



Launch of the JAPAN-UNDP Partnership on the Prevention of Violent Extremism
06 August 2018, Ateneo de Davao University, Davao City, Philippines

The launch of the JAPAN-UNDP Project, “Strengthening National and Local Resilience to Risks of Violent Extremism in the Philippines”, proceeded through three sessions: (1) the launch event proper, (2) the informal brainstorming session on risks and opportunities in preventing violent extremism, and (3) technical review meeting on the operational elements of the project.

PROJECT LAUNCH EVENT

The launch event was attended by various stakeholders from partner institutions of UNDP as well as representatives from partner organizations of project implementing partners – Al-Qalam Institute of Ateneo de Davao University, National Commission on Muslim Filipinos. These included participants from national government agencies, local government units, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and people’s organizations.

The programme for the launch event is provided below:

| Time | Activity | Person/Organization in Charge |
|-------------|--|---|
| 10:00 am | National Anthem and Prayer Welcome Remarks | Fr. Joel Tabora SJ, President Ateneo de Davao University |
| 10:10 am | Introduction to the JAPAN-UNDP Partnership | Titon Mitra, Country Director UNDP Philippines |
| 10:20 am | Prevention of Violent Extremism: Insights from Japanese Support and Partnerships | H.E Minister Councilor Iyori Embassy of Japan, Manila |
| 10:40 am | New approaches and research in the prevention of violent extremism | Mussolini Sinsuat Lidasan, Director, Al Qalam Institute, ADDU Yusuf Ali Roque Morales, Commissioner, National Commission on Muslim Filipinos |
| 11:00 am | Cultural Event showcasing Diversity in Mindanao | Kaliwat Dance Group |
| 11:30 am | LUNCH | |

Prof. Mansoor Limba of Ateneo de Davao University served as the master of ceremonies.

Below are presentation materials from the discussion on new approaches and research in the prevention of violent extremism:

Presentation of Director Mussolini Sinsuat Lidasan. Director of Al-Qalam Institute, ADDU

Presentation of Commissioner Yusuf Ali Roque Morales, National Commission on Muslim Filipinos:

INFORMAL BRAINSTORMING SESSION ON RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Following the project launch event, a smaller group of partners were engaged in an informal brainstorming session on the risks and opportunities in preventing violent extremism. UNDP Country Director Titon Mitra moderated this discussion, guided by the following questions:

1. What opportunities are opened up by the final passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law to address the problem of violent extremism? What role can be played by the Moro fronts, and how can they be best supported?
2. What are the most significant current risks that could drive the further violent radicalization? What should be the priority actions in addressing these risks?
3. How can civic organizations best support those at the frontline of dealing with violent extremism--youth, religious and traditional leaders, women-- to have a more significant and widespread impact when dealing with violent extremism? Current efforts are important but often ad hoc, limited, and uncoordinated.

Highlights of this session are provided below:

- There is a need to work in synergy to make people understand the details of the Bangsamoro Organic Law. Some people may think that the BOL will bring about discord. On the other hand, there is a need to ensure that the BOL can be seen as an opportunity to make people work together for peace, to address divisiveness within the Bangsamoro.
- Opportunities to prevent violent extremism are there. There is a clearer separation of processes on the ground – decommissioning, disbandment of private armed groups, etc. There is a clearer separation such that there should be no more misencounters as the Moro Islamic Liberation move from their camps. On the other hand, there is the risk of other groups stepping in as the MILF moves out of communities. For instance, the MILF as a revolutionary group has relied on *zakat*, which is the charitable contribution/revolutionary tax provided by communities. If the MILF moves out of communities, there is a vast opportunity for other groups to step in. Thus, there is the need to redefine the method of warfare.

