# Regional Emergency



# PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK

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# REGIONAL EMERGENCY **PSYCHOSOCIAL** NETWORK

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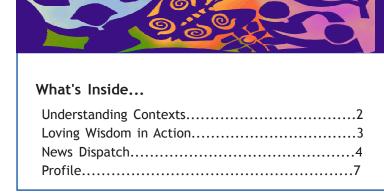
Regional Emergency Psychosocial Support Network August 2004 Regional Consultation Workshop

# Regional Cooperation, Networking, and Consolidation of Resources

From July 31 to August 6, 2004, more than thirty participants from eleven countries throughout the East Asia and Pacific Region and representatives from the United Nations Children's Fund - East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (UNICEF-EAPRO) convened at Hotel Dominique in Tagaytay City, Philippines for a consultative workshop aimed towards the formation of an emergency psychosocial response team for the region. Hosted by the Regional Emergency Psychosocial Support Network (REPSN) secretariat, the University of the Philippines' Program on Psychosocial Trauma and Human Rights Program of the Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP-CIDS PST), the international six-day event highlighted regional cooperation, networking, and consolidation of resources as the cornerstones, the next steps towards the realization of the Regional Emergency Psychosocial Response Team (REPRT).

Elizabeth Protacio-de Castro, Associate Professor and Convenor of the UP-CIDS PST during the opening day of the consultation workshop said that the workshop, entitled "Evolving Capacities in Emergency Psychosocial Support in the East Asia and the Pacific Region" had been the result of efforts by UNICEF and concerned organization in capitalizing on local sources and building the capacities of the region in providing psychosocial support. The event is the latest development after the establishment of the RESPN during the Regional Experts' Meeting on Psychosocial Response in Emergency convened by UNICEF-EAPRO in Bangkok, Thailand 2001. "It is almost like a dream come true for [those of] us who have been talking about this event for the last three years," she said. "But this is just the first of many other steps."

The consultation workshop served a pre-test of the modules developed by former psychosocial support network consultant Dr. Les Spencre and the UP-CIDS-PST. Conceptualized and developed last year, the modules contain important training materials, guidelines, methodologies and approaches to be used as reference by people and organizations involved in psychosocial care in emergencies. Dr. Spencre and Mr. Ernie Cloma of the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) helped facilitate the activities. Based in the Manila, PETA is a people's theater committed to social change and nurturing wellness, and has been an active partner of NGOs in the Philippines in therapy through conduct of art workshops.



# SPECIAL FEATURE

# **Understanding Contexts**

Peaceful indigenous response to war and healing practices

# The Mangyans of Mindoro Island

(The following article is taken from an on-going study made by UP-CIDS-PST commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme. The study, entitled "Documentation on Peace Building Efforts by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the Philippines to Address the Psychosocial Consequences of Armed Conflict/Violence," forms part of the larger "Documentation of Civil Society Experiences of Peace Building" headed by Miriam Colonel Ferrer of the University of the Philippines-Diliman and participated by six other groups working on separate themes. The editorial board wishes to express its gratitude to Ms. Ferrer for allowing the publishing this portion of the UP-CIDS-PST study.)

On the morning of July 31, 2003 in the town of Magsaysay in Mindoro Occidental, soldiers from the 16th Infantry Battalion of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) massacred a family of four belonging to the Mangyan tribe. The victims included the mother who was eight-months pregnant and her two young sons, aged three and two. The military claimed that that the incident was a legitimate encounter with units belonging to the Communist Party of the Philippines – New People's Army (CPP-NPA) and the children of Roger and Olivia Blanco were just an unfortunate collateral damage during the crossfire. Accounts by witnesses, including the lone survivor, and relatives of the deceased strongly discredited the military's claims on the incident, which also resulted in the displacement of ten Mangyan families.

The Blanco family massacre is one of the alleged atrocities committed by elements of the AFP against upland farming communities, not excluding Mangyan groups in Mindoro Occidental over the last two years. The CPP-NPA has been reported to recruit Mangyans into their ranks. A fact-finding mission and other actions were conducted, participated in by representatives from the Social Action Center (SAC) of the Vicariate of San Jose, the Mangyan Mission; the Office of Mangyan Affairs (OMA), an extension arm of the local government of Magsaysay exclusively for handling the affairs of the Mangyan residents of the municipality; the HAGURA, an indigenous people's organization comprised of members of the Hanunoo, Gubatnon and Ratagnon Mangyan; and the PASAKAMI, the umbrella organization of five Mangyan organizations from throughout Mindoro.

