

# Nonviolent Peaceforce

Evaluation of NP's Project in Mindanao,  
Philippines

REPORT



Nonviolent Peaceforce

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## List of Abbreviations

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
BARIL	Bring Your Rifle and Improve your Livelihood
BCJP	Bangsamoro Center for Just Peace
BDA	Bangsamoro Development Agency
CPC	Civilian Protection Component
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVO	Civilian Volunteer Organization
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
CCCH	Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GRP	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICG	International Contact Group
ICP	International Civilian Peacekeeper
ICPM	International Civilian Protection Monitor
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMT	International Monitoring Team
JI	Jemaah Islamiyah
JCMP	Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Post
KFI	Kadtuntaya Foundation Inc.
LJ	Laskar Jihad
LGU	Local Government Unit
MCPD	Media Center for Peace and Development
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MMI	Magungaya Mindanao Inc
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MOA-AD	Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain
MPC	Mindanao Peoples Caucus
NDF	National Democratic Front of the Philippines
NPA	New People's Army
NP	Nonviolent Peaceforce
NPP	Nonviolent Peaceforce Philippines
NCP	National Civilian Peacekeeper
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
OPAPP	Office of the Presidential Adviser to the Peace Process
SOMA	Suspension of Military Action
SOMO	Suspension of Military Operations
UNYPAD	United Youth for Peace and Development

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all the interview partners, who made time in their busy schedule and in demanding times. Special thanks to all national and international staff of the Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) in the Philippines, whose frankness, engaging commitment and cooperation made the evaluation mission a rich assessment and collaborative learning experience. The excellent logistical support and the sound safety and security protocols of NP in the Philippines ensured a smooth mission and were instrumental for the positive atmosphere throughout the mission.

*Some comments about Nonviolent Peaceforce ...*

“Nonviolent Peaceforce has the special formula for peace: trust, sincerity and strategic thinking.”

“Nonviolent Peaceforce is the international organization with the largest footprint in Mindanao.”

“Nonviolent Peaceforce – they are the force of the people”.

“Nonviolent Peaceforce gave us hope and a sense of belonging.”

## Executive Summary

Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines can look back at more than two years of unique, relevant contributions and constructive engagement in one of the most difficult, political and volatile, contexts to work in: Being the only international non-governmental organization working with and living in close proximity to the most conflict-affected population in Mindanao, NP in the Philippines was able to support and enhance local structures of cease-fire monitoring, early warning, cross-community dialogues, human rights protection, to offer civilian protection and help to reduce the high levels of community violence.

The accepted offer to NP in the Philippines in late 2009 by the conflict parties GRP and the MILF to join the International Monitoring Team<sup>1</sup> (IMT) and its Civilian Protection Component is a direct expression and result of its successful contributions to non-violence and violence reduction of the last two years.

To keep up the important work of NP's project in the Philippines in the years to come, it is essential to ensure that the activities and objectives of NPP are based on a strategically and conceptually sound footing. This seems even more important given that NPP is going through a remarkable consolidation and expansion phase at the time of report-writing.

The re-focus on its key mandate, strengths and strategic advantages in Mindanao gives NP the opportunity to further enhance its unique work in the area of nonviolence, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

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<sup>1</sup> The International Monitoring Team includes *among others* states like Malaysia, Japan, Libya and Brunei as well as the local NGO Mindanao Peoples Caucus.

## **1. Introduction**

This evaluation was contracted by Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines and conducted by Dr. Cordula Reimann from the Swiss Peace Foundation swisspeace.

NP's program activities in Mindanao were designed in 2007 to offer civilian protection and to support local structures and process of human rights, cease-fire monitoring, early warning and violence reduction.

The main aim of the evaluation was threefold:

First, to assess the achievement of objectives and the effectiveness of NP's work in Mindanao and the perception of NP among a sample of partner organizations, stakeholders, conflict parties and beneficiaries.

Second, to offer the ground and opportunity for collaborative sharing and learning on latest thinking on conflict analysis and strategic program design and monitoring in peacebuilding and

Third, based on the mission's findings, to suggest recommendations for NP's future work.

Empirical evidence and first-hand information were collected during a field visit from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2010: Interviews and focus group discussions with a wide range of local stakeholders, beneficiaries, conflict parties, NP staff and partner organizations were conducted in Manila and Mindanao. To ensure the confidentiality of information and safety of interview partners, the decision was taken not to disclose the names of the interview partners. Project documents and reports, draft strategy papers and planning designs of NP and the relevant background and conflict literature on Mindanao were studied.

A one-day workshop on international lessons learned on program design and effectiveness of peace practice was conducted for national and international staff and management of NP in Cotabato City.

### **Challenges of evaluation**

The overall challenges were the limited time of the field visit paired with security restrictions and concerns. The field visit was limited geographically by security restrictions before and at the time of the mission and by long travelling distances to field sites. That is also one of the reasons why regrettably not all field sites and all NP staff could be visited. Due to the resumption of peace talks, some important decision-makers and donor agencies in Manila and Mindanao were not available for interview. Given the limited time, the evaluator was not able to take part in individual activities like trainings etc.

Yet, a very broad and wide range of opinions and ideas was secured from NP staff and management, affected beneficiaries, stakeholders, conflict parties, national and international partner organizations and diplomatic circles. The high flexibility of NP team staff, interview partners and the evaluator ensured a timely and most efficient unfolding of the mission.

### **Structure of report**

The report is structured as follows: After some words about methodology (section 2) and a brief background analysis of both NP's work in Mindanao and the conflict context (section 3), the main focus will be on the main findings of the evaluation (section 4), along with recommendations on strategic design and implementation for the future work of NP (section 5).

## 2. Methodology

The evaluation methodology comprised a mixture of semi-structured and open interviews with NP staff, project partners and beneficiaries, focus group discussions with NP staff and beneficiaries, expert interviews during and after the mission, study of relevant literature, project documents, draft strategy and concept papers as well as personal observations.

Much of the analysis and applied benchmarks of the evaluation are based on the international lessons learned and key findings developed and generated by the Reflection on Peace Practice (RPP) Project and its main lessons learned in terms of effectiveness, program strategic planning and design (see below in sections 2.1. and 2.2.). Relevant insights from OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) “Guidance on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities” and its “Principles for good international engagement in fragile states and situations” as well as Liam Mahoney’s “Proactive presence” are also taken into account.

In contrast to standard evaluations which have a strong connotation of “punitive” measurement, this assessment stressed the “learning aspects”: To foster and enhance the organizational learning of NP, a workshop on international lessons from effective program design in peace practice was conducted for NP staff and management in the Philippines.

It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to unpack the different definitions of key terms in conflict and peace research, such as peace keeping and peacebuilding, and how they are used in the “NP family”. As far as this report is concerned, the respective different use of terms of NP staff and partner organizations will be reflected but not be critically challenged.

### 2.1. Key Insights and Lessons Learned from Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP)

The insights and lessons from the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Project are based on the international experiences of different programs and organizations working on stopping direct violence (working on “negative peace”) or building up processes and structures of conflict transformation (aiming at “positive peace”).

RPP is an international collaborative learning experience on effective peace work initiated and organized by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects based in Cambridge/MA. More than two hundred organizations were in the first phase involved from 1999-2003 looking at 26 case studies together with over 1000 peace practitioners<sup>2</sup>.

RPP puts centre-stage the question: “How can international agencies engaged in peace practice make their efforts more effective?” The so-called “RPP Matrix” below is one of the main analytical instruments which helps to strategically plan, monitor and assess the effectiveness of a program.

The RPP Matrix is a four-cell matrix which allows analyzing activities and program strategies in two main dimensions:

- who to address or whom to engage;
- what level of social change is sought.