- The Institute for Autonomy and Governance has conducted research on the reasons behind violent extremism. They have identified the non-implementation of peace agreements as one of the main reasons. The implementation of BOL will help address these concerns and this process will be an opportunity for the Moro fronts to coordinate and work together.
- There seems to be a great divide between the Moro population and the rest of the population. The BOL is a good opportunity for the MILF to explain about them – their cause, their history and aspirations. Identity is something that needs to be examined, particularly for younger people who need a sense of belongingness. The BOL will be a good opportunity to develop a strong sense of nationhood and exercise strong leadership. It is a good opportunity to promote education about the history of Mindanao, specifically on the struggle of the Moros and Indigenous Peoples. There is a need to address awareness of the greater population.
- Chair Murad, in his message during a recent assembly in Camp Darapanan, reiterated that the jihad of armed struggle is now over, and that the next jihad is education, Education in the ARMM is the poorest in all indicators, as evidenced by ghost teachers and ghost schools. The Madrasah can be considered as the most underprivileged educational institution. Hopefully, the example of madaris in Indonesia can also be done here in the Philippines. Seventy percent (70%) of madaris in the Philippines are not controlled or supervised by government institutions and thus do not subject themselves to government regulation and supervision.
- One challenge pertains to promoting a culture of tolerance, cultural diversity and inter-religious understanding. There is a need to deconstruct past experiences, fight for inclusivity, and address historical injustices. The challenge is really in understanding what drives violent extremism, in gaining an appreciation of the lay of the land.
- Violent extremism is both a social illness and a symptom of other illnesses such as intolerance, religious fanaticism, and poor governance. There are opportunities to address violent extremism with the passage of the BOL, depending on the degree of awareness of the people. There is the possibility of supporting the Moro fronts by supporting programs for tolerance and diversity, and enabling them to be good workers working towards good governance.
- There is a need to look at the messaging of BOL. There are young individuals who appear to support the Moro fronts but are not very happy because the form and substance of BOL did not meet their expectations. As such, there is the challenge of increasing constituencies both inside and outside the Bangsamoro. Include CSOs that are not normally included in the BOL so as to sway the tide, particularly in areas that are critical of the BOL, such as the Island provinces.
- The BOL can provide a lot of opportunities to address injustice and marginalization. The challenge is in enhancing governance and demonstrating the needed political will to govern the Bangsamoro. A big aspect of the BOL is governance. The good thing about BOL is that it is inclusive. The critical aspect in the BOL is on the implementation. We do not want to have the same problem as what history has taught us. So much expectations have been raised across different stakeholders. The BOL should be a concerted effort, an opportunity to work together – CSOs, academic institutions, etc.
- Violent extremist groups are also very active in Northern Luzon, Southern Luzon and the Visayas. In Mindanao, some students in Notre Dame of Kidapawan have been seen waving black flags. Radicalization is also happening in Luzon areas, even in social media. For them, now is the time to recruit and convert. Indeed, the most violent attacks are done by converts. There is a need to conduct assessment of programs that have been implemented on preventing/countering violent extremism.

- The Muhammadiyah in Indonesia can be seen as a potential model in the transformation of armed groups into social movements that provide social services. However, it might be difficult to compete if the group will just be rendering social services. There is always a way to frame jihad in a broader perspective. We also need to look at the situation in orphanages.
- The largest collection of zakat is still in Maguindanao, with OFWs also providing their contributions. In the case of Muhammadiyah, they have turned their jihad into economic empowerment for their communities.
- There are opportunities to do more campaigns nationwide. There are certain realities on the ground. Once the BOL will be put to a plebiscite, what will happen? The Coordination Team for Transition has already stated their meetings. We need to examine the temperature of the people on the ground.
- A significant support that we can give is to make people understand what BOL is. We do not necessarily campaign for a “yes” vote but there is a need to implement a campaign that will help erase the fears of the people.
- There is a need for a strategic communications plan that will have a cohesive point. Peace negotiations may have started on the wrong foot, and for the wrong reasons. The strategic communications plans should be able to explain why people are fighting for self-determination. The messaging should be chronologically stratified, even adapting to the technologically challenged. The challenge lies in explaining the relationship between BOL and violent extremism.
- On the question of coherence and coordination, there is the challenge of not having a single repository of efforts on PCVE. There is a need to review coherence, synergy and coordination.
- There is a need to take stock of what has happened in terms of efforts at peace education, including community-based modules on peace education and how to build on and strengthen these past efforts.
- One fear lies in not engaging or talking directly to the violent ones. We need to re-examine what is being done, whether the right things are being undertaken, and whether we should be talking also to the violent ones.
- There are a lot of negativities coming from Muslim population. There are many people who are hoping that they can be clarified on how they can help. The key players are Muslims and there is a need to respect that they will find solutions to these problems. Non-Muslims cannot go in and say – this is what you should do. This is the time wherein Bangsamoro people should come together to work for healing and peace.

