



from
STREET FIGHTERS
to
Peace Builders

The Stories of Transformation in
Timor Leste's Martial Arts Leaders

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Builders:
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Martial Arts Leaders**

*We should not look at each other as East and
West but as one.*

*The sun rises from the East and sets on the West but
Timor is always one.*



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The project would not have gone forward without the trust, commitment and moral support of Aniceto Neves and Jose Luis de Oliveira of the well respected human rights organisation HAK Association. Over many years they had built close connections and ties across the martial arts group. Without Aniceto and Jose Luis' willingness to share those contacts and relationships with Action Asia personnel, no single martial arts leader would have participated in the program.

Funding for such a project is not so easy. While it could be described as a simple training, in this case the participants really believed they might kill each other on the opening night, and the program may well have gone up in flames, literally. Nevertheless Concern Timor Leste, Oxfam Australia and American Friends Service Committee supported the work without judgement. This was made possible by individuals within those organisations who worked hard to make the process fit into the necessary log frames—they include Keryn Clark, Emma Conlan, Leonie Venroij, Jacqui Chagnon, Patricia DeBour, Bubu Saha, Cris Catano and Maritao de Araujo.

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Kudos to Lakshmi Jacota and Boonruang Song-ngam for making this book so presentable!

Dedication



This book is dedicated to the brave and courageous martial and ritual arts leaders who took the huge risk of participating in a program for peace. As you will see in their stories, on their first night together many of them did not sleep at all, as they believed they would be killed by one of their rivals in the group. Even in the first week of the program, they suspected the process may be a trick, designed to extract information which would lead to their arrests. And yet they came and over the weeks realised the power of transformation and how they too can be part of the solution. We salute their courage, and their willingness to transform themselves to agents for peace.

Introduction

This book was not written as a definite guide to martial arts and ritual arts groups in Timor Leste. Far from it! It is an issue which is deeply complex and requires ongoing attention, support and intervention.

This book is however a celebration of the changes, both personal and societal, undertaken by men and women who once saw violence as the only option. There are two memorable events in this program which characterise the experiences of working with martial arts leaders in Timor Leste. During the first workshop we showed the Gandhi movie. In the scene where Gandhi has his supporters lined up, each one stepping forward to make their protest, knowing they will be beaten, the Martial Arts leaders starting yelling at the screen – “Resist”, “ Fight back”, “Stand up for yourselves”. Hardly surprising when the experience of Timor has been that standing up for your rights is synonymous with violent action. It’s hardly surprising that when Timor’s young people have been frustrated by the slow processes of development and the obvious disparity between themselves and the international community workers who have come to help; that they would resort to throwing rocks, spears and what have you to make their point. Later in the Gandhi movie there is a scene which shows Hindu and Muslim groups fighting each other in the street. During this scene a quiet came over the room, and tears were shed. In the debriefing, of course no one admitted they actually cried, but they were willing to admit that they identified with the pain of street fighting and how scary it is.

The second memorable experience was during the same module whilst working through an analysis of the conflict when we heard sirens coming up the hill. The guys fled, running in several directions, some into the bush, some into the kitchen, some hiding themselves in the building. Three Australian military vehicles had pulled up in front of

the workshop room and about ten Australian soldiers got out of the vehicles heavily armed. In my thickest Australian accent I asked them “What’s up boys?”. They explained they had been told there was a martial arts convention taking place and several martial arts leaders were congregated together here. I said I knew nothing about a convention but we did have 15 young people gathered here to study peace and we had just finished watching the Gandhi movie. After taking my picture and details they promptly left. Following this incident it took several days for the participants in the peace program to trust again. It turns out one of the martial arts leaders routinely reports to the Australian military for his own protection and told them about the workshop. Somehow the information had been grossly exaggerated. Nevertheless it showed how a ‘foreign’ force can undermine feelings of security, trust and even initiatives for peace. We knew the Australian military were simply doing their job, but after struggling so long for their independence, they continue have to account to outsiders!