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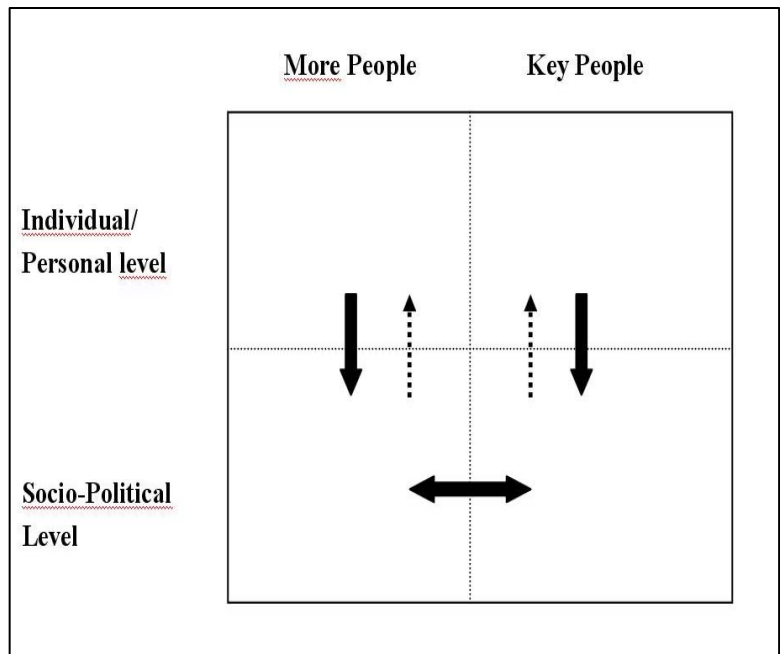
<sup>2</sup> The main findings are summarized in Mary B. Anderson and Lara Olson (2003) *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners* available at <http://www.cdainc.com>

The idea is that every peace activity can be located in one of the four quadrants along the information on *who* the intervention targets and on *what level* change towards peace is intended:

The horizontal axis of the matrix shows whether an agency works with large groups like e.g. youth organizations or women groups (More People) or whether it rather engages key actors like e.g. powerful and influential military or political powerful leaders (Key People).

Organizations working with the "more people approach" believe that peace can be built if increasing numbers of people become politically involved until a critical mass is mobilized: They will be then able to build up enough political pressure to initiate change towards peace. This strategy aims at expanding the numbers of people who are engaged in peace work.

By contrast, practitioners using the "key people approach" assume that peace can only be achieved working with particular groups of people, who have the influence or power to stop the direct violence or directly influence the resolution of the conflict.



Who are "more or key people" greatly depends on the context of conflict. Thus "key people" could be for example political leaders for passing laws, rebel groups signing a peace treaty, military commanders negotiating a cease-fire or unemployed, young and frustrated, men.

The vertical axis determines whether the planned impact and change of the intervention lies on the so-called individual-personal or the socio-political level. Approaches which aim to induce changes on the individual level are based on the assumption that peace is only possible if the hearts, minds and behaviour of individuals are changed. Changes towards peace on the individual level define altered attitudes, perceptions, values, and/or skills. Training programs on IHL aiming at learning about human rights mechanism or dialogue programs trying to change perceptions of formerly enemies classify as engagements on the individual level. Organizations who focus their work on the socio-political level believe that impact and changes on the structural, institutional and societal level are necessary conditions for peace. These agencies therefore focus their efforts in the public realm and support changes in politics, economics, justice systems, the public opinion through media or other public institutions.

RPP found that most efforts stay in one cell or work in the boundaries between two cells. Yet, efforts or programs that stay in one cell are not enough to have a tangible effect on the peace dynamics or build momentum for significant change. Each program aiming at peace is more effective if two kinds of linkages are considered:

First, programming on the individual-personal level have to linked or translated into action at the social political level (see bold vertical arrows in the RPP matrix above). To take an example of the

context of NP in the Philippines' activities, trainings in human rights or IHL are more effective if their planning phase envision of how to translate the results of the trainings into political action like human rights reporting or investigations or setting up of human rights mechanism or institutions. Second, programming on the social-political level that focuses on the "more people" should think of strategies or activities how to affect or link to the "key people" – and the other way around (see *bold horizontal arrow in the RPP matrix above*). Another example of the Mindanao's context may be how the local cease-fire monitoring structures (working with the more people/social-political level) could become more effective by more strategically include key people like LGU or AFP (key people/social-political level).

The international experiences with RPP emphasized that inherent in practitioners' decisions with whom and how to engage are assumptions about how to achieve social change and peace: In the context of peace-building the so-called "theories of change" define the underlying, often implicit assumptions or beliefs of an organization how to induce social change and how to bring about peace. The international experiences of the RPP Project suggest that many programs are less effective because they make untested and often unrealistic assumptions about how their activities will lead to changes on the wider peace dynamics, the overall goal or vision of a program.

The "theories of change" point at two levels: They refer to the "program theory" on the one hand and to the "theory of change" on the other hand. While the "program theory" refers to the underlying assumption how specific activities (or series of activities) should reach objectives, the "theory of change" defines how an objective/the objectives contribute to the overall goal or vision of an existing or planned program.

## 2.2. RPP Criteria of Effectiveness

The RPP process collected five criteria of effectiveness which helps to analyze and understand if a program or effort had or will have a tangible effect on the wider peace dynamics<sup>3</sup>.

Each of the five criteria is context-specific. All criteria have to be read and interpreted in the given conflict dynamics. That also implies that questions related to stopping the direct violence and increasing physical security are of greater importance in moments of escalating violence than in moments of "relative" negative peace.

A peacebuilding effort or program has been effective if one or more of the following five criteria are fulfilled.

**Criterion 1: The effort results in the creation or reform of political institutions to handle grievances in situations where such grievances do, genuinely, drive the conflict.**

To reform or build institutions that are unrelated to the actual drivers of a specific conflict would be ineffective.

**Criterion 2: The effort contributes to a momentum for peace by causing participants and communities to develop their own peace initiatives in relation to critical elements of context analysis.**

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<sup>3</sup> These criteria can be used as a monitoring and/or as an assessment or evaluation tool.



This criterion stresses how important it is to create local “ownership” and sustainability of action involving more people.

**Criterion 3: The effort prompts people increasingly to resist violence and provocations to violence.**

One way of addressing and including “key people” who promote and continue tensions (e.g., warlords, spoilers) is to help “more people” develop the ability to resist the manipulation and provocations of these negative key people.

**Criterion 4: The effort results in an increase in people’s security and in their sense of security.**

This criterion reflects positive changes both at the socio-political level (in people’s public lives) and at the individual/personal level as people gain a sense of security.

**Criterion 5: The effort results in meaningful improvement in inter-group relations, reflected in, for example, changes in group attitudes, public opinion, social norms, or public behaviors.**

The understanding is that the more criteria that do apply, the more effective a program has been or will be.

### **3. Context of Evaluation**

#### **3.1. Background to political context<sup>4</sup>**

The Mindanao conflict is one of the most protracted, deep-rooted social conflicts worldwide with multiple and highly interwoven layers of militarization, economic and political power asymmetries, organized crime, dissatisfied right for self-determination and needs for collective identity and discrimination of minorities.

For decades the Philippines has been afflicted by several violent conflicts between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and various insurgent movements which have left the country and particularly the southern part in deep poverty and insecurity. The origins of the tensions go back to the forced displacements of indigenous Filipino Muslims and native Lumad people as Christian settlers were encouraged to move to the resource-rich regions in southern Philippines in the 1960s. The resettlements and their consequences induced disputes over land and natural resources, dispossessed peasants and widespread structural poverty led to the formation of several Islamic movements in Mindanao of which the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) became the most significant. After internal disputes between moderates and conservatives within the MNLF on the question of upholding a violent insurgency or making concessions for a limited autonomy over the Muslim majority areas, the more radical faction broke off from the group and founded the Muslim Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the 1970. In 1996 the GRP reached a compromise with the MNLF and gave them autonomy over the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) whereas the MILF continued their fight and still remain the strongest and most present insurgency until today.