TECHNICAL REVIEW MEETING ON THE OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT

Project implementing partners were invited to participate in a technical review meeting on the operational elements of the partnership, which featured a discussion on:

- a) Initiatives and activities being undertaken by the partners with Japanese support;
- b) Relevance of initiatives and activities given the current context;
- c) Review of any adjustments and course correction, if necessary;
- d) Requirements for effective coordination and alignment of partners’ activities.

The meeting was moderated by Prof. Mansoor Limba of Ateneo de Davao University.

Mr. Chetan Kumar, UNDP Senior Peacebuilding Advisor, opened the technical review meeting by providing a background regarding the partnership. Mr. Kumar explained that the project will be a multi-year engagement accompanying the transition to the Bangsamoro, with Japan as a key supporter. Mr. Kumar also explained the objectives of the technical review meeting, highlighting the need to review initiatives to ensure relevance, identify necessary adjustments, maximize opportunities for further collaboration, coordination and alignment, and address risks that impact the partnership. He also suggested the possibility of continuing to meet together as a group as part of monitoring and evaluation initiatives for the project.

The two main implementing partners for the project were asked to discuss specific components that they will be handling under the JAPAN-UNDP partnership.

Commissioner Yusuf Morales of the NCMF identified three (3) major areas that his team will focus on under the partnership: (1) development of youth network for PCVE, highlighting the formation of an alternative youth peacebuilding network, (2) the formation of a network of intra-faith religious leaders, and (3) the conduct of research on radicalization in religious learning institutions.

Director Mussoloni Lidasan of the Al-Qalam Institute of Ateneo de Davao University described the construction of the Bitiala Center as a way to bring Ateneo closer to community partners. The Salaam Movement involves empowering Muslim youth through community involvement and social media campaigns. The Bangsamoro Youth Caucus will also be implemented to help explain the Bangsamoro Organic Law to youth networks.

Mr. Vinci Bueza of the Madaris Volunteer Program explained that the MVP was borne out of collaborative initiatives between the Catholic Education Association of the Philippines (CEAP) and the National Association for Bangsamoro Education. The MVP now covers 20 schools in Maguindanao, Cotabato, Lamitan, Bongao and Simunul. Apart from deployment of volunteer teachers, MVP also implements capability enhancements trainings for educators. The MVP seeks to instill courage and compassion and facilitate connections among young leaders. The MVP also implements peace advocacy activities that focus on stories of the Bangsamoro. Relative to the targets identified in the project document, the MVP will introduce the following changes: (1) the conduct of additional trainings for volunteers and teachers, (2) the conduct of impact assessment for the program, (3) implementation of social media campaigns, and (4) cultural sensitivity trainings for teachers.

UNDP representatives also explained the different project components that will be implemented directly by UNDP. These include the following initiatives:

- (1) the development of National Action Plan on the Prevention of Violent Extremism, which involves capacity development for national government agencies;
- (2) the setting up of community security platforms, which involves capacity development for local government institutions;
- (3) capacity development for Muslim traditional, religious and civic leaders through capacity-development on negotiation and mediation, development of common framework for Islamic teaching in partnership with Clingendael Institute, Bangsamoro Insider Mediators Groups, and Nahdlatul Ulama of Indonesia;

- (4) the conduct of research to establish detailed socio-economic baselines to help measure effectiveness of programme for economic inclusion, empowerment and social cohesion, covering at least half of households in Lanao del Sur provinces; and,
- (5) efforts to assist Moro leadership in establishing an effective strategy against violent extremism, which involves capacity-building for the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to provide social services and support for the development of a joint strategy by major Moro armed groups for combating violent extremism.

