



Research Team:

**Radzini Oledan, PhD
Gilbert Pacificar, MASOR
Shari Palabrica**

Background of the Research

Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is an International NGO engaged in the creation of a large-scale international unarmed protection force, composed of trained civilians. In partnership with local groups, NP applies proven non-violent strategies to protect human rights, deter violence and help create space for local peacemakers and human rights defenders to carry out their work. It aims to protect civilians in violent conflicts through unarmed strategies, build peace side by side with local communities and advocate for wider adoption of these approaches to safeguard human lives and dignity.

It was established in 2002 and has worked in numerous conflict-affected areas worldwide, including the Philippines. NP Philippines started in the Philippines on May 2007. Since then, it has closely collaborated with local government units, different government agencies, other civil society organizations, academe and with local communities on civilian protection. Overall, it employs Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) as a methodology, and deploys international and national civilian protection monitors to document and respond to civilian protection issues.

Alongside the different communities, it has raised awareness on civilian protection and human rights issues and remain actively into the monitoring of the humanitarian situation in Mindanao as it works with civilians in building their capacity to further strengthen early warning and rapid response system, and engages with other stakeholders to promote and uphold civilian protection.

Under its “Creating Safer Space” project, NP is working to enhance unarmed civilian protection (UCP) practices to create safer space for communities amidst violent conflict and help prevent displacement. Specifically, building the research partnership in the UCP field. Through this research project, a comprehensive review and scoping of the existing knowledge on UCP was undertaken.

Objectives of the Scoping Research

The scoping research project intends to map out and profile the existing and potential stakeholders and partners on UCP work in Mindanao, and in the country. Specifically, the research undertaking aims the following areas to wit:

1. Scope the type of information on Unarmed Civilian Protection and
2. Map the relevant stakeholders in UCP work (organizations, partner communities and organizations who might be interested in learning more on UCP)

Technical Workplan

In carrying out the scoping research, a technical workplan was developed by the lead Research Assistant (RA) which outlined the key action step with corresponding timeline and expected outcomes. The key action step includes the conduct of desk research, identification of key respondents for stakeholders mapping, interview with protection partners and their network, data analysis and submission of final report.

The scoping research on the UCP landscape and information in the Philippines started last January 2021 and ended on June 2021 covering different UCP materials that were accessible online, and with partner organizations. *(Please refer to Annex 1. Technical Workplan)*

The workplan guided the UCP research not only in mapping out the available materials that could form part in the database of knowledge on UCP work, but also identified the existing and potential stakeholders on UCP work. This includes local community partners of NP for the stakeholders mapping, and the interview with protection partners and their networks. The researcher developed and pre-tested an interview tool prior to the conduct of the face to face key informant and FGDs, as well as during the online interviews. The following local partner organizations were also mapped out as potential UCP partners: Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society; Muslim Organizations for Government Officials and Professionals; BANTAE Basilan; LIPAD Mindanao; Tiyakap Kalilintad Inc.; Kadtuntaya; Integrated Resource Development for Tri-People Incorporated; UnYPaD; Balay Rehabilitation Center, Inc. and Matawksi Incorporated. The key informant's interview with UCP work partners in Mindanao and other areas in the country provided a glimpse on the common areas of collaboration, including the focus and expertise by each. *(Please refer to Annex 2. List of Local Partners in UCP work)*

On the latter part, the research expanded to identify not only academic materials or studies exploring the subject, but also expanded to include creative materials like indie films.

