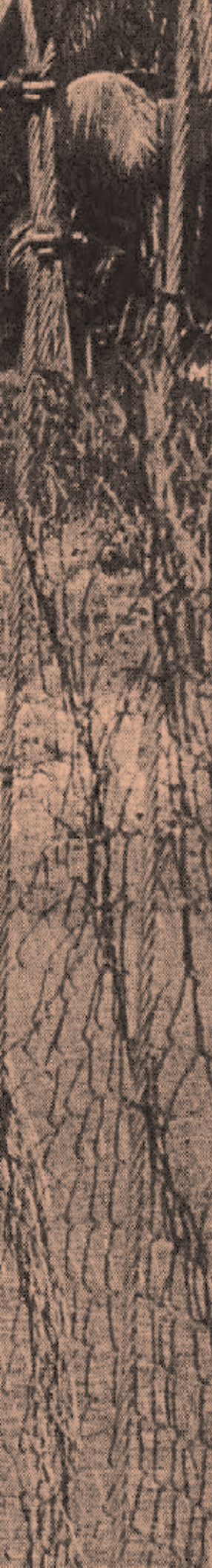


A woman in a dark coat is walking away from the camera on a narrow suspension bridge. Her arms are raised in a gesture of triumph or peace. The bridge is made of wooden planks and ropes, and it spans across a body of water. The background shows a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The overall tone is warm and hopeful.

# Recognising Women's Participation in Sustainable and Lasting Peace

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





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

For instance, day-care teachers shared creativity in teaching the value and understanding of living in a tri-people (Christians, Muslims and Lumads, or indigenous peoples) community that calls for acceptance despite differences. The indigenous farmers also spoke of “Damayan” (helping each other) not only as a farming system but also a way of community life that exists during times of peace and conflict. Yet, none of this is projected in media nor is it known by local government or civil society groups working in the area of peace building. At the same time, neglecting participation of women, including conducting any consultation with them in peace building, results in a lack of or insufficient programmes and activities addressing women's issues and concerns during times of war and conflict.

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

But peace and conflict issues in the Philippines are not confined to Mindanao alone. In Luzon and in the Visayas, women suffer the consequences brought about by armed encounters between the military/police and the New People's Army

in a war that has, like the conflict in Mindanao, stretched on for decades. Women likewise become victims of clashes between various armed groups and private armies.

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

Isis International thus realised that with so much peace work being done by groups both among civil society and government, its value lies in bringing in the gender aspect of peace work and emphasising its value by looking at and working on peace building holistically. And to do this, Isis International realised it is essential to initially find out to what extent (or if any at all) do peace advocates include or consider women and gender in their peace work. Then, to expand its capacity building work among the grassroots women to empower them by equipping them with the tools so that they may voice their experiences and issues and ways they can contribute to both civil society, local government and media. Lastly, to promote the UNSCR 1325 as a valuable tool in ensuring women's participation in peace building as well as the protection of women and children in times of conflict and reconstruction.

### Gender, Conflict and Peace Situation in the Philippines

Armed Conflict in the Philippines has been ongoing for several decades now. The Communist Party of the Philippines – National People's Army (CPP-NPA) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front – Bangsamoro Islamic Auxiliary Force (MILF-BIAF) are the two major groups that are at war with the State for a number of reasons: some fight for their rights to ancestral domain, clamour for access to basic rights and services, and the experience of poverty and marginalisation. In the different regions of the country—Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao—different groups figure into the war with the Philippine Government. The radical change for which they aim has been espoused through a long history of armed struggle

against century's old problems of colonisation, poverty, inequality and marginalisation that to date is felt by marginalised sectors of society: peasants, workers, Moros, and indigenous people in different regions of the Philippines. (Teodoro, 2007)

### Gender and Armed Conflict

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

While various groups recognise long-standing issues of conflict and war in the Philippines, it is also important to note the gendered impact of war on women and children. Margallo in her 2005 report summarised the status of addressing gender issues in Conflict Situations in the Philippines. She notes how gender responsiveness continues to be a difficulty encountered by peace and development actors at the national and community levels despite achievements towards gender responsiveness. One of the problems she noted was that women are still not able to participate in decision making processes in the home, communities and formal governance. When women are able to occupy leadership positions, it is largely due to the fact that they come from political families and dynasties. Evidence of this is the experience of the Philippines in having two women presidents: Cojuangco-Aquino and Macapagal-Arroyo. Leadership is still not seen as a role women should be playing because of traditional notions of femininity that is interwoven with cultural and religious beliefs that may vary by region.

