

You Make Protection Possible in Rakhine

Increased fighting in Rakhine, Myanmar has made it difficult for a local humanitarian organization* to provide assistance like food items and other basic necessities. The humanitarian organization knew they needed to incorporate more than aid into their work—they needed to look at civilian protection as well.

But they didn't know where to start, so they asked Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) for help. They knew that NP has staff who are from and who have worked in other conflict-affected states in Myanmar—using nonviolent methods to bring people together to create their own solutions to protect themselves and their communities.

When NP started working with the local humanitarian organization, the NP team knew that the best people to assess the civilian protection needs would actually be the civilians from the townships

themselves. So, in January, NP recruited and started training 14 community volunteers on how to assess the needs of their own communities.

Since we were working in a community where there have been interethnic tensions in Rakhine State, NP made sure to train volunteers from all the communities in the village—all sides need representation in the process for it to be successful.

The volunteers are learning that they can do something, rather than wait for an organization to enhance their protection.

They have already identified protection issues in the training. For example, many families that have been displaced from violent conflict are now in camps or are spread across homes. And gender-based violence is common behind closed doors.



**the organization is anonymous for safety reasons*



Indigenous Youth Group in the Philippines — Connecting the Next Generation with Peace

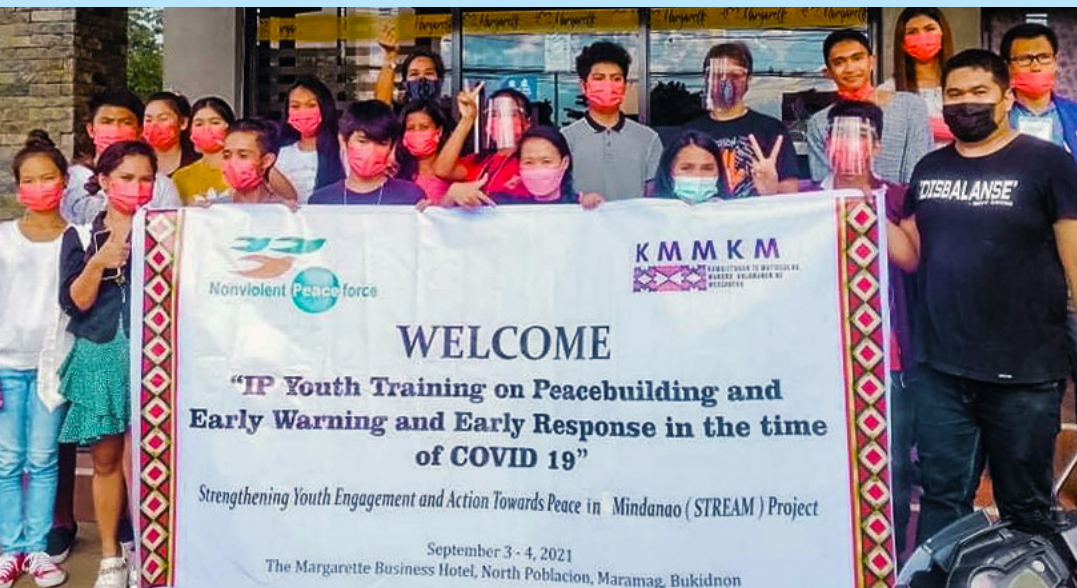
With your support, NP and the United Women of Matigsalog, Manobo, Kulamanen Tribes (KMMKM*) established the Indigenous People Youth Leaders Organization.

The indigenous KMMKM women, recognizing the potential of their youth, entrusted them to make a change, to contribute to the peace building process, and to preserve and promote the culture of the indigenous peoples.

NP was able to support the youth participants with leadership trainings, as well as training on conflict & culturally-sensitive peacebuilding. Now, the youth group advocates for

sustainable peace in their community by organizing peace related activities: youth empowerment, good leadership, and social awareness.

**The acronym “KMMKM,” comes from its name in Cebuano: Kamalitanan Te Matigasalog, Manobo, Kalumanen Tribes Ne Megsabeka*



But, the volunteers are also realizing there are things they can do to protect themselves and others — making it easier for the local humanitarian group to provide assistance.

And, as the volunteers are identifying protection needs for themselves, they are also recognizing the distrust between their different ethnic groups, even though they all live in the same townships. For many, this was the first time they had an opportunity to be in the same room and listen to others from different ethnic groups. They were able to build empathy and knowledge — they left the room recognizing they are all affected by the same conflict, even if they entered the room looking at each other as enemies.

Thank you for believing in unarmed civilian protection. Your support makes trainings like these possible in even the hard-to-reach places like Rakhine, Myanmar. 

Benjo Capul of the Manobo tribe is a communications student and the President of the Indigenous People Youth Leaders Organization.

Benjo shared that the Early Warning, Early Response training enabled the group “to be empowered indigenous youth who carry with them the responsibility of being responsive and efficient indigenous leaders in the future.”

Through these trainings, he adds, the group has gained “confidence to talk more about their passion and what they really wanted to do.”



“NP has given us once in a lifetime opportunities by hearing our voices, and for that we are very thankful.”

Already, you have made it possible for the indigenous youth to make an impact —



Registering indigenous people to vote — a challenge for plenty who are based in remote, mountainous areas where modes of transportation are not easily accessible.



Creating an outreach program for children in their community — Through this program, the youth provided kids with school supplies to help with their education.



Running a clothing drive for indigenous peoples in remote areas — the youth responded to the shortage of this basic necessity due to the lack of infrastructure in rural areas.

Systemic Change and Sustainable Giving

Supporter Spotlight: Jen Lau

Jen Lau found NP the way so many have – through a friend. She was initially looking for a place to volunteer just while she was a student, but soon felt connected to the rest of the organization, even when so many of the staff were half a world away.

“I was so drawn to the mission of NP – the idea that people are working across the world in communities, being true allies of communities, and working together for something more sustainable.”




As Jen continued her career as a student, she was disappointed as she learned about the inefficiencies of typical aid assistance.

“But I was so excited to believe in NP, because you are not just shipping dollars at an issue. NP provides real support, partnership, and protection. NP takes realistic steps toward a future of peace.”

Through volunteering, Jen became interested in the behind-the-scenes operations of an organization like NP. After she graduated, Jen worked for nonprofits such as New Profit and Public Architecture.

“That experience made it clear to me why monthly giving is so important. Nonprofits need sustainable revenue, something to look forward to every month.”

By giving even a little bit each month, and then again at the end of the year, Jen knows that she can stay confident and NP can stay flexible.

More than ever, consistency in some form – even in a small way – is important. How else can we expect organizations to achieve systemic change, if we don’t make sure our support is sustainable?” 

You can support peace every month of the year!

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- » Training for a community group on Weapons Free Zones
- » Protection for families at risk of harassment and assault in an internally displaced persons camp in Iraq



***For more information on ways to give,
go to www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org or contact our office at 612-871-0005.***