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<sup>4</sup> The information provided here is only a snapshot of the conflict issues, drivers and main actors. For further information on the conflict analysis of Mindanao see selected bibliography in Annex IV.

Although the ultimate aim of the MILF has been secession of the south from the mainland and the creation of an Islamic state in southern Philippines, its moderate leaders were in continuous peace negotiations with the GRP since 1997. Even though the peace talks were interrupted twice during two all-out wars in 2000 and in early 2003, they resumed in March 2003. Just as the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domains (MOA-AD) giving the MILF far-reaching autonomy over southern Philippines was in sight in October 2008, the negotiations ended abruptly: The Supreme Court declared that the draft of the MOA-AD between the MILF and the GRP as unconstitutional. Heavy fighting and the further displacement of the Moros was the consequence, while the official peace talks were suspended.

Fighting, bombings, kidnappings and assassinations have been not only undertaken the MILF and the GRP by different radical armed groups like the New People's Army (NPA), Pentagon Gang, Laskar Jihad (LJ), Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) or Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Ilaga with shifting alliances based on political opportunism and personal profit.

Compared with the previous months, the Suspension of Military Operations (SOMO) and Suspension of Military Action (SOMA) by both GRP and MILF respectively in July 2009 led to reduced violence and fire fights.

Still, a comprehensive peace architecture for the complex web of inter- and intra-party conflicts is further delayed complicated by a society based on tribal clan loyalties.

Clan loyalties, in turn, are much linked to a corrupt and inefficient legal and political system of clientalism and patronage. A concrete example of the dysfunctional legal system in Mindanao is the prevalence of "rido" that is clan or family feuding. And the ruthless exploitation of natural resources by transnational corporations under the protection of local "strongmen" or military personnel can only be understood in the context of political corruption.

The decade-long armed struggle led to a heavily militarized society characterized by a "culture of violence and silence" and the high proliferation of small and light arms. A recent dramatic yet illustrative example of this "culture of political warlordism" and "rido" is the massacre in November 2009 in Maguindanao, when 57 journalists and members of a local politician were brutally killed by the private army of a warlord allied to the Philippine President (see International Crisis Group 2009).

At the time of report-writing, the official peace process is with just two months away from the general Presidential elections at a most critical juncture: Accusations, intrigues and conspiracy theories prepare the ground to politically exploit and instrumentalize the elections - not only by the MILF and the GRP, but also by the political opposition in Manila and the southern islands. As the MOA-AD remains highly controversial among the political *nomenklatura* and elites, no party will effectively take steps towards serious peace talks with the MILF as long as it is unclear, who will gain the next elections. And if there is no progress in the peace talks, the likelihood of renewed fighting is high.

With Mindanao attracting comparatively little international media and political attention, it is one of the "forgotten conflicts". In early 2010, there are still only very few international organizations active in the region and Nonviolent Peaceforce being one of them.

### 3.2. Background to Nonviolent Peaceforce<sup>5</sup> Philippines, its mandate and activities

After an intensive consultation phase, including trainings and field assessments in Mindanao between 2003 and 2006, NP in the Philippines was officially launched in 2007. Nonviolent Peaceforce was invited to Mindanao by local community based organizations to assist their efforts of enhancing human security and human rights through proactive non-violent ways and means. An “Advisory Council” (formerly called the “Advisory Board”) comprised of civil society representatives was set up before the official start in 2007. Its main aim has been to give advice and feedback on strategy planning, running and planned activities.

As an international organization NP subscribes to the following key working principles: Non-violence, non-partisanship, and non-interference.

NP subscribes to the over-arching principle of non-violence as strategy and means in all their activities. While in NP's understanding the principle of non-partisanship refers to not taking side and offering its services to all parties, non-interference implies that NP does not influence the outcomes of the conflict except to assure that they are not violent.

In the start-up phase 2007-2009, NP deployed 6 International Civilian Peacekeepers (ICPs) and 12 national staff in field offices in the Maguindanao and Sulu and Basilan provinces and the main office in Cotabato City (see map in Annex I). In March 2009 NP in the Philippines consolidated and expanded its activities with additional 11 ICPs and 18 national staff and new field offices in North Cotabato, Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur.

At the time of report-writing in February-March 2010, NP in the Philippines employed 17 ICPs, 35 national staff plus 7 national and international staff in key management positions. At the same time, NP was also in the process of training and deploying additional international and national staff.

Until now, the ICPs and senior national staff were composed of trained practitioners from conflict and non-conflict areas like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Kenya, DR Congo, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Pakistan, Germany, and the Philippines.

Field sites are located in Maguindanao, Cotabato City, North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur, Illigan and Lanao del Norte, Basilan and Sulu – with the Sulu office currently operating on a low-profile basis and Basilan being temporarily closed for security reasons. NPP is maintaining a policy liaison office in Makati, Manila as well.

With the membership of the International Monitoring Team (IMT), NP will additionally deploy 45 International Civilian Protection Monitors (ICPMs) and 26 National Civilian Peacekeepers (NCPs) in 13 different locations in spring 2010. The numbers of ICPs for the regular program will grow to 26.

Since 2007, NP's program in Mindanao has been mainly involved in the following activities:

- civilian protection to local and international human rights groups;
- accompaniment of victims of human rights violations and affected population;
- trainings in human rights protection and International Humanitarian Law (IHL), early warning for affected population and community based organizations;
- documentation and reporting of human rights violations;

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<sup>5</sup> To get an idea about the general background, mandate and key principles of Nonviolent Peaceforce and its international activities see [www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org](http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org)

- regular needs assessments among the affected population, especially Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs);
- organization and facilitation of dialogues and information-sharing meeting on security situation for international diplomats, local civil society organizations and representatives of the conflict parties;
- local and international cease-fire monitoring initiatives and structures.

All these activities – while to varying degrees – have been initiated and run in close cooperation with NP’s partner organizations. Since its early days, NP in the Philippines has worked very closely with local civil society organizations such as Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society Organizations, Ginapaladtaka (G7), United Youth for Peace and Development (UNYPAD), Chrislam, Magungaya Center for Palma Inc., Kadtuntaya Foundation Inc. (KFI), Mindanao Peoples Caucasus (MPC), Bantay Ceasefire, Bangsamoro Center for Just Peace (BCJP), Magungaya Mindanao Inc (MMI), Madia Center for Peace and Development (MCPD), and CSOs for Peace.

In December 2007 NP was accorded observer status by the GRP and MILF Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) in one of their Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Posts (JCMPs) in Balanaken. In December 2009 NP accepted the official invitation from GRP and MILF to join the IMT and its Civilian Protection Component (CPC).

## 4. Main Findings of Evaluation

First of all, three general observations and findings are in order. They were not the explicit tasks of the evaluation but matter in the overall assessment of NP in the Philippines’ work and its activities of the last two and a half years.

### 4.1. General Findings

*Finding 1: The overall focus of NP’s work in the Philippines is relevant to the current conflict context, the practical needs of the affected population and the peacebuilding needs of the local civil society organizations.*

Studying the Mindanao conflict and consulting the conflict literature, the dysfunctional legal system and the high militarisation of the society nourished by and built on a “culture of violence and of silence” are considered key drivers of the Mindanao conflict. Given this conflict context, NP in the Philippines’ main activities in terms of assisting with establishing early-warning systems, cease-fire monitoring, supporting human rights structures and civilian protection are relevant to address the important driving factors of conflict and violence.

