem was the Academic Director of the Cyprus program; Ong, the administrative director; and, myself as the Training Coordinator. In the post-colonial period of its history today, Cyprus is a divided society. The "Green Line" divides the country into two imagined communities: the Turkish Cypriots in the North and the Greek Cypriots in the South. They live in "twin solitudes." Untold sufferings have befallen both communities. In the Cyprus program, we brought over twenty Turkish Cypriot students, twenty Greek Cypriot students, two Turkish Cypriot adult leaders, and two Greek Cypriot adult leaders to Northern Illinois University. Our Cyprus

alumni now form a loose network whose aim is to strengthen the bonds of Turkish and Greek Cypriots across the Green Line in order to foster a sense of bi-communal unity amidst diversity.

Southeast Asia. Based on the successes of the PYLP that Ong and Russell co-direct, the council members of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) of Northern Illinois University decided to engage in a similar program for Southeast Asia as a whole. Ong, who is a CSEAS council member, hired Garth Katner to prepare a project proposal that principally uses her successful grant proposals as a template. As with the PYLP, the Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program (SEAYLP) successfully competed and won funding from the U.S. Department of State. Kate Wiegele, an anthropology professor and a Filipinist, run the program. Tasked by Wiegele and upon the recommendation of Ong, I trained the newly formed SEAYLP team. Other key persons involved in the SEAYLP were Jim Collins and Deb Pierce. Based on the lessons learned and best practices of PYLP, I trained Wiegele and her four staff members on the elements and process of the preparatory work, program implementation, and post-program work. Under the helms of Wiegele and with the wise advice of Ong as consultant, the operation of SEAYLP program has been smooth sailing.
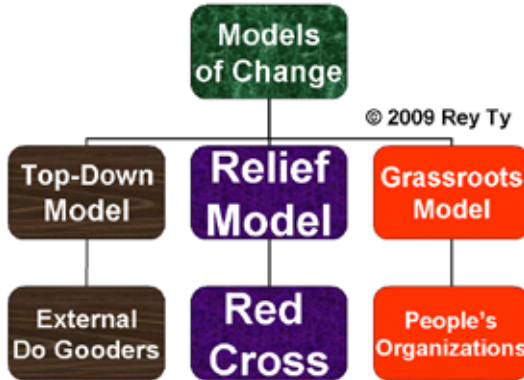
Recommendations

Many training organizers are tempted to keep participants tied down with numerous activities that eventually turn out to be counterproductive. Other training organizers "teach down" abstract or non-contextual materials to participants. This is another recipe for failure.

Based on ITO's best practices, therefore, we recommend the following:

- Instead of "too heavy" programs, human rights and peace education programs should provide enough "free time" for deeper reflection and networking among participants;
- Training organizers should ensure that their programs address at the first instance the concrete contexts of the participants; they should refrain from dwelling on abstract concepts at one end and insulting the intelligence of the participants by having infantile activities at the other end. Rather, participants should be encouraged to engage in critical reflection that respects their actual experience and level of intelligence.

On a different note, there are at least three models of working for change with different impacts on the community: (1) the missionary model, (2) relief model, and (3) grassroots model. Figure 2 below illustrates the models.

Fig. 2. Working for Social Change

We recommend that human rights and peace education programs include both learning and action components, as in the ITO program. In this way, human rights and peace do not only remain on the realm of thinking, but extend to real-life action for social change. Note, however, that engagement in one model of action or another has different social impact. The top-down model is the easiest thing to do, as the outsiders themselves decide what the community insiders need. An example of a top-down model is a dole-out project where outsiders (donors) provide clothes, books, school supplies, or food to the community. The relief model involves providing help to survivors or victims of disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, and typhoons. It also involves urgently helping internally displaced persons (IDPs) who flee from armed conflict situations. The grassroots model involves empowering community members themselves. Community members learn to and engage in needs assessment, write project plans and budget proposals, implement projects that really respond to their community needs and evaluate their work.

Aside from adding an action component in the post-program phase, we recommend that participants be briefed about the social impact of each social action model. There is a great temptation to engage in projects using the

top-down model, whose impact (or euphoria) on both community outsiders and insiders lasts only during the gift-giving period. Once the bubble bursts, the community insiders are back to facing the hardship and helplessness in their daily lives.