The mechanism practiced by the PASAKAMI and its component organizations is evidence of both the strong noninterference policies of the respective Mangyan tribes in the affairs of the other tribes and the steadily growing influence of a pan-Mangyan approach in facing issues that concern the entire Mangyan community in Mindoro. The different tribal organizations are autonomous as far as planning and carrying out programs in their respective territories, but they act as a cohesive unit in areas concerning the welfare of all Mangyans. All decision-making is always done in consultation with the council of elders and traditional leaders of the different Mangyan groups to ensure that any of the approved measures would be sensitive to their culture. Using their traditional methods of voting, the leaders for the tribal organizations are chosen. In turn, they elect the person to lead PASAKAMI, an agency to insulate the Mangyan community against drastic changes in the traditional ways of life, which is central to their identity as a people or a tribe.

Through the initiatives of the SAC, which extended paralegal assistance to the bereaved families, representatives from the military, local and provincial governments, and PASAKAMI conducted a consultative meeting in September 2003 that resulted in a preliminary agreement on peace issues and human security. During the meeting, the representatives discussed the issue of militarization according to the different perspectives held by the military, government officials, and the Mangyan tribes. During the meeting, the Mangyans clearly pointed out the issues faced by their community in view of the operations against the CPP-NPA units in Mindoro - that they are caught between the crossfire between the government and the insurgents. The Mangyan representatives also stressed that these should be recognized and considered by the military leadership in their proposed process to seek the aid of the tribal community against the insurgents. Regarding the entry of soldiers into their territories, the PASAKAMI proposed that the leaders of the communities should be informed about the entry of soldiers into their areas and that the military should

see page 5

News Dispatch... continued from page 4

West Papua

# Refugees repatriated from camp to camp

Sources from Australia reported in September 30, 2004 that more than 300 West Papuan refugees in Papua New Guinea (PNG) had agreed to settle voluntarily from their camp in Vanimo to another in East Awin province. This development came after earlier attempts by the PNG government to repatriate them to East Awin had failed. According to Inter-government Relations Minister Sir Peter Barter, the refugees have been living in the Vanimo Transmitter Camp in the PNG province of Sandaun since 2000. Mostly from the Wamena area, the refugees left West Papua in that year during the height of tensions between the Indonesian military and the Free Papua Movement (OPM). NBC News reports that 300 border crossers were granted refugee status in March this year, and their repatriation was supposed to begin at the end of September. However, many of the refugees are refusing to relocate. Their repatriation to East Awin raised fears of a repeat of earlier experiences of "border crossers" who were moved to the area which is strongly under the influence of Jakarta. Most of the leaders who were settled there died or were bought off by Indonesian agents. While transfer was on a voluntary basis, individuals refusing to leave would be considered as illegal migrants and face appropriate measures by the PNG authorities. PNG army and police officials were reportedly helping the refugees to stay in Vanimo, even ordering them to hide in the nearby jungles. (MPP)

Source: http://www.westpapuanews.com/articles/publish/index.shtml/

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# **Regional Psychosocial Network** (continued from page 1)

Among the themes covered during the consultation workshop were care and support for caregivers, strengthening and evolving culturally appropriate psychosocial support with the community, and the assessment of local psychological wellness and resources. During the session on care and support for caregivers, participants, representing NGOs and organizations from Thailand to Australia, Mongolia to East Timor, shared their personal experiences. They related how they managed to cope during emergency situations. Participants were also treated to film showings on varying themes, such as the struggle and hardships of indigenous peoples in West Papua (formerly Irian Jaya) in Indonesia, an Aboriginal woman demonstrating the art of cradling, and the popular Life Celebration conducted in the Australian bush.

Unique to the consultation workshop were the various experiential activities that helped the participants to touch base with their inner strengths as caregivers and their nurturing and creative roles as part of the larger natural world. At the start of the second, third, fourth days, participants were invited to join dawn ceremonies presided by members from team countries. Meanwhile, at the start of the plenary sessions, participants also volunteered to share simple helpful practices. One of them was a simple "standing meditation" which was presided by a delegate from Cambodia. On the fourth day of the consultation workshop, Dr. Edru Abraham of Kontra Gapi, and his team of students from the University of the Philippines-Diliman, performed traditional and not-so-traditional but engaging and powerful music and dance performances for the participants. Afterwards, the foreign and local delegates and members of the secretariat were provided an opportunity to try their hand with the indigenous musical heritage of the Philippines.