At the same time, the practical needs of the war-affected population for security and protection are addressed. Equally, the peacebuilding needs of local partner organizations for supporting existing local structures of human rights documentation, accompaniment, protection and cease-fire are targeted. Discussions with representatives of the IDPs, the war-affected population and partner organizations echoed very much this assessment and observation.

*Finding 2: Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines has worked in one of the most difficult political and security circumstances and was able to give the most affected population a sense of security, trust and hope in a better, non-violent future.*

Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines as the only international non-governmental organization living in close proximity to the conflict affected populations has showed great solidarity with the affected population and the local civil society organizations.

These findings were very much echoed by the interviews and discussions with partner organizations and the local populations and beneficiaries. The international and national staff members of NP's Philippines program have to be credited for their achievements of the last two years. At the same time, as with many similar organizations in their start-up phase, NP's Philippines program has been very much driven and shaped by the vision and engaged commitment by the "mover and shaker" personality of the country director.

*Finding 3: The staff and management of NP's Philippines program expressed great openness and willingness to learn from their past successful and more difficult experiences and lessons.*

The kidnapping of an international NP staff member in the Philippines in the spring of 2009 constituted a highly stressful time for all staff involved. It took a lot of energy, commitment and drive to keep the organization going both by management, national and international staff. As part of the organizational evolution of NP, this experience also prompted NP to revise and rework its security and safety procedures and protocols and successfully put to test NP's self-understanding as a learning organization.

#### **4.2. Key Findings on achievement of objectives and effectiveness**

*Finding 4: Most of the activities of the last two and a half years focussed on enhancing and supporting local structures of human rights protection, peace work, and cease-fire monitoring. While working with the linked-minded, NP's Philippines program was able to reach out, build trust and strong links to the "key people".*

This point mirrors the great strengths and achievements of NP's work of the last two and a half years in Mindanao.

In the area of civilian protection, NP in the Philippines was successful in reaching out to actors, considered to be not only important stakeholders and powerful actors but also the key drivers of conflict, like the AFP, MILF, GRP etc. Working with the "linked minded organizations" like its partner organizations, NP was able to build up trust in the wider community and to reach out to "key people" and key drivers of conflict like the AFP and the GRP - "key people" who clearly are for the local, community-based organizations "hard to reach". The strategic advantage here is NP's principle of non-partisanship or perceived "neutrality" as international organization.

The question here is how to make the different activities like trainings or dialogues more strategically grounded in the mid- to long-term (and will be taken up below under findings 8-10). That implies also the question if and how trainings on for example IHL should be conducted for the "hard to reach", like members of the AFP, MILF or GRP. The question then will have to be what is strategically important, what is feasible and what is realistic.

*Finding 5: Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines has been first and foremost effective in stabilising the security situation: Local partner organizations and the war-affected population share the perception that due to NP's presence the level of security situation has increased.*

Looking at the RPP effectiveness criteria above (see again section 2.2.), one has to conclude that NP's Philippines program has mainly addressed and had an impact on the criteria 3 and 4 (security) and to a lesser extent on criterion 5 (inter-group relations). Given the current strategic set-up, NP in the Philippines so far has so little impact on addressing or contributing to criteria 1 and 2 (see also findings 8-10 below).

There is supporting evidence from the interviews and focus group discussions that the very presence of NP and its work on civilian protection has improved the security situation in the provinces of Mindanao where NP has been working in for the last two years.

Many beneficiaries and partner organizations stressed that they feel more secure and safe to walk the street and to meet friends and family knowing that NP is present. Some women IDPs referred that they feel less stressed, do sleep better and have in general more hope, trust and confidence in the future for their children and their well-being. The focus group discussions with IDPs highlighted that they felt empowered to raise their voices about human rights violations. Others IDPs particularly stressed that they felt encouraged to go back to their barangays<sup>6</sup> because of NP's presence. Comments like "because of NP we as a community feel more connected" were raised by many locals, partners organizations and affected population alike.

Some partnerships and stakeholders underlined that only NP as an international organization was effectively able to reach out to the AFP - considered one of the main key drivers of conflict in the Mindanao conflict - and to soften their "hardline"<sup>7</sup> approach. This gives NP's Philippines program an important and unique position and role, which no other local and national organization can play – or could play until today.

At the same time, while beyond this evaluation, a comprehensive analysis of the overall improved security situation and the decrease of homicides in 2009-2010 has to take into account other factors like the current political dynamics on the ground, the "softened approach" by the AFP or by the combined activities of the different local and international organizations working on human rights, and NP P being one of them. While NP P and many partner organizations of NP P have collected facts and figures on human rights violations, looting, house burning and homicides, a reliable and official documentation of homicides and human rights violations does not exist.

*Finding 6: Nonviolent Peaceforce Philippines is considered the impartial and up-to-date focal point for information-sharing, esp. on the conflict dynamics and security updates.*

Nonviolent Peaceforce Philippines is extremely well connected with like-minded organizations and all important local stakeholders. In a political environment where it is difficult to get hold of impartial information NP has clearly filled in an important niche and lacuna: NP's Philippines program has

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<sup>6</sup> Smallest administrative division in the Philippines and native Filipino term for a village, district or ward.

<sup>7</sup> "Hardline" in the eyes of local partners and stakeholders.



been praised for organizing and facilitating Security briefings and updates by many partner organizations, national and international stakeholders.

Participants of these facilitated information-sharing events have been representatives of local and international organizations and the international diplomatic community. Many interview partners stressed the great value of these meetings in a “neutral setting”. This point will be taken up again under the findings on the perceptions of NP (section 4.3.).

*Finding 7: Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines has been instrumental in organizing and facilitating closed-door dialogues at the height of the crisis between key international actors and representatives of the conflict parties involved in the peace process.*

Nonviolent Peaceforce’s Philippines program was instrumental in facilitating contacts between MILF and EU in September and October 2008 that in time resulted in the ICG being established, which, in turn, was a fundamental stepping stone towards the resumption of talks in December 2009. The responsible representatives from the conflict parties and the diplomatic circles stressed the key role of NP in the Philippines, especially the country director.

Furthermore NP made a very important contribution to the restoration of confidence between the parties after the MOA-AD crisis, the resumption of the process in 2009 and the establishment of stronger monitoring mechanisms on the ground.

According to representatives of the conflict parties and EU diplomats, NP could play this role due to its international character and perceived neutrality or impartiality. At the same time, there is some agreement that NP’s discreet facilitating role should remain in the person of its country director without deviating from NP’s main role in civilian peace-keeping and protection.

*Finding 8: The program of NP in the Philippines could be made more effective at this stage by developing explicit and realistic connections between activities, the objectives and the overall goal or vision of peace of NP.*

The current objectives read as follows:

- \* To enhance the work of local peace teams through its presence and through reporting to the world about developments on the ground.
- \* To contribute to the maintenance of the ceasefire(s) and to prevent the outbreaks of, or to mitigate, new violence through means of unarmed civilian peacekeeping.
- \* To support human rights reporting mechanisms in remote conflict areas and assist and connect local and international advocacy groups that work for peace with justice by responding to people’s grievances.
- \* To localize grassroots conflicts so that they are resolved through dialogue at the lowest level and do not grow into larger crises.

As far as the formulation of the objectives is concerned, three aspects are of relevance:

First, the objectives are too general and difficult to measure.

Second, some objectives tend to be defined as activities but not in terms of their impact on the socio-political level.

Third, the objectives are defined as untested and unrealistic belief or assumptions on how activities will lead to the program objective (see further below also “program theories”).