Projects along the lines of the relief model are very necessary and important, as people afflicted with untold suffering due to natural or human-made calamities need immediate attention and help—psychological, economic and physical. And in cases government agencies are slow, corrupt or both, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role in providing immediate relief (such as provision of water, food, soaps, detergent, tents, boots, blankets, beddings, medical first aid, basic medicine, and sanitary supplies) to victims, survivors, and vulnerable groups. Projects involving the third type of work—grassroots empowerment model—have the longest lasting effect on communities.

Conclusion

The International Training Office of Northern Illinois University has been continuously implementing a program since 2003 up to the present known as Access to Community and Civic Enrichment for Students (ACCESS) Philippine Program and renamed it in the academic year 2006-2007 as the Philippine Youth Leadership Program (PYLP). The change in the title and annual themes reflect the changes in the program content and focus. While not known as such, as in many related programs all around the world, the PYLP program actually involves human rights and peace education.

ITO sees the value of longer lasting social change by ensuring that its alumni work for grassroots empowerment. As a Chinese proverb goes: "Give people a fish, they will eat for a day. Teach people to fish, and they will eat for the rest of their lives."

*Disclaimer: All views expressed in this article solely belong to the author and do not represent the views of the institutions with which he is affiliated.

Endnotes

[1]The Philippine government issued on 24 January 2005 Executive Order No. 404, "Creating The Government of The Republic of The Philippines Monitoring Committee (Grp-Mc) on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law" in order to monitor the implementation of CARHRIHL.

[2]The "Implementing guidelines on the humanitarian, rehabilitation and development aspects of the GRP—MILF Tripoli Agreement on Peace of 2001" provides for the application of the provisions of international instruments and covenants on International Human Rights Laws (IHRL) and International Humanitarian Laws (IHL) entered into by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines."

[3]For further information on ITO, please visit: www.niu.edu/ito/aboutus/mission.shtml

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Annex A

PHILIPPINE YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM-YEAR 6 (2009)
A Statement of Commitment to
Human Rights, Justice and Peace in Mindanao
4 May 2009

We, the participants of the Philippine Youth Leadership Program (PYLP) held at Northern Illinois University, from April 4 to May 6, 2009, understand that there are many causes of the conflicts in Mindanao: historical, social, economic, political, territorial, and cultural. As with the national situation, the "Mindanao Problem" involves foreign domination, poverty, inequality, corruption, and discrimination, all of which lead to endless internal armed conflict between the Philippine government and various rebel groups, such as the National Democratic Front (NDF) and its member organizations, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). As we work towards a just and long-lasting peace, we enjoin all parties to the armed conflict to respect the laws of war. We realize that, being the new generation in Mindanao, in the Southern Philippines, we must continue our work for promoting a culture of peace in Mindanao.

We commit ourselves to engage in interfaith, intergenerational and inter-ethnic dialogue in promoting mutual understanding and tolerance among Indigenous peoples, Muslims, and Christians. If we want peace, we must work for justice. Hence, we are committed to struggle against social injustice, inequality, poverty, and corruption in our respective communities in Mindanao. We are committed to work for economic, social, cultural, civil, and political human rights. We are committed to fight for social justice, equality, and sustainable development in places where we live, study and work. We pledge to speak out for those who are oppressed, exploited, and marginalized. We pledge to stop stereotyping and discrimination. We vow to exercise our leadership for community activism and volunteerism. We are committed to implement our community projects and strengthen our common values underpinning justice, peace and people-centered sustainable development in all our communities.

We loudly call on the Philippine government to support our peace-building efforts and the positive contributions of various non-governmental groups and social movements in civil society to the peace process in Mindanao. While we entrust all our commitments, endeavor, and dreams of a peaceful community to our almighty Creator, we ourselves take small but concrete steps to fulfill our big dreams of a just and peaceful Mindanao in particular and the Philippines in general. Civil Liberties! Equal Rights! Social Justice! Peace! Now! In Mindanao!