Prof. Rufa Guiam raised a suggestion regarding the need to come up with a unified plan for the monitoring and evaluation system for this project. A unified system for coordination, monitoring and evaluation can help the project to replicate successes and learn from failures. There has to be common messaging across partners and stakeholders, and contesting narratives should be brought into the discussion. Resource materials on PCVE need to be consolidated and standardized.

Prof. Bebot Rodil shared that the Mindanao State University system has introduced peace education as a standard course for all incoming students. However, peace education should be implemented not only in Mindanao but should also be extended nationwide. This should also extend to training of teachers and monthly learning sessions on peace action, peace research and peace education. The Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao (IPDM) is connected with a lot of agencies and institutions and has assisted these partners through its expertise in context/conflict analysis and program assessments. Certain developments on the ground need to be addressed. The IPDM has worked with OPAPP on the conduct of Peacebuilding Needs Assessments as well as on the conduct of peace formation sessions for its study grant program.

Asec. Alexander Macario of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) shared that they are currently undertaking an inventory of all CSOs and their initiatives advocating on PCVE. Local Peace and Order Councils have been enhanced to take on the task of PCVE. The issue of violent extremism should be addressed through a Whole of Nation approach, which involves complementary efforts from different actors including the security sector. It will also be good to undertake documentation on good practices on PCVE and counter-insurgency, such as the case of Bohol. When the Abu Sayyaf Group entered the province, all of them were neutralized through the concerted efforts of different actors. In the case of Marawi, there was a failure to appreciate indicators of violent extremism fueled by a failure in governance. There is a need to go back to the basics of good governance.

Mr. Robert Apadan of the Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society Organizations (CBCS) shared regarding their efforts at setting up community-based platform for convergence. These included activating and strengthening peace and order councils at the barangay and municipal levels. These also included strengthening youth participation in children protection structures.

Mr. Chinot Adao of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process discussed various initiatives of the national government, including the development of the National Action Plan on PCVE. There is a need to encourage agencies and stakeholders in a whole of nation approach. At the community level, OPAPP has also worked on strengthening community security and strengthening the role of women in peacebuilding, based on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Among the youth, there have been frustrations because of graft and corruption in governance. OPAPP has

also worked on the promotion of a culture of peace. A lot of work will also need to be done towards the creation of the Bangsamoro Government.

Commissioner Yusuf Morales of the NCMF explained regarding the need to agree on common values that should be shared by the project implementing partners, such as tolerance and diversity. These will also include common points that will need to be emphasized at all points of the project implementation. Project implementing partners and stakeholders will also need to be capacitated to develop a proper appreciation of the push and pull factors of radicalization. Another area that needs to be examined concerns existing programs for PCVE in jails, as well as initiatives to address recidivism.

Prof. Rufa Guiam also raised the observation that project implementation should also take into account those who are missing around the table. The UN Women has commissioned a project on mapping PCVE initiatives and the role of women in such initiatives. There is a need to better understand gender dynamics relative to the growing threat of violent extremism. It is also important to factor in the significance of illegal economies, such as gun running and illegal drugs, in relation to violent extremism. The International Alert has come up with a very good study, based on the Bangsamoro Conflict Monitoring System, that examined the nexus between illicit economies and violent extremism. Another challenge is to understand the tipping point wherein radicalization turns to violent extremism.

UNDP representatives raised two points for consideration in the discussion. The first point related to the suggestion of drawing up a shared theory of change that will details project outcomes, outputs and inputs as well as risks and assumptions. This will help define the changes that will be achieved through the project such as changes in capacities, structures and policies. The second point was in line with the National Action Plan on PCVE and highlighted the challenge of incentivizing local government units to take on the PCVE agenda. In this way, PCVE is integrated into local peace development planning processes.