By the same token, the overall goal of NP's program remains unclear and open for speculation. Looking at the objective "to localize grassroots conflicts so that they are resolved through dialogue at the lowest level and do not grow into larger crises", one may think more of the overall goal or vision of NP. This interpretation is supported by discussions and interpretations of NP senior management and staff in the Philippines.

Yet, there seems to be no explicit and well-defined goal that all staff members subscribe to. Some refer, for example, to NP's program in the Philippines' overall goals as "stopping the direct violence", others prioritize the general goal "to enhance human security and human rights mechanisms". While all goals are closely interconnected, they are still not the same and drive the organization and its activities in different directions.

Less surprisingly, there are different ideas among staff and management (and partner organizations) about the prime focus and respective importance of individual activities and the program's focus. The different understandings are best reflected in staff's understanding of NP as a humanitarian organization, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and/or human rights organization.

The unspecific formulation of objectives and the overall goal of NP in the Philippines may be best explained by the very dynamics of start-up phase of NP's Philippines program and the implicit wish of NP to accommodate for the multiple interests of very different local stakeholders.

*Finding 9: Given the current strategic planning design of NP in the Philippines, it remains vague if and how different activities are linked.*

Many partner organizations and stakeholders highly praised NP for its work in civilian protection – playing an important role to increase the level of security which only an international organization could play. Or to put into the words of a representative of local NGO "seeing the international is already a form of protection for us."

On a more general note, given the unspecific formulation of objectives, it is difficult to trace back with what activities which objective/s should be reached or have been reached. There exists a "strategic gap" between the planned and already undertaken activities and the achievement of the above objectives. How and with what particular activities the respective objectives should be reached remains unclear.

This point may be best illustrated looking at the role of "trainings" as one particular form of activity. Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines has run trainings in human rights, IHL, and early warning – very often together with or for local partner organizations.

The training documentation at NP in the Philippines so far has focussed very much on output, i.e. that is how many trainings have been conducted. The primary information gathered indicates that there has not been a program strategy or design in place which ensures that the outcome of individual trainings are not lost - but transferred and followed up with initiatives on the social political level. In terms of effectiveness, trainings lose their potential to have a discernible positive impact on the social-political level if they are understood as an end in itself. At the same time, NP's experiences over the last two years and the conflict dynamics also stress how far security of staff and participants on the one hand and the confidentiality of information discussed in the other always have to be taken into account. The concern for both security and confidentiality, in turn, may slow down or challenge meaningful follow-up activities.



NP's training documentation suggests that there is no explicit strategy in place what the objectives on the socio-political level should be. It remains unclear if and how trainings in human rights or IHL exactly “contribute to the maintenance of the cease-fire” (objective 2) or “human rights reporting mechanisms” (objective 3) (see again above and for illustration RPP matrix in Annex II) .

Moreover, it remains vague if there should be or is a priority among the planned or running activities. If this priority does exist, it is more implicit and taken-for-granted but not an agreed-upon consensus among senior management and staff.

*Finding 10: Based on findings 8 and 9, the “theories of change” how to achieve both the overall goal and the specific objectives with the current program of NP in the Philippines’ activities remain implicit and unrealistic.*

The information gathered in the interviews and in NP’s documentation suggests the following two underlying “theories of change” driving much of NP’s work in the Philippines:

In terms of the “program theory”, the underlying assumption is that trainings or dialogues will prepare the respective participants with skills or knowledge or make them feel empowered, and as a result, participants will either get politically involved and/or will set up their own initiatives or institutions or resist violence.

Looking at the “theory of change”, one gets the idea that underlying assumption is that the increased cooperation of different civil society organizations, different Muslims families or/and relationships between Muslims and Christians will lead to felt changes in collective behaviour. Looking at the lessons learned collected and tested by the RPP Project, one may conclude that above theories of change in the current formulation of objectives and activities are problematic or incomplete at best.

Given the current strategic set-up of NP and referring to RPP’s international experiences and lessons learned, one has to highlight that in terms of the above program theory, it is very unlikely that trained participants will get politically involved or set up their initiatives

By the same token, the theory that closer relationships and interaction will lead to reduced violence can not be verified from other violent conflict settings.

This, in turn, means to be clear and as specific as possible what will happen as a result of an activity like a training or a dialogue, and how this result will lead to the defined objectives and their desired or intended impact on peace dynamics. In other words, the program of NP in the Philippines could be further improved and made even more effective by developing explicit and well-developed, tested and realistic, connections between activities, the objectives and the overall goal or vision of peace of NP.

*Finding 11: Given the current strategic design, the program of NP in the Philippines and its very rationale are rooted in an implicit analysis of the key drivers of conflict.*

The main impetus to start its activities in Mindanao was the request and the very needs of partner organizations and the affected population – how far a sound conflict analysis influenced the critical appraisal of possible, strategic entry-points starting for NP remains unclear.

This does not mean to say that a sound analysis has not been done or is not done regularly. The point here is that given the information the evaluator was provided with much of the analysis was done implicitly, by intuition or by single members only. The overall shortcoming of an implicit

analysis is that it assumes that the involved staff members share the same understanding about the conflict causes and dynamics and hence are driven by the same underlying assumptions of social change and priority of activities.

Discussions with NP staff reveal that there are different opinions on how far a conflict analysis is relevant and instrumental for the work, objectives and activities of NP. As a matter of fact, the interviews and discussions with national and international staff suggest that there are different forms of conflict analysis undertaken by NP's Philippines program and the methodological knowledge of tools of conflict analysis does greatly vary among staff.

*Finding 12: Safety and security measures and protocols are in place and are taken care of very seriously and effectively.*

Regular security briefings, regular contacts between the security manager and field sites and NP's safety and security rules and regulations are very much part and parcel of the everyday routine of all staff in field sites. The kidnapping of an ICP in spring 2009 further sharpened the general awareness and sensitivity for security and safety regulations and protocols.

*Finding 13: The recruitment of highly qualified and experienced national and international staff is key for the "success" of activities and has been a challenge for the last two years.*

It has been difficult to recruit experienced professionals as staff members who are willing to go to work and live in Mindanao – given the security restrictions, comparatively low salary and hard-felt cut backs in their private life. This may partly explain the significant staff turn-over at NP P for the last two years.

Demands for more competitive benefit packages for international and national staff have been recently taken up by management.

In terms of skills and professional experiences, it is striking that most staff do join NP very early in their professional career and use NP P as a "hub" for better paid posts in international governmental organizations. Less surprisingly, most of the international and national staff have very little or no management or planning expertise and experiences.

*Finding 14: An intensive sense and level of frustration and stress among NP's program in the Philippines staff has to be put into context and taken seriously.*

Many ICPs stressed that they would need more recreation opportunities at the field sites, esp. given that dependent on the security situations their free movements outside are clearly and massively restricted. By the same token, some staff would prefer to have more flexibility on when and how to take their annual leave or their R&R (recreation and rest).

Many national and international staff considered the existing "grievance system" within NP and the level of professional supervision not effective or efficient to address their personal and professional grievances. Any uncertainty and heightened – no matter how personal or subjective - frustration may create tensions among staff, hence may jeopardize the safety of staff and beneficiaries. And

this together with the very lack of qualified and experienced staff could seriously limit the very effectiveness of NP's work.

*Finding 15: The communication flow between headquarters in Cotabato City and field sites and between Cotabato and Brussels is not considered satisfactorily by (international and national) staff.*

Many field staff members considered the current line of communication between the main office in Cotabato and the field sites as not satisfactory.

With the recently introduced system of "line management" there is clear distribution of responsibilities and duties at NP. This clarity on paper was not felt in everyday work practice. Some staff member expressed their frustration that in the current "grievance system" their concerns and needs were not listened to or taken seriously.