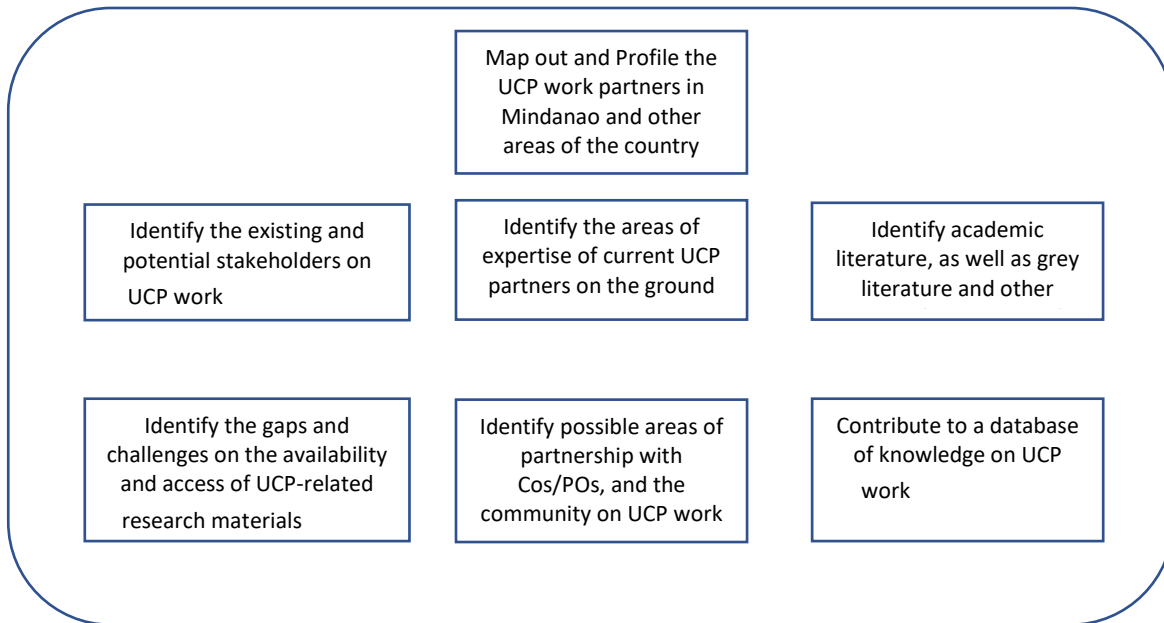


Scoping the UCP Landscape and Information

NP- Philippines, Creating Safer Space Project Report

July 13, 2021

Figure 1: Results/Outcome Chain



Nesting UCP work in Mindanao



Most of the UCP materials available online provided a documentation on the peace process in Mindanao, including the solidarity work in other areas in the country which points to the value of the participation of local communities and the role of civilians, peace advocates and solidarity groups in bringing about and sustaining peace. As to type of materials, about 48% or 29 were related to various published research papers. This was followed by analysis paper with 11, project brief and bulletin reports (8), books in pdf form (7), conference papers

(2), journals (2) and 1 training manual. In terms of topic, 58% or 35 were related to the peace situation in the Bangsamoro communities in Mindanao while eight (8) were focused on Indigenous peoples.

Scoping the UCP Landscape and Information

NP- Philippines, Creating Safer Space Project Report

July 13, 2021

Moreover, there were six (6) materials specific to women participation in the peace process and peace building activities, six (6) were focused on Marawi, three (3) were related to both IPs and two (2) were linked to armed conflict discourse in Southeast Asia. 36 materials are under the classification of independent films. *(Please refer to Annex 3. List of Reviewed UCP Related Materials)*

The reviewed materials and the scoping with local partners and communities points towards a hybrid UCP model in Mindanao, which was a product of a long-standing work of the human rights and peace movement working alongside local communities, capacitating them to engage with local government units and advocating to uphold civilian protection and human rights.

The presence of the International Monitoring Team (IMT) bolstered the protection effort with a clear and strong mechanism to ensure civilian protection. As an international entity in Mindanao, IMT provided a more objective lens on reporting civilian protection issues, thus enhancing its role as facilitator between the government and the MILF. The IMT was a product of the peace process that resumed under Malaysian facilitation in 2001 and produced a series of agreements, including the Implementing Guidelines on the Security Aspect of August 7, 2001, that created the LMTs, the CCCH, and authorized the creation of the Malaysian-led IMT; and the Implementing Guidelines on the Humanitarian, Rehabilitation and Development Aspect of May 7, 2002, creating the Bangsamoro Development Agency.

It was officially deployed only in October 2004 with a one-year mandate to monitor the cease-fire, complementing the LMTs, and to observe the implementation of the agreements. Since its deployment, it was found to play a critical role in preventing armed skirmishes, and in putting in place a more peaceful environment for negotiations to take place. In 2008, during the stalled GRP-MILF peace talks, the need for third-party monitoring resurfaced. Responding to the humanitarian crisis and the surging number of internally displaced, both panels agreed to establish the Civilian Protection Component (CPC) and expanded the mandate of the IMT to include “supervising, verifying and reporting” on both parties’ compliance with the civilian protection clause.

The framework for the Civilian Protection Component (CPC) was adopted in October 2009, and the terms of reference leading to its actual operation were established on May 5, 2010 to include monitoring the safety of civilians in conflict affected areas, support for internally displaced persons, and reporting all violations of the ceasefire agreement.

The UCP landscape in the Philippines points to the protective presence of different stakeholders and partners in areas of conflict. The strength of the Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) comes in its actual ground work with local communities to open up the space for grassroots participation and uphold civilian protection. Among its range of approach from documenting human rights violations to engaging with different stakeholders in dialogue, it also ensured that local capacity is further strengthened by putting in place an early warning system within the community, building on the gains and taking on the approach of the Bantay Ceasefire mechanism earlier established. In 2007, upon the invitation of local CSOs in Mindanao, NP recalibrated the approach and provided the direction in shaping the EWER network of monitors composed of civilians who were then trained on the tenets of UCP. Since then, NP daily reports contains verified information provided by the civilians and thus, strengthening its monitoring and empowering role. The presence of NP provided a nudge for both the government and the MILF to fulfil its role to protect civilians in areas of conflict.