On the last day of the consultation workshop, participants discussed issues relevant to the formation of the REPRT such as membership, structure, role and function, process, fund sources, accountability and transparency. Participants suggested that membership to the REPRT would be open, either on an individual or organizational basis, and that it would include community-based or grassroots levels and follow a code of principles, shared vision, and a guiding framework. While no definitive decision was arrived at as to the structure of the REPRT – whether it would be formal or informal and whether it would be based on one country and revolve around within a given time span – the participants agreed that it would have to be centered on the secretariat. It was however agreed that the UP-CIDS-PST would still act as the network's secretariat for three more years.

As far as its roles and functions were concerned, the REPRT would conduct advocacy work, training and workshops, networking, assessment and resource mobilization. Participants and organizers reiterated the role of network and the REPRT as an information exchange conduit and a means to help member organizations enhance their capabilities in doing psychosocial work in their respective areas. As far as processes were concerned, participants noted that there should be some protocols and agreements to be

followed. However, the terms of actual operations remains to be open for discussion. Several suggestions were also forwarded regarding funding, and these ranged from the collection of a membership fee, the sale of manual and other products developed by the network, the provision of counterpart funds from member organizations, and advocacy work to raise money, which would augment funding support by the UNICEF-EAPRO.

The workshop was a great opportunity for UNICEF-EAPRO representatives to meet with members from grassroots organizations and exchange views on providing psychosocial support and recognizing the importance of local healing ways, said Dr. Spencre in an interview during the consultation workshop. He described the regional consultation workshop as a venue for sharing and building on micro- and macroexperiences on providing psychosocial support, which is important in the region that had seen many natural and manmade calamities. Dr. Protacio-de Castro, meanwhile, emphasized that the consultation workshop stressed the importance of caring and support for caregivers, assessing contexts, and providing gentle respect and support. These three principles, she said, punctuated the atmosphere during the consultation workshop as the participants, through the activities, identified local psychosocial support systems, and people in the local cultural context jointly supporting the psychosocial needs of the

The consultation workshop in Tagaytay City is the first of two major activities planned by the REPSN for 2004 towards the formation of the REPRT. With the support from UNICEF-EAPRO, the network secretariat hopes to conduct before the end of the year the second workshop, which is a pre-test on the implementation of guidelines during an emergency psychosocial response. (MPP)

# **Special News Feature Article**

# **Children Caught in Conflicts Project:**

Child envoys voices out on protection issues, provision of basic services and the psychosocial effects of armed conflict

During the National Workshop on Protection Issues held from September 17 to 19, 2004 at the Ramberry Suites in Quezon City, Philippines, child envoys from conflict-affected communities voiced their concerns and gave their recommendations on the issues such as protection, access to basic services, and the psychosocial impact of war on children and youth. Coming from the provinces of Mindoro Oriental in Luzon, and Basilan and Lanao del Norte in Mindanao, the children have been actively participating in the UNICEF-funded Children Caught in Conflicts Project being undertaken by the University of the Philippines' Program on Psychosocial Trauma and Human Rights Program of the Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP-CIDS PST) since 2002. During the workshops, the youth envoys presented their recommendations, which were consolidated with those made by the adult participants.

During the workshop on protection issues, the children singled out one serious problem – attacks on civilians and restriction of movement. They recommended the inclusion of the issue on children in armed conflicts into the peace talks, human rights education, and gender sensitivity training. The youth envoys noted the importance of community meetings on protection and disaster preparedness. "They should identify schools, churches, mosques, hospitals, and health centers as peace zones and the local officials should teach civilians to avoid hot spots. They should hear both sides of the conflicting groups, to have an honest and reliable reporting," said one of the youth envoys. They also noted that special protection must be given to young girls and women evacuees, especially in times of emergencies. Showing that they love their caregivers, the youth envoys also recommended that protection should be given to the people working for them.

Regarding the provision of basic services, the children noted that the authorities supposed to help them did not know the issues. They lamented that the evacuation centers were crowded, food was insufficient and lacked nutritional value. They also said that some families did not receive badly needed aid because they names were not registered in the distribution list. While in the centers, the youth envoys said that there was nothing for them to do since there were no recreational activities and programs in the evacuation centers. They recommended that people of the affected community should make the authorities aware of the issues by presenting them a list of concerns. They also underscored the importance of constant consultation with the people throughout the stages of the conflict,

see page 5

# typescript

Annotated bibliographies of recent and not-so-recent publications, studies, reports and other documents on psychosocial trauma, child soldiers, IDPs, and related issues. Please visit www.psychosocialnetwork.org/online\_resources.htm. Works featured in this section are available for reference use at the PST Library.