Some staff members referred to a "reality gap" between the NP's headquarters in Brussels and its level of information on the one hand and the practicalities on the ground and the "real life" of NP's staff in the Philippines on the other hand.

*Finding 16: Cross-cutting and transversal themes of conflict and gender sensitivity are taken care of and remain an everyday challenge for field staff.*

The discussion with individual staff members revealed that there is a general high awareness and knowledge on key concepts of conflict sensitivity and gender mainstreaming - both in terms of theory and implementation. How far that can be said only about some members or about the entire staff can not be concluded based on the evidence that the evaluator was provided with or was able to collect.

Many staff at field stressed that the main challenge for practically implementing approaches like the "Do no harm" framework was a methodological and practical one: It remains first and foremost difficult how to find the adequate level of balance between "confidentiality" on the one hand and "trust/openness" on the other hand while working with a great variety of actors ranging from IDPs to the AFP.

Another point of concern of some partner organizations and beneficiaries was the lack of language skills: Nearly all ICPs do not converse in the local languages and/or Arabic. And indeed, it might be useful to have one or two international staff members being fluent in Arabic. Yet, the question of learning a local language or vernacular is again a delicate question of conflict-sensitivity. Learning one language but not another might very easily be perceived as taking sides or sympathizing with one conflict party. And in fact, the international composition of NP and English as international working language has given NP its character and flair of "neutral" stakeholder in Mindanao.

In terms of gender-specific recruitment at NP in the Philippines, what is most striking is that more than half of the national and international staff is female – yet with more women working at the middle and lower management and only one in senior management.

The information collected leaves also room for interpretation what the specific indicators of "success" of gender mainstreaming and conflict sensitivity might constitute.

### 4.3. Key Findings on Perceptions of Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines

*Finding 17: Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines is extremely well connected among local, national and international organizations and stakeholders.*

Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines has strong partnerships with like-minded community-based organizations in the area of early warning, protection, human rights and cease-fire monitoring.

At the same time, some partner organizations shared their general concern that there is a real danger of duplication, esp. in the areas of human rights protection and cease-fire monitoring. This stresses the real need for a more strategic distribution and self-critical appraisal of roles and responsibilities among partner organizations and NP.

*Finding 18: Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines is considered an easy accessible, a flexible, and quick-to-respond point of contact and support.*

Many requests of partner organizations and beneficiaries stressed that their immediate concerns or urgent requests have been taken up and addressed promptly and efficiently. While the flexibility of NP's Philippines program is a great strength of the organization, this flexibility should be not exercised at the expense of strategic focus and clarity on priorities. Given the current volatile and highly insecure situation and the very practicalities on the ground, to prioritize the activities is challenging and daunting. At the same time, it is important in order to ensure an effective running of activities and to look after the psycho-social well-being of NP's national and international staff. This also implies to analyse which of the activities could be run or organized by partner organization without the help or support of NP in the Philippines and where the explicit, strategic advantage of NP lies.

*Finding 19: Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines has build up over the last two and a half years an outstandingly high level of trust, and credibility among stakeholders, conflict parties, local and international partner organizations.*

Interview partners stressed that this down to two main reasons: On the one hand, NP is the only international NGO on the ground living and working with the community. On the other hand, NP is the only an international NGO offering personal protection and accompaniment.

NP's discreet facilitator role in late 2008 and 2009 further enhanced the confidentiality among the main conflict parties in NP and its impartiality. A concrete expression of this trust and credibility is the invitation in late 2009 to join the IMT.

The expectations of NP and its achievements are for the most parts unrealistically high. Comments like "NP will bring peace to Mindanao" support this observation. The current "shopping list" of wishes of NP's partner organizations and beneficiaries alike are a concrete expression of this the high level of expectations: Many organizations expressed time and again for example the wish for NP to additionally offer and provide food security, shelter and humanitarian aid.

*Finding 20: There are various and different perceptions and understandings of NP's role among stakeholders, partner organizations, conflict parties and the affected population.*

While some consider NP to be first and foremost a peacekeeping and peacebuilding organization, others stress NP's role and achievements in human rights protection. Others still understand NP as a humanitarian organization.

The level of clarity or confusion about NP's mandate suggests to be higher among beneficiaries and lesser among stakeholders and conflict parties.

*Finding 21: With the new role within IMT, the challenge for NP will be how to keep up the principles of non-partisanship and non-interference.*

The very fact that NP has been invited by the two parties is a clear indication and confirmation of its important work in the areas of civilian protection and cease-fire monitoring.

Echoing very much finding 15, the expectations for NP in the Philippines' role within IMT are high among local stakeholders, the affected population and the conflict parties involved. These expectations are high, especially given that according to the GRP-MILF Agreement on Civilian Protection, the CPC shall remain in place and continue to perform such functions even if the IMT ceases to operate.

At the same time, the governmental members of IMT have also different interests and stakes within IMT and prioritize their activities and responsibilities accordingly. While NP is an independent organization, its activities will be bound in one way or another and directly or indirectly influenced by these national interests. Or to put it in the words of a representative of an international organization "how to avoid that NP does not become a political player?". The main challenge is what will happen once there will be a re-escalation of violence either by the conflict parties themselves or "lawless elements", which are not part of this agreement.

How the different roles of NP as facilitator/third party, advisor, peace-keeper and cease-fire monitor will then work out and match will be an organizational challenge. At the same time, it will be a question of priorities and strategic focus. And above all, it is also a question of communication, i.e. how NP will successfully communicate its different "non-IMT" and "IMT" roles and hats.

This challenge is not to be underestimated given that among important stakeholders and the beneficiaries there is already some felt confusion of the different roles and the specific mandate of NP in Mindanao.

## **5. Recommendations**

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are listed in order of priority and importance. All recommendations are based on the assumption that NP will be able to secure additional funding sources in the next months and years and will further stabilise its financial situation. This financial "peace of mind" of NP is key in terms of its self-critical and strategic planning and changes, especially in the current expansion phase.

Section 5.1. refers to the questions of the achievement of goals and effectiveness, while section 5.2. points to possible recommendations in terms of the perceptions of NP in the Philippines.

## 5.1. Recommendations in terms of goals and effectiveness

*Recommendation 1: Clarify and further refine the strategic focus of NP's work, its role and self-understanding in Mindanao (and the Philippines). Base its focus on a sound conceptual footing and analysis of the current, given political context and conflict.*

The analytical and strategic focus have to be made explicit and transparent within the organization – otherwise staff members may be unclear about NP's focus or role of different activities and each staff member will be driven by different (implicit) understanding of the conflict and its key drivers and dynamics. This also implies that this kind of general strategic re-assessment should not be the work of one or two senior staff members but should include all international senior and national staff. This strategic re-assessment could take the form of an in-house workshop or retreat where questions like the following ones are discussed:

- What is our understanding of the key drivers of conflict in Mindanao?
- Where does NP locate its activities in this specific analysis?
- Given its mandate, where is NP in the Philippines most likely to have the biggest impact? What is feasible and realistic?
- What is the strategic advantage of NP in Mindanao?
- What are the “theories of change” or underlying assumptions how specific activities like human rights protection, cease-fire monitoring etc. should reach which objective (and the overall goal) of NP's Philippines program?

*Recommendation 2: Specify and reformulate the program objectives and overall goal to make them more concrete and measurable. Objectives should be defined as statements of desired changes in - the RPP's terminology - on the socio-political level and not in terms of activities.*

This is not a question of semantics but analytical clarity and focus and logically follows from recommendation 1 above. In fact, clarity of the strategic focus sets the frame for formulating the specific program objectives.