The last two decades saw marked efforts at trying to address women's strengthened participation in leadership and governance. At the international level this is evidenced by the adoption of two key international conventions and resolutions such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women as (CEDAW, 1981) and the UN Security Council Resolution

1325 (UNSCR 1325, October 2000). These two resolutions aim to define the experience of discrimination in various contexts while being mindful of the crucial role women play in leadership. In the Philippines efforts to match international policy development for women's participation is evidenced by the adoption of the Women in Nation Building Act (RA 7192, 1992), Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710, 2009) and the Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (supported by EO 865, 2010).

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

### Health Impacts on Women

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

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





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

### Isis Contribution to Gender and Peace-building Work

Interwoven in the gender and conflict situation of the Philippines is Isis International’s commitment and contribution to looking into the achievement and challenges of inclusion of women in the peace process and development work. In the past four years, Isis International has worked steadily on women’s participation in peace building, making sure that women are included in a process that looks at holistic approaches towards peace and development work, and that peace and development efforts are mindful of women’s voice and contribution in various processes at the formal and informal level. Isis International launched its Activist School in 2009 to provide skills building capacity to women on the use of community media technology and ICT to advance their advocacies and to strengthen their capacity to articulate their own issues through their own perspectives and experiences.

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

Ten years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the implementation of Security Council resolutions has been weak due to a lack of political will and monitoring bodies. The challenge is to continue to contribute to the realisation of the said resolution and put this in full implementation as a way to uphold human rights. Other resolutions to augment and help strengthen 1325 are UNSCR 1820, which aims to address sexual violence in conflict and UNSCR 1888, adopted to reinforce the protection and prevention of sexual violence by assigning leaders and calling for coordination among stakeholders.



A decade after the approval of UNSCR 1325 the Philippines launched the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in November 2010, that was the first launch in Asia and 17th in the world. The basic components of the Philippine NAP cover an implementation plan for UNSCRs 1325 (women's participation in peace building) and 1820 (addressing sexual violence as a weapon of war).

### Media Accounts of Gender Issues within Conflict Situations

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

Isis International through this one-year project urges for community radio to be popularised as a way to bring women's voices together towards peace-building and to exchange information promoting inter-cultural understanding. It is also to develop skills of women in producing articles

equipped with a "right" way to approach the conflict situations. (Women in Action, 2006)

### Research into current practices for gender inclusion by peace and development organisations

Isis International conducted research into current practices for gender inclusion by peace and development organisations working in conflict areas in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao in order to assess the current capabilities and surface gaps in how peace and development stakeholders are able to contribute to an environment conducive for the effective implementation of the UNSCRs 1325 and the Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. This was done through the conduct of focused group discussions (Regional Cheekah Sessions) among peace advocates in specified areas in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, representing various civil society organisations, local government units (and agencies), and community-based women's organisations. This survey collected the cases of good practice in implementing UNSCR1325 as well as identified the gaps.

The research aimed to respond to the questions: How can various peace and development stakeholders effectively contribute to strengthening women's participation in peace and development work? What support is needed for civil society organisations to effectively contribute to the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 through the Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security?

The Cheekah Session was designed as several small group discussions that encourage informal flowing conversations with use of creative activities like clay-play and collage making among the research partners to surface their thoughts on women's participation, experiences of conflict, violence and peace. The Cheekah allowed women to speak freely about their thoughts, feelings and insights on their various roles in everyday community and peace building. They referred to these sessions as an "emotional band-aid" that provides them the space to acknowledge their hurts and experience healing and affirmation within a safe space. The Cheekah Session also provided discussion spaces for women

and peace stakeholders representing: women community leaders, local government leaders, government representatives, NGO representatives and media practitioners.