# **Enhancing Partnerships Towards Effective Strategies on DDRR**

Second National Consultation Workshop on the Use of Child Soldiers in the Philippines
Philippine Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (PCSUCS)/Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
Manila Published in 2004

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The report is based on the proceedings of the Second National Consultation Workshop on the Use of Child Soldiers in the Philippines held in November 2003 in Opol, Misamis Oriental in the southern Philippines. The first part is an executive summary of the discussions and the results of the workshop. The workshop covered themes on the disarmament-demobilization-rehabilitation-reintegration (DDRR) of child soldiers, on the experience of government and NGOs in the DDRR process, and on engaging with non-State Actors. Aside from detailing the results of the workshop, the document also list the Ten-Point Action Plan adopted by the participants at the end of the consultation workshop. (MPP)

# **NEWS DISPATCH**

# The Diplomacy Training Program (DTP) **Human rights training slated for February 2005 in East Timor**

From February 7 to 25, 2005, the Diplomatic Training Program, an affiliate of the Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales, Australia, is calling for applications for the 15th Annual Human Rights and People's Diplomacy Training for Human Rights Defenders from the Asia-Pacific Region and Indigenous Australia. In cooperation with the Peace and Democracy Foundation in East Timor, the training program is primarily for non-government and community-based organizations relevant to human rights and people's diplomacy. The training provides knowledge of international human rights laws and the operations of the United Nations and other inter-governmental systems. Also included in the program is as training in strategic advocacy and "peoples diplomacy" and skills in working with the media and the Internet. Applications close on November 12, 2004.

Among others, the 15th Annual Training will include sessions on the following topics: economic, social and cultural rights, civil and political rights; a human rights-based approach to development; developing advocacy strategies; reconciliation and transitional justice; an introduction to human rights factfinding and investigation; and children's rights, women's rights and rights of migrant workers. The Diplomacy Training Program (DTP) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization providing human rights training in the Asia-Pacific region. Professor Jose Ramos-Horta, the 1996 Nobel Peace Laureate and representative of East Timor at the United Nations for over a decade founded the DTP in 1989. Since January 1990, the DTP has been conducting regional training sessions in the Asia Pacific region, including India and Sri Lanka. For more information about the East Timor training, please visit http://www.dtp.unsw.edu.au. The brochure and application form are also available in Word document form from dtp@unsw.edu.au. (MPP)

SEA Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers

# Filipino youth appointed as new regional coordinator

Out-going Southeast Asian Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (SEACUCS) Regional Coordinator Glenda Ramirez announced in late September 2004, the appointment of the Ryan Silverio of Philippine Human Rights Information Center (PhilRights) as the organization's new regional coordinator.

To be assigned in Bangkok, Thailand, the former resource development officer has been active in the promotion of youth and children's rights for many years. An international studies graduate of the prestigious Miriam College in Quezon City, he began his fruitful career in human rights work in PhilRights in 1995. The 24-year old Filipino child and youth rights advocate has been one of the most active voices and actors in the Philippine Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (PCSUCS), of which PhilRights is a member of the steering committee. Silverio, who also headed the Manilabased Human Rights Youth Action Network, has represented the Philippines in several international human rights and youth forums. (MPP)

# UNICEF/UP-CIDS-PST

# Children Caught in Conflicts Project: National Workshop on Protection Issues Held in Quezon City

From September 17 to 19, 2004, the University of the Philippines' Program on Psychosocial Trauma and Human Rights Program of the Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP-CIDS PST) conducted the National Workshop on Protection Issues at the Ramberry Suites in Quezon City, Philippines. Participants to the event were UP-CIDS-PST's research partners in the UNICEF-EAPRO-funded "Children Caught in Conflicts Project: The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children", which started in 2003. Participants were field researchers, partner non-governmental organizations and government organizations, and child envoys from the Mindoro, Lanao del Norte, Cotabato, and Basilan, areas that are experiencing armed conflict. The national workshop was the next step after data gathering on the impact of armed conflict on children. It aimed to draft recommendations and strategies that will holistically protect children in times of armed conflict and during recovery and reintegration. During the three-day event, UP-CIDS-PST researchers presented a summary of their research findings and workshops were conducted on the following themes: access to basic services, psychosocial impact of armed conflict, and protection issues and legal policies and responses. For a related article, please see Special News Feature Article, Children Caught in Conflicts Project: Child envoys voices out on protection issues, provision of basic services, and the psychosocial effects of armed conflict. For a backgrounder on the Children Caught in Conflicts Project, please see (MPP)

see page 7

**Understanding Contexts...** (continued from page 2)

not use any member of the tribes as a guide nor use force and intimidation in dealing with them. They also stressed that the soldiers or military units should respect indigenous culture and not to stay long in the tribal areas. For their part, the Mangyan tribes and grassroots organizations promised to try their best not to be influenced by the leftist groups.