*Recommendation 3: Further develop a clear and explicit strategy how the project intends to achieve its stated objectives and how to measure the “success” of its activities.*

NP in the Philippines introduced a “logframe” to its planning, monitoring and assessment tools and methodologies in late 2009. The recent introduction clearly goes into the direction: It points at making the implicit assumptions driving NP's work in the Philippines explicit and make the output more measurable. While a “logframe” prompts NP to be more systematic about planned or current activities, it does not necessarily imply that strategic questions of effectiveness are equally taken care of.

Possible options to further develop this strategy might be to plot current and past activities, objectives and the overall goal of NP's program in the Philippines on the RPP Matrix. This would facilitate to discuss the following two main questions:

First, how to make sure that the momentum of individual activities like trainings are not lost and are followed up by strategically planned and implemented follow-up activities? This also implies to ask how to work with for example the changed attitudes or increased human rights awareness of the



affected population and build on them. This question refers to link activities on the individual-personal level with the objectives on the socio-political level.

Second, how to engage more strategically in NP's activities with "key people", like LGUs such as local authorities, like mayors, and counsellors, Christian settlers, MILF etc.? This point refers to the necessary linkages of activities with/for "key people" which in the past NP's program in the Philippines predominantly organized and run with/for "more people".

Additional points of reference and analytical direction may come from the RPP's criteria of effectiveness discussed above. These criteria could be formulated as guiding questions for planning new activities or assessing ongoing or past activities. These criteria could be broken down into indicators with a special focus on outcome- and impact indicators.

*Recommendation 4: Develop a clear internal communication strategy or procedure which facilitates a smooth and reliable channel of information, communication and supervision, particularly between NP in the Philippines' headquarters in Cotabato City and the field sites.*

The planned and soon to be launched "NP in the Philippines Newsletter" on current activities and latest successes by staff in the Philippines is clearly an important step in the right direction.

*Recommendation 5a<sup>8</sup>: The role of the national staff of NP's program in the Philippines, especially at field sites, should be strengthened.*

The national staff is the "glue" between the international staff of NP and local affected population and stakeholders both in terms of "institutional memory" and cultural interpretation and reading of local events and dynamics. In contrast to the international staff, they are from the local community and their work for NP and their well observed personal conduct will have more direct and immediate repercussions and effects on their personal life. Their important role in terms of effective peace work should be mirrored in support, training, supervision and benefit packages.

*Recommendation 5b: Offer on-the-job-training-facilities, professional and regular supervision including psycho-social support for international and national staff.*

The management took key initiatives and guided national and international field staff. The field staff are at the heart of the NP's Philippines program and very much responsible for the very success and achievements of NP over the last years along with the pivotal role played by the management. Clearly, NP Philippines' management was successful to win new international donors, established and refined management structures, policies and procedures and was hence able to recruit more international staff and built key strategic relationships at various levels. Still, most of the internationals do join NP with little project management, planning or analysis skills or experiences. An extra-effort is needed to recruit more international and national staff with a background in program planning, design or management. At the same time, additional on-the-job training facilities

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<sup>8</sup> To indicate that the following recommendations 5a and 5b are equally important and go hand in hand, they are classified accordingly.

and supervision should be organized. The arrival of the new international staff for the NP work for and outside IMT does seem to be an ideal timing for that.

These trainings like on strategic program design, planning and monitoring should be organized in such way that the routine analysis and planning is further enhanced and very concretely improved. The high level of personal stress and trauma that much international staff is exposed to in their everyday work further necessitates professional psycho-social on-site supervision and support.

*Recommendation 6: Given its prime and well respected role as information-holder and sharer, NP in the Philippines should think of ways to institutionalize the information-sharing on the security and conflict situation in a regular, structured and systematized kind of format.*

Many interview partners stressed the prime position and great strengths of NP's Philippines program in the area of information-sharing. To institutionalize the role of information-sharer could take the form of regular round-table discussions on current conflict issues, security concerns or other questions of strategic interest and importance.

Given its strong partnerships and local footing, NP would be in the prime position to invite to and facilitate these meetings. To cross-fertilize local and international concerns and perceptions on the conflict, NP would be in an ideal position to invite local, national and implementation organizations and stakeholders.

## **5.2. Recommendations in terms of perceptions of Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines**

*Recommendation 7: To further foster the local understanding of NP's role, an outreach strategy should be in place.*

Based on the findings above, one has to think how to explain the roles and mandate of NP in plain and simple English and the local language. The existing information brochures on NP in the Philippines' mandate and objectives are for many partner organizations and affected population more irritating than clarifying. Given the high literacy rate among the war-affected population, NP's mandate should be explained with the help of visualisation like pictures or postcards. Postcards and pictures could be easily distributed and can be understood in all different local languages.

*Recommendation 8: Develop a clear communication strategy about different mandates and roles of NP both as members of IMT and as "regular" international and national staff of NP.*

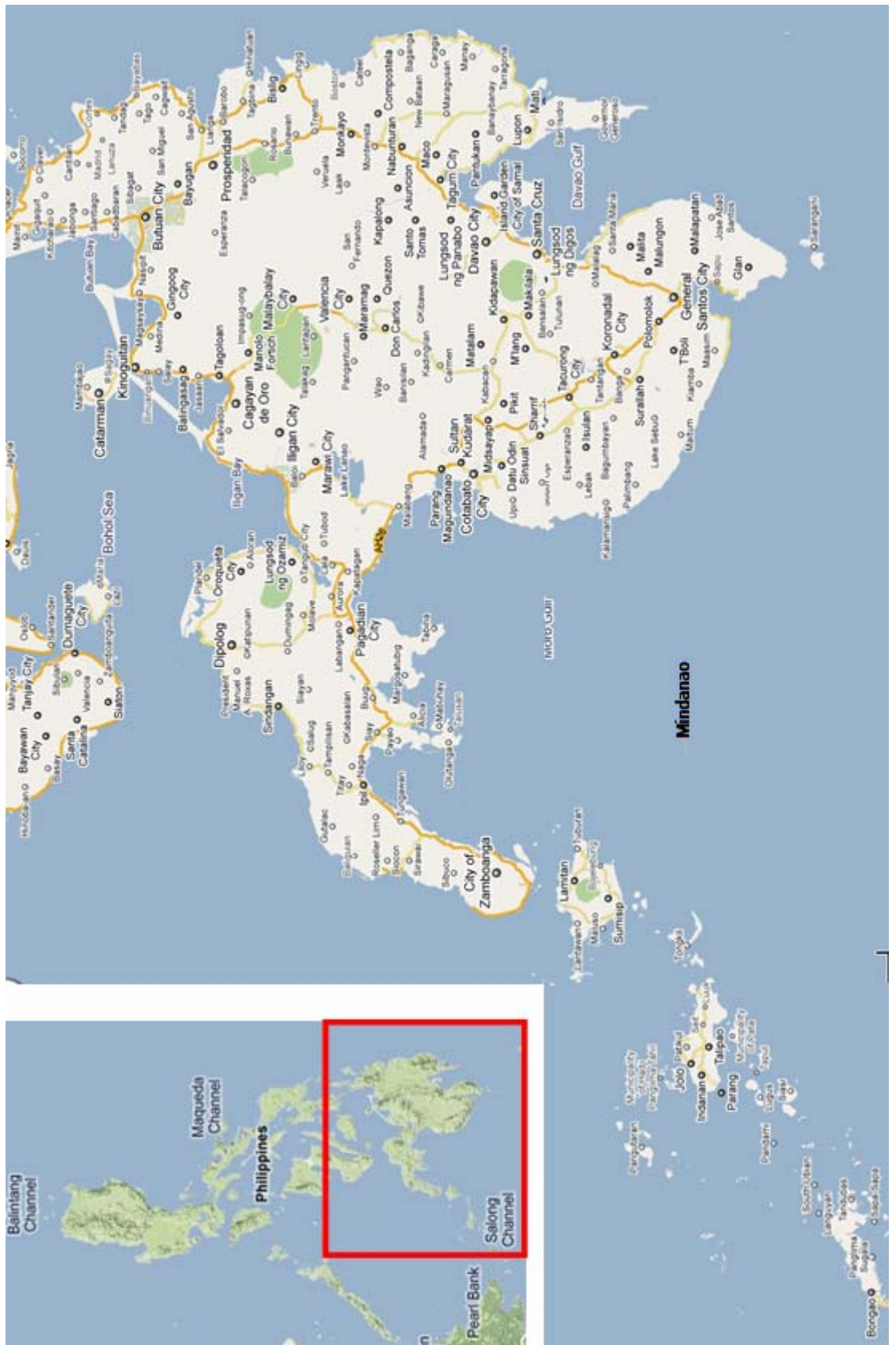
While monitoring the cease-fire is key to the regular and non-regular NP in the Philippines program work, it is important that in the very perceptions of the affected population, partner organizations and all other stakeholders the two mandates and self-understanding of NP are not mixed up. The current plan to have different outfits for ICPs and ICPMs is an important step in the right direction.