## Summary of Findings

### Experience of Violence across Regions

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

**Samar in Visayas** experiences political, economic, cultural and psychological forms of violence. The province continues to be affected by the armed conflict between the government and the Communist Party of the Philippines. However, another political form of violence, stemming from political rivalries, confronts people of the province as well. Structural violence is also experienced through poverty and the lack of basic social services. They also noted cultural forms of violence such as the experience of marginalisation because of class and gender as well as forms of gender based violence with women experiencing domestic and sexual violence. They see the roots of this violence in ideological differences, the experience of poverty and various forms of social injustice (including gender). They also named poor governance as contributory to worsening the experience of conflict. The armed conflict in Samar has caused displacement, worsening poverty because of the

disruption of economic activities, and destruction of lives and property. The Samarens also noted feelings of insecurity among media personnel because of political labels given to them by either party to the armed conflict.

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

### Gendered Impact of War/Violence on Women

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

**Political Subordination.** The experiences shared by the participants from Kalinga, Samar and Maguindanao spoke of political marginalisation in terms of women's leadership and a lack of access to basic rights and protection. They observed that women occupied very little space in leadership and were rarely appointed in high level positions. They see that as being rooted to the perception that women have no right to become leaders and as a manifestation of gender inequality. Another manifestation of political subordination is the poor



implementation of laws that should be ensuring women's participation. They experience a lack of government protection because laws that exist are not properly implemented and are not efficiently monitored. These conditions make it more difficult for women victims of violence to access existing mechanisms for redress making it more difficult to seek justice.

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

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

**Physical and Psychological Insecurity.** The women also talked about the physical and psychological impact of violence and conflict on women. They spoke of physical insecurity

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

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

### Women's Rights Violations

The gendered experience of conflict is manifested in the violation of women's political rights to equal opportunities and freedom of choice. Women lack the awareness of basic laws that are supposed to be protecting their rights. Women also need access to economic opportunities to help them recover from the experience of conflict and yet they have difficulty in accessing employment, economic resources such as land and property. These impact their right to achieve financial independence from families, spouses and partners. Even as women speak of the experience of resilience and being able to bounce back from difficulties and challenges, practice of individual agency is still challenged. Even if women try to fulfil all of the roles expected of them, people around them are not always mindful in recognising these. Women are

deprived as well of basic opportunities for growth and improvement such as education sessions or capacity building activities.

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

### Women Responding to Gender Issues: Mechanisms Available and Challenges Encountered

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

- **Women in Local Governance.** Women in the different regional cheekah sessions shared how they, as incumbent public officials in the local community council, municipal and city leadership, monitor various abuses against women, oversee community projects and assess how these should benefit women. They also take the opportunity to promote national laws and local ordinances for women. But even as they try their best to respond to women's needs in times of conflict their credibility to do so is often questioned not because of their capacity but because they are women. They also face

challenges in raising awareness on the existence of various forms of abuse against women. They encounter the resistance of the community who would rather not speak of these experiences and continue to be silent about it.

- **Women in Government Service.** Different government agencies were represented by women in the regional cheekah sessions; these were the Philippine National Police (PNP), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Department of Education, and the National Commission for Indigenous People's Rights (NCIP). These agencies are involved in direct service provision to women in terms of protection of their rights, relief assistance during times of evacuation, livelihood programme provision and looking after the special concerns of marginalised sectors like indigenous people. They try to continue to be responsive to the needs of civilians particularly women. They also face the difficulty of being ill equipped in terms of capacities and material resources. The different government agencies have varying capacities in understanding gender issues within conflict and peace situations. Some agencies such as the Philippine National Police had the benefit of gender sensitivity trainings. Other agencies that are saddled with various concerns face the challenges of being ill-equipped in addressing the women's issues amidst this conflict.
- **Women in Civil Society Organisations.** Also responding to the urgent situation of women within armed conflict is the steadfast support and partnership coming from civil society organisations. Non-government organisations are committed to development work within the context of conflict and peace. They take part in advocacy and awareness work on women's rights. Their advocacy range from awareness raising on gender issues, awareness of laws and policies for women's protection to enjoining communities in protest and mass action to end abuse against women. Other organisations also share their services and partner in delivering basic social and economic services and organise livelihood opportunities. But they also face



challenges in continuing to provide these. Not all have the benefit of strengthened capacities prior to diving into service provision. They also face the challenge of financial limitations that threaten their capacity to continue on with their work.