UCP Landscape and Information: *Emerging Themes*

Over-all, the scoping of the UCP landscape and its information were mainly contextualized in the armed conflict situations in Mindanao involving Bangsamoro rebel groups and government forces. Emerging themes were focused on peacebuilding, role of CSOs, humanitarian, armed conflict, conflict resolutions and management, traditional conflict resolutions, peace process and negotiations, rebuilding initiatives. There were significant materials that highlighted the role of indigenous peoples and Moro in sustaining peace, as well as those which delved on the role of women and youth in the peace process.

The review of the UCP work and information points to a strong civilian ownership on the peace process and the role of protective accompaniment to monitor the human rights situation, report any violation and malfeasance, and engage in a dialogue. It also highlighted the work with internally displaced persons in different armed hostilities in Mindanao and in voicing out their protection issues.

UCP related activities and programs on the ground were associated to peacebuilding, human rights, conflict resolution, conflict management, peace process and local governance. It is important to note however, that almost all local partner organizations interviewed have difficulty to establish their own database management system related to their programs, beneficiaries, and resource materials. They are however, rich sources of raw data from the field, which they submit to the protection cluster network and the partner LGU. The scoping shows that most the UCP partners take online security as an area



of utmost concern when sharing and storing documents online. This gap on knowledge management and information management, as well as on firming up the documentation work would be the main challenge and areas of possible collaboration that needs to be strengthened by the UCP network.

The scoping covered other emerging themes related to peace process, human rights, traditional conflict resolutions for indigenous peoples and Bangsamoro communities, and the role of women during armed conflict, including one material which discussed the impact of conflict on gender and mobility, pointing

Scoping the UCP Landscape and Information

NP- Philippines, Creating Safer Space Project Report

July 13, 2021

out that, “Men's mobility was frequently severely constrained by conflict, leading to feelings of frustration and marginalization, challenges to cultural definitions of masculinity, and long-term disadvantages, including curtailed education and less opportunity for formal employment or involvement in agricultural activities. For women, mobility is often increased, leading to enhanced opportunities for leadership, formal employment, and decision-making, but also greatly expanding the demands placed on women's time and safety.”

1. Peacebuilding work

- Recognizing that development, peacebuilding and civilian protection are mutually reinforcing framework in the attainment of peace.
- Promoting the principle of upholding human rights towards a culture of peace
- Local peacebuilding initiatives may be affected by the national government strategies

2. Role of Civil Society in Peacebuilding and UCP Initiatives

- Recognizing the significant contributions of CSO towards managing the conflict in the southern Philippines and in forging durable peace
- Recognizing that the term CSO encompasses the entire work to forward conflict transformation or societal transformation
- Playing the important roles in UCP work and in peace-building, peace-making, and potentially, in the expected political transition.
- Direct participation in the early warning, civilian monitoring and inter-positioning activities.
- Able to wield the “power to expose” injustices and surface conflict non-violently.
- Have the capacity to work for spaces and strengthening voices for peace initiatives in Mindanao
- Recognizing community-centered peacebuilding strategies and the process by which they contribute to the residents’ quest for peace.
- Have the capacity to intervene in the evolving realities in Mindanao
- Recognizing their role in the community protection initiatives

3. Women in UCP work

- Provides enabling environment that made women's participation possible in the peace process and negotiations
- The role of women to assume leading economic roles, pushing them to navigate public spaces denied to them before conflict.
- In the many conflict-affected areas, women of the concerned communities have taken the lead in calling for the cessation of hostilities and have called for the establishment of "peace zones".
- Work with community peace and order councils through monitoring and documenting incidents of conflict, raising the discussion on and encouragement of reporting gender-based violence, and mediating community conflicts.
- Participation in early warning and early response, conflict management and other traditional conflict prevention systems
- Comprehensive understanding of the complex gender dynamics of conflict. There is a growing body of literature on gender and conflict in Mindanao which shows that conflict affects men and women in different ways.