# Annexes

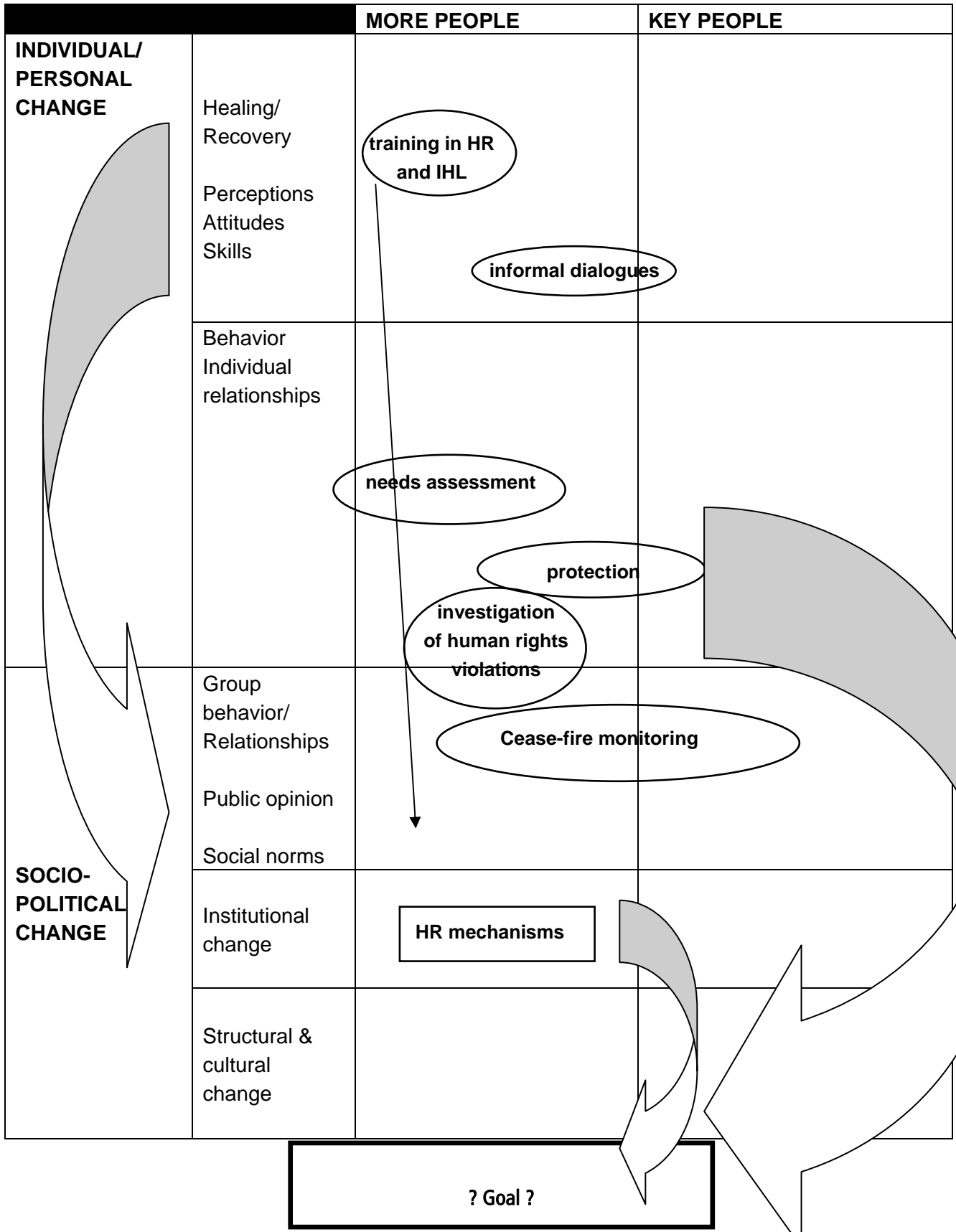
## Annex I

### Map of Mindanao



Objectives

Activities



<sup>9</sup> Note the sub-categories on the individual-personal and socio-political levels which should help to be more specific.

## Annex III SWOT Analysis

### SWOT analysis from outside (non-NP staff)

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>High credibility of NP and its core principles of non-partisanship: <u>only presence and international organization</u> on the ground and working with and living among local communities</p> <p>NP's strategic advantage: Civilian Protection and accompaniment! Only international organization on the ground offering personal protection and accompaniment</p> <p>High trust and confidence in NP by partner organizations, stakeholders, conflict parties, affected population</p> <p>Level of security or perception of level of security has increased because of NP's presence! (For example: People feel empowered to raise their voices about human rights violations.)</p> <p>Given people hope!</p> <p>Soften the "hardline" approach by AFP (which only an international organization can do!)</p> <p>Information-sharing of NP with stakeholders</p> <p>Strong partnerships with NGOs in the area of human rights training, early warning, dialogue, protection, and monitoring</p> <p>National <u>and</u> international staff together</p> <p>Quick response</p> <p>Easy accessibility , flexibility</p>	<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>Working with the "hard to reach", especially in terms of capacity-building, like training activities</p> <p>Influence on and cooperation with local authorities (council, mayors etc.)</p> <p>How to work with changed attitudes of affected population and build on them?</p> <p>Linkages of different activities in an effective and sustainable way</p> <p>Membership of IMT</p> <p>Different perceptions and understandings of NPs role by stakeholders, partner organizations, parties, affected population: peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict prevention, humanitarian or human rights work? Vague and fuzzy on purpose?</p> <p>More inter-religious activities</p> <p>Potential and great importance of national staff liaising with local population</p> <p>More international staff on the ground – greater impact?</p> <p>Sharing of updates on security situation in a consistent, structured and institutionalized way</p>
<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Too general goals, objectives defined as activities and not in terms of outcome or impact</p> <p>Unclear links between activities and objectives, i.e. unclear objectives should be achieved with the current activities: what are and how realistic are the underlying theories of change?</p> <p>Unclear about follow-up activities vis-à-vis objectives (e.g. trainings)</p> <p>Unclear importance of conflict analysis and how far conflict analysis is linked to strategies, activities and goals!</p> <p>No or very little knowledge of local language and/or Arabic</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>Non-partisanship of NP</p> <p>Different roles of NP (IMT and non-IMT work)</p> <p>Duplication of work in the area of monitoring HR and cease-fire – strategic advantage of NP?</p> <p>Very high expectations of beneficiaries and partner organizations</p> <p>With expanding danger of loosing its focus while the expectations, demands and level of accountability and responsibility to NP will increase</p>

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