- **Women in Community Leadership.** Local community leaders have found it helpful to partner with CSOs in giving assistance within communities. They also found an effective space as mediators of conflict within their respective communities. In doing this they found themselves drawing on indigenous forms of conflict resolution that have been tested as they mediate on resource based conflicts within the community. A challenge they face however is trying to use these mechanisms to address gender issues as well. This is where they are faced with cultural conservatism and blindness to gender issues. To effectively push for these concerns, they have expressed the need to be more exposed to gender trainings that are culturally sensitive or mindful in addressing cultural challenges in gender.
- **Women in Media.** Women media representatives who attended the regional cheekah sessions are mostly involved in radio and community media. They shared how they have maximised their radio programmes and community media in drawing attention and visibility to gender issues. Their programmes talk about various forms of abuses against women, especially gender based violence. They have also maximised the platform to share current services and programmes for women. The challenge they experience however is the lack of capacity building activities on gender and media work especially in the context of peace. They also see collaboration and partnership to be a challenge as they are not always seen as partners in development work. They also face threats to their own security as visible spokespersons of these sensitive gender and conflict issues.

### Implications on Policies, Programme and Practice for Gender Inclusion in Peacebuilding

The Women, Peace and Security framework that was used to craft the UNSCR 1325 and

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

Effective implementation of policies must be grounded in current needs of ordinary people in the immediate as well as the long term. The concerns raised by the participants in the cheekah sessions were in the foreground of crafting recommendations for strengthened practice, effective programme and policy implementation at the local level. These three aspects were seen to be part of effective mechanisms for Women, Peace and Security at the regional and local levels.

### Strengthened Practice towards Women, Peace and Security

- **Pursue peace negotiations that are inclusive of gender concerns.** Women participants appreciate current practices in pursuing peace. True and lasting peace was part of the conditions for which women feel secure in various aspects of their lives. However these processes need to be mindful of traditional notions of gender that challenge women in various aspects of their lives.
- **Early warning and reporting systems.** Instituting early warning and reporting systems will help ordinary people be informed of when conflict escalates and ensues. It helps when civilians are also part of this mechanism of reporting similar to the Bantay Ceasefire as they are informed of when to leave and return to their homes.
- **Engendering Peace Journalism.** Engendering peace journalism recognises the role of media practitioners as partners in peacebuilding. It also offers a sound frame for media practice that is responsible, accounts for the needs and concerns of the people and the role media

plays in shaping perceptions of men and women. Practicing principles of engendering peace journalism is thus a substantial and essential part of media responsibility and public vigilance.

- **Multi-sectoral Dialogues.** The practice of dialogues as a way of problem analysis and crafting solutions is good practice. However for it to be representative of the needs of all it needs to have all groups represented so that all concerns are raised, heard and considered. In the case of the Philippines, this may comprise of government, security sector, armed groups and civilians composed of Christians, Muslims and Indigenous People.
- **Achieving Gender Equality as a Goal of Good Governance.** Ensuring good governance as a practice was seen to be contributory to crafting and implementing policies, programmes and services. The usage and maximisations of the Gender and Development (GAD) budget was often cited as a way to make available financial resources to address gender concerns. However its implementation and usage also lies in appreciating the need to look in gender issues as peace and development concerns and be mindful of the use of existing resources to achieve these.
- **Grounding in People's Needs and Concerns.** There is a need to constantly look into current conditions before guidelines and recommendations are enforced specially in designing and implementing government services. It is important to be aware of current challenges that may affect proper implementation, or specific challenges of marginalised groups in availing of these.
- **Strengthened Partnerships for Gender, Peace and Development.** Women, Peace and Security will not be achieved by one sector alone. Thus, effective collaboration between various stakeholders in gender, peace and development in government including local government and local government agencies, civil society, communities and media should be forged and strengthened.