Mr. Kumar noted that the DILG will also be launching a network on PCVE initiatives. Through this network, all resources on PCVE can be collectively brought together. A number of groups have also done assessments on PCVE initiatives. Part of these assessments have included defining categories of interventions and criteria for assessments. Given the multiplicity and diversity of PCVE initiatives, there is a need to bring together such initiatives towards developing a common framework that will guide coordination, monitoring and evaluation. There has to be a shared understanding of outputs, indicators and impact. The National Action Plan on PCVE will also have its own results statements and indicators.

Prof. Bebot Rodil also shared that something is also changing on the ground. Specifically, there are emerging pathways that have been observed, and the push and pull factors may differ. There are also marked differences in the process of radicalization. Research has shown that the youth manifests positive aspirations but for some of them, the only option is violent extremism. There is also a need to build capacities of PCVE actors and stakeholders on conflict/context analysis.

Asec. Alex Macario of DILG also shared that Peace and Order Councils have now been enhanced to integrate representatives from youth, women and indigenous peoples.

Director Lidasan posed a question on the challenge of bringing together all existing programs from different actors. He further noted how social movements such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah can provide advice on the transition from armed struggle to economic empowerment. Such processes were initially undertaken by Kadtabanga, which can perhaps be replicated in the current project. These can also serve as preparations for the next phase of JAPAN-UNDP partnership.

Mr. Kumar explained that the project will need to have a collective/shared theory of change. He also reiterated the need to develop the repository of what has been undertaken on PCVE, and identify good practices from such initiatives. Inputs from the conversations held in Bangkok may help on this. He also noted how the Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah both have an ideological and spiritual core.

Mr. Apadan of CBCS proposed the conduct of baseline research on PCVE. Diagnosis should be context-sensitive and therefore context-specific baseline research on violent extremism needs to be undertaken.

The group agreed that studies on violent extremism, as well as initiatives on PCVE, should be put together and shared in future conversations.

Mr. Winston Aylmer Camarinas, head of UNDP Cotabato Field Office, noted that the JAPAN-UNDP project is not the only project on PVE. There are already a lot of initiatives on PVE. Thus, there is a need to also understand how the current project stands in relation to the different initiatives on PVE.

Commissioner Morales of NCMF also shared that there exists highly classified research on violent extremism undertaken by the National Security Council.

Prof. Rufa Guiam also shared that in her conduct of literature review on violent extremism, she has come across significant research on the phenomenon undertaken by the Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research under Professor Rommel Banlaoi. Another focus area that will need to be addressed by the project includes the need to capacitate leaders of LGUs and Moro fronts, as well as followers and citizens. How do we make followers demand accountability from leaders? How do we demand transparency and adherence to rule of law? A baseline research on capacitating people on followership may also be undertaken.

Asec. Macario of DILG also reiterated the challenge of the decommissioning process for the MILF. As part of the Task Force for Decommissioned Combatants, he shared that 12,000 MILF combatants will be decommissioned by the first quarter of 2019. The challenge lies in the readiness of government to provide the packages for the decommissioned combatants. If the government fails to provide such packages, then in effect, it will be radicalizing 40,000 MILF fighters. Relative to the Marawi siege, the groundbreaking of the rehabilitation of Marawi should have been conducted in April 2018, but was moved to September 2018. If the rehabilitation will not push through, then 250,000 inhabitants would have been radicalized. From its end, the DILG has implemented PhP76 million worth of water system projects in the main battle area.

Mr. Kumar explained that both Peacebuilding Fund and the JAPAN-UNDP partnership are projects dedicated to the prevention of violent extremism. He further noted that the UNDP is undertaking implementation through the direct implementation modality. UNDP will also continue to update on the following items: (1) succeeding meetings/sessions on the project to include other actors and stakeholders, (2) development of shared theory of change which includes articulation of key results statement, indicators and core values, and, (3) consolidation of existing research and initiatives on PCVE.