4. Understanding Armed Conflict

- Strategic role of NGOs and wider civil society in enabling human security as the missing link at the nexus of peace, security and development.
- The root cause is the failure to address the Mindanao peoples legitimate struggle for their 'right to self-determination, dignity and governance', and is a major challenge to achieving sustainable peace in the region.
- Understand the underlying structural causes, cyclical nature, scale, and impact of involuntary internal displacement due to armed conflict and; (ii) identify development options and actions to enable durable solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs) resulting from the armed conflict in Mindanao.
- Recognition of vested property rights as well as rights of those unjustly dispossessed in the past as well as adequate reparations where rights of those unjustly dispossessed cannot be restored, and recognition for indigenous peoples' rights to property.
- Escalation of clan feuds pertaining to group competition over the access of ancestral land and natural resources as the immediate cause of communal violence.
- Tenure disputes in the areas of Cotabato, Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat, challenging UCP workers for a sharper analysis and awareness on the current problems

- Process of reintegration of former armed rebels into the mainstream, and how peace zones can be made more effective

5. Rebuilding Initiatives

- National civil society actors, INGOs and NGOs need to work strategically with the government on transitional justice initiatives.
- Emerging call for INGOs need to be flexible in their programme design to accommodate the local context.
- Responding to the gaps on the support required for children with special needs, orphans, at-risk children, out-of-school youth and child-headed families in armed conflict areas.

6. Sustaining Peace

- Prospect for a sustainable peace between the GRP and MILF by looking at the following variables: source of conflict, ongoing transition and peace process, involvement of external actors and the need for an increased public engagement and participation.
- Partnerships as a mechanism for the creation of a space for communities, civil society leaders, and local and regional government bodies to discuss priorities for peace.
- Explore issues of recognition and self-determination, through the examination of traditional dispute settlement mechanisms from communities across the island, and the ways in which they co-exist with modern, non-indigenous practices in the country.
- Nurture intercultural respect and understanding.

7. Traditional Conflict Resolutions

- Discussion on the system of conflict resolution among tribes, traditional means of conflict resolution among indigenous peoples, and forms and nature of punishments employed.
- The role of *baes* (women members of the tribal council) in the traditional system of conflict resolution, as well as in maintaining tribal peace and order.
- Utilization of indigenous knowledge on conflict resolution processes in resolving conflict as their means of maintaining peace sustainability in the area.

Opportunities for Collaboration:

The seven (7) emerging themes in the UCP materials available reflects the areas of UCP work in Mindanao and in the country. However, considering the bulk of development interventions, there remains a dearth in the documentation of UCP initiatives, as well as gap in making these available to UCP researchers and the public. The scoping also points out to the need for a more deliberate technical assistance and investment on harnessing the use of technology for development to ensure that relevant information on protection issues and the corresponding initiatives among UCP movers are deliberately and systematically gathered, stored and shared among stakeholders and practitioners. There is also a need to build the capacity of UCP workers on the areas of knowledge management, development communication, participatory research and data/ information management. An emerging area of possible support is on film research and development to encourage more independent film makers to chronicle the UCP journey.

Annex 1. Technical Workplan

GCRF Development Awards Project “Creating Safer Space” Work Plan (January-June 2021)

The GCRF Development Award project “Creating Safer Space” is a small grant, whose purpose it is to help prepare a bigger project under the same title. The vision of all “Creating Safer Space” projects is to enhance unarmed civilian protection (UCP) practices, which create safer space for communities amidst violent conflict and help prevent displacement. Specifically, the research undertaking aims the following areas to wit:

1. Scope what types of information exist on Unarmed Civilian Protection, and
2. Map the relevant stakeholders in UCP work (organizations, partner communities and organizations who might be interested in learning more on UCP)

Technical Workplan					
Key Action Step	Timeline	Expected Outcome	Data Source	Person/Area Responsible	Comments
<i>Scoping the knowledge available on UCP</i>	January -April 2021	Database on existing UCP knowledge	Online research, interview with protection partners and their networks; other alternative sources including photography, film, art craft objects and IKSP	Research Consultant	<i>Project reports, and any other forms of project documentation .</i>

Scoping the UCP Landscape and Information

NP- Philippines, Creating Safer Space Project Report

July 13, 2021

Technical Workplan					
<i>Identification of key respondents for the Stakeholder Mapping</i>	February 2021	UCP partners as respondents identified and informed; Coordinated schedules for online interview and F2F validation	List from NP Coordinated schedules	NP	<i>Pre-identified sources of information</i>
<i>Actual conduct of online interviews and F2F validation</i>	March-April 2021	Knowledge gaps identified and analyzed; UCP stakeholders mapped out	Key informants (UCP protection partners and networks)	Research Consultant	
<i>Collation and Analysis of Data</i>	May- June 2021		Transcribed audio materials; Key Informants and FGD workshop results analyzed	Research Consultant	
<i>Final report</i>	June 2021	Written report		Research Consultant	



Scoping the UCP Landscape and Information

NP- Philippines, Creating Safer Space Project Report

July 13, 2021