An appreciation of the distinct cultures of each of the Mangyan groups is important in understanding the psychosocial effects of the military campaigns against the CPP-NPA units in Mindoro. According to members of the Tau-buid Mangyan, the mere presence of armed men in their territory, let alone the occurrence of atrocities and unfortunate events like the massacre in Magsaysay, is enough to send hapless villagers to flee quickly to the forests or other areas. They decried the desecration of sacred areas like the taguan or places where harvested crops are stored, the disrespect of the military towards the community not excluding the highly revered ulangan or council of elders and the katuntunan or hereditary traditional healer-leaders, and the theft of precious farm animals such as chickens and pigs by soldiers. These demands reflect the general Mangyan worldview, which is distinctly marked by a divide between the Mangyan and the non-Mangyan, the members of one tribe and their counterparts from other Mangyan groups, and the members of one tribe living in Mindoro Occidental and their counterparts from the Mindoro Occidental area. For example, the Hanunoo Mangyan term damuong refers to all non-Mangyan peoples, and to all outsiders. Used by Hanunoo mothers to hush up their crying babies, the term is defined early on some kind of bogeyman or threat-object among the Hanunoo. The word kristiyano is also used as a synonym, suggesting the negative image the Mangyan groups have of their Christian neighbors.

Like among other Mangyan tribes, there is still the practice among Tau-buid Mangyan families to abandon their thatch houses after the death of a family member, whether by natural or unnatural causes, and move to a new area. Such practice is based on the belief that the house is already full of bad luck and that it would prevent the ghost of the dead from haunting the living. Moving to a new house appears to be helpful in the healing process. The old house is left to fall in disrepair. As a form of social support, the *ulangan* meanwhile makes inquiries on the cause of death, on what the family needs and help provide such needs as part of the collective support effort. The council also helps look for and determine the site of the new house. Appropriate burial rituals are performed by the katuntunan or by the Catholic priest. Prayers are offered against the reoccurrence of such misfortunes. The immediate family of the deceased is never left alone by relatives and neighbors, who take great effort to make the bereaved smile. The family of the deceased and people paying their respects to the dead are provided food and entertained by endless

kamatuanan or storytelling and alubadan or singing. If after a long period had passed since the death of their loved one and any member of the surviving family is still experiencing grief, he or she is sent to relatives living in a distant village or sitio. Again, there is the indigenous practice of separating them from the locality where the death occurred, and this is said to help facilitate healing and prevent any haunting by the dead. They are advised to return to their new home only when they believe that have recovered from the death of their loved one. The council of elders of the tribe to which the Blanco family belonged also conducted these interventions to help the family of the victims.

It is apparent that the Mangyan tribes, through their respective organizations like the HAGURA and the PASAKAMI or the council of elders and traditional healers, have a range of responses based from their worldview and experience in interacting with people from other communities. They begun creating spaces in healing the social wounds of armed conflict and political violence and are using indigenous knowledge, available resources, and linkages with organizations and church groups to restore peace and stability in their communities. A lesson might be learned from the Mangyans. (MPP)

**Special News Feature** (continued from page 4)

the conduct of regular visits or missions by government relief, health and social workers in the evacuation centers, and informing the public about the situation and monitoring the outbreak of diseases. Included in their recommendations is the provision of public training on nutrition, setting a schedule and area for the registration of displaced families, and the provision of recreational and sports activities and rules and regulations for their use. They recommended local officials and disaster coordinating councils to formulate evacuation plans and make these known to the people in the towns and villages.

Concerning the psychosocial effects of armed conflict and violence, the youth envoys noted the occurrence of trauma among the younger members of the affected population. They observed that children and young people who have experienced armed conflict had low selfesteem and felt very helpless. The youth envoys particularly noted the cases of children and young people who were separated from their parents and loved ones as a result of the war. Proving that the already have an understanding of their circumstances, they also noticed the lack of disaster preparedness of the communities and the local government units. The youth envoys strongly recommended the conduct of recreational activities and workshops that would allow the children and young people express their thoughts and feelings about what is happening around them. They particularly noted games that would help them build their confidence and leadership skills, the organization of children's dance, theater, and choir groups. Also important is locating the children who were separated from their families and loved ones and reuniting them. The youth envoys also recommended the conduct of peace-related activities and the inclusion of peace education in the school curriculum and church activities. (MPP)