The martial arts leaders took huge risks agreeing to participate in this program. On the first night many of them did not sleep, as they had to be at the ready should one of the other try to kill them. After the first module they returned to their own groups inspired by what they had learned to find their members had become suspicious of them. They had been away for a week and had been known to be associating with leaders of other groups. Being pioneers for peace is never easy. Interestingly when we explained that the third module of the program would take place in the Philippines they simply did not believe us. They explained no one had ever invested in their development before so we simply must be lying so as to entice them in the program. I don’t think they really believed us until their flight actually touched down in Manila.

One of the unique moments of the Philippines visit was when they came face to face with those who had been convicted of the assassination of Ninoy Aquino in Bilibid Maximum Security Prison. I think there was some initial awe at the men who had brought down a

hero. However as those Filipino convicts explained how they had committed their lives to non violence and it was a much tougher path than using violence, we could see the challenge had been put at the feet of the Timorese men.

When your entire life has been characterised by structural injustice and physical violence, the path to non violence is a mighty and courageous choice, especially in a culture where machismo rules! Yet after all this dialogue, exposure, discussion, analysis, challenge and reflection, it is what these men are trying to do. Since the completion of the program we have heard some of the men have resorted back to their old ways. But their friends, hold them to account and remind them of their commitment.

This intervention was far from perfect. And is far from sustainable on it's own. We were disappointed the representatives from Seven Seven did not feel able to join the workshops at the outset. However they did participate in the graduation party having observed the process throughout, albeit from a distance.

We hope that by sharing these stories and reflections of these particular martial arts and ritual arts leaders it will inspire others to continue the journey. Further we hope it affirms those individuals who took part in the program and gives Timorese something to celebrate.

Emma Leslie

Chapter One

The Context of Conflict in Timor Leste

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It can be argued that Timor Leste, formerly known as East Timor, really only fully entered into international consciousness as a result of its violent birth as an independent country. From its occupation by Indonesia from 1975 until 1999, along with its previous 400 year history of colonial subjugation under the Portuguese and its suffering under Japanese occupation, there was not much attention made to this small Southeast Asian nation.

Only in the throes of its independence, after a long and brave struggle, did the world awake to the history, tradition, beauty and most of all, potential, of the 21st Century's newest sovereign state.

Now with independence comes nation building. Yet the legacy of years of conflict, aggression and brutality have created an entrenched culture of violence which has to be dealt with if the country is to move towards true and sustainable democracy, replete with a strong constitution, the rule of law, fairness and justice.

The only way to undertake this mammoth task, from a top-down, military style of leadership to a democratic bottom-up development model requires a fundamental paradigm shift. But what exactly are the details that need to be considered?

Paradigm Shifts

Perhaps one of the most significant and frustrating legacies of Timor Leste's history is the organisation of people and communities. From the traditional and cultural infrastructures of a patriarchal system, to more modern political and religious configurations, leadership has always been from the top down. This served well in the organising people against a common enemy, as well as to ensure that community life could function. Whether led by the church or the resistance, complete obedience was called for, especially when it came to creating clandestine networks.

After independence, however, changes became apparent. More and more women came to the fore as a democratic, inclusive nation was emerging. Old structures and loyalties lost their sway and for the first time, freedom at the ballot box was an option. It was only natural then, for expectations to grow: from the right to participate in decision making, to peace, to employment and education to health care and clean water, and even the expectation of becoming materially better off.

However, as the new nation discovered, expectations far outran their materialisation, resulting in a rise of tensions and frustrations. Into this confusing milieu, many sought security in familiar expressions of identity and belonging; in some cases reverting back to previously covert networks and articulations of violence and protest.

In fact, many of the resultant fissures were played out on the national stage: the ongoing personal disputes between President Xanana, Prime Minister Horta and former Prime Minister Alkatiri; as well as the challenge of integrating former disparate guerrillas into a unified national military (F-FDTL) and police (PNTL), alongside an unwelcome Australian and Indonesian presence.