- **Recognition of various forms of support and partnership.** Civil Society Organisations have been doing peace and development work on the ground for a very long time and they should be recognised and supported as legitimate stakeholders in peace and development work. CSOs have also been working with the international community on support for peacebuilding work on the ground so as they deepen this involvement through gender inclusion they should be allowed to sit/ be heard in committees and other mechanisms related to women, peace and development.
- **Participation in Special Local Peace Bodies.** Women in government, CSOs and community all do their share in peace work. Much of this work is centred on welfare. Women can and should do more than giving training on livelihood or health but participate, as well in local bodies and mechanisms that promote peace such as the Barangay Human Rights Action Centre and the Lupong Tagapamayapa (Mediating Peace Group). The experience of women in mediating conflicts in the family and community should be brought to formal conflict resolution spaces such as these.

### Effective Programmes Grounded in People's Needs

- **Substantial Budget for Social Services.** In all of the regional cheekah sessions participants were consistent in saying that access to basic social services such as basic health, reproductive and maternal health education and employment are challenged before, during and after conflict. Ensuring that sizeable budget is allocated to cover these basic social services and that allocations are spent for the intended purpose will allow people to recover from the devastation of conflict and violence.
- **Knowledge of International Standards for Gender Equality and, Human Rights Law.** All stakeholders were seen to benefit from raising their capacities on international human rights laws- Training on these should also be complemented with knowledge on their implementation at the national and local level by means of policy development at the national level.




- **Capacity Building on Crisis Intervention for Gender Based Violence.** With increased incidents of gender based violence at home and in communities, training should be given to CSOs on initial crisis intervention to respond to gender based violence. A network of support services to address gender based violence would help make available services like basic counselling, crisis intervention and shelters for survivors of GBV. This makes for a genuine support system for awareness on women, peace and security at various sites of their lives.
- **Women, Peace and Security at the International, National and Local Level.** The development of a localised action plan on women, peace and security was also highly recommended if the NAP is to be grounded on people's needs. For a local policy intervention to be effective it needs to have an appreciation on international standards of women's rights as well as grounding to women's needs and concerns related to their sense of peace and security at the personal, home and community level.
- **Strengthened GAD Fund Implementation.** The GAD fund has been a mechanism for making resources available for gender and development work in communities, departments and localities, existing for over ten years but it has been without systematic and progressive implementation. It is a strong recommendation from this research that its usage and implementation be reviewed and monitored in relation to its use in women, peace and development work. All stakeholders in gender, peace and development need to raise their understanding of state obligations on achieving substantive gender equality; framework on women, peace and security; and available mechanisms for achieving this.
- **Media Practitioners as Effective Stakeholders in Women, Peace and Security.** Given the current threats to media practitioners who are targeted for their advocacies and practice, attention should be given to their security concerns. They can continue to be effective stakeholders in raising the public's awareness on women, peace and security issues if they

too have the grounding to understand these through consistent capability training on areas of concern such as holistic peacebuilding, engendering peace journalism, and human rights and Policy Development for Women (Philippines). These capacities can also be maximised through collaborative engagement with CSOs and government.

### Policy Development for Women, Peace and Security

- **Institutionalise Monitoring Mechanisms for Women's Participation.** In support of the laws that were passed and implemented, monitoring mechanisms should be crafted to ensure inclusion/participation of women. Its indicators should be able to measure women's participation not only in numbers and percentages but for the quality of how they are able to participate.
- **Monitoring mechanisms to implement laws.** Studies and research should also be encouraged to look into the effectiveness of the laws that have been crafted. This would inform policy makers to look into conditions that hinder and facilitate the effectiveness of the laws.
- **Engender Local Systems for Conflict Resolution.** Local and indigenous systems for conflict resolution have long been recognised to effectively contribute in resolving conflict and building peace within communities. Council leaders should also be enjoined as partners in achieving substantive gender equality so that existing local systems can also effectively address discrimination and marginalisation of women as they strengthen their understanding of cultural roots of gender inequality.
- **Institutionalise Monitoring Mechanisms for the Inclusion / Protection of Women.** In support of the laws that were passed and implemented, monitoring mechanisms should likewise be crafted to ensure inclusion/ protection of women. Its indicators should be able to measure the women's participation and protection not only in numbers and percentages but for the quality of how they are able to participate. It should also look into the hindering and facilitating factors that





push women and their families to put forward complaints that pertain to sexual violence of women.

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

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