At the local level, high levels of, particularly youth unemployment, unresolved land conflicts (many dating back to 1975, the arrival of

internally displaced people into settled communities, political manipulation and long held prejudices of so-called “east” and “west” identities, all saw outbursts of violence.¹

These different levels of conflict were further complicated by a number of other factors, which included, ambiguity at the highest level in terms of plans and positions; the fatigue and exhaustion after a 24 year struggle; impatience of the slow process of reform and development; tensions between international versus local interventions; the disproportionate emphasis on security vis-à-vis peace building; the Catholic church searching for its own identity; a partisan media with little critique or analysis and the parallel operation of old and new structures.

However, all was not bleak. There were a number of groups and processes that had taken positive steps, including: Sima Malu², Jura Povu³, the Interfaith Working Group⁴ and various community initiatives for peace.

What is therefore apparent – and the grim reality – is that conflict exists at all levels of Timorese society: within and between government, the church, civil society and youth movements. All of which continue to prohibit the shift to people's empowerment and democracy

Therefore, the paradigm shift from subjugation and occupation to peace building will test the resources and capabilities of all involved, especially for those who know no other way except violence. Prejudices, resentment, feelings of suffering, frustration, abandonment, alienation

¹ Action Asia found in one of its analytical reports that the using of “east” and “west” was commonly used to pit one group against another. However it is important to understand that this divide does not refer to East and West Timor, but the geographical or political delineation of east and west within East Timor itself.

According to the doctoral thesis of Dionisio Soares, *Branching from the Trunk: East Timorese Perceptions of Nationalism in Transition*, this rivalry is derived from two chief causes: one, the dispute over who ‘won’ the war, with easterners claiming the major contribution to the resistance, and provoking westerners by labeling them as collaborators or militia; and two, commercial rivalries between traders from the western districts of Bobonaro and Ermera, and traders from the eastern districts of Baucau and Viqueque over market dominance, following an eastern influx into Dili after World War Two and then again after 1999.

² Where government facilitators were prepared to facilitate community levels conflicts.

³ A system to use traditional and cultural practices to resolve community and national conflicts.

⁴ Which brought together middle level religious leaders to work on resolving local level and national level conflicts.

and illegitimacy have to be replaced by positivity, non violence, dialogue, compromise and conciliation. On all this hangs the future of Timor Leste.

Martial Art Groups in Timor Leste

It is dusk and a hundred or so black pyjama-clad youths have gathered on a patch of dust the size of a basketball court on the outskirts of Dili. Standing in tight-rows, they make a pledge of allegiance before spreading out and practicing kicks and punches in the gloom. Shaolin monks these are not. Limbs flail and sweat mingles with dirt, but as they soldier on into the darkness, dimly illuminated by a single light bulb dangling from a wire, there is a tangible spirit of discipline and determination. In a fledgling nation so far defined by poverty and instability, it seems they are not so much venting frustration as grasping for a sense of purpose and self respect.⁵

Thus is one of Timor Leste's largest martial arts groups – *Persuadaraan Setia Hati Terate* (Sacred Heart or PSHT) – described.

In August 2006, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) commissioned a report entitled 'A survey of gangs and youth groups in Dili, Timor Leste' researched and written by James Scambary. While martial arts groups and gangs have long been in existence, this was the first systematic report which analysed and provided details into the nature, size, political affiliations and interests of the various groups across Dili.

The report stated;

Under Portuguese colonial rule, gangs, or 'Moradores' as they were known, were used as a tool of repression, as were gangs and militias throughout Indonesian rule. The post independence period has experienced sporadic but persistent clashes between gangs particularly in the western highlands, Baucau, Viqueque and Dili. A riot in March

⁵ Tom Greenwood, 'Dili's dark art, August 27, 2008

2001 between martial arts groups destroyed most of the houses in Olobai and Boramatan villages in Viqueque. In another notorious incident, attributed to martial arts groups fifty houses were burned down in Ainaro, in August 2004. For much of the last six years gangs have also made parts of the eastern city of Baucau a virtual no go zone after dark, setting up barricades and extorting motorists.⁶

Critically the report raises the interconnection between political parties and the martial arts groups, with Korka aligned to Freitlin and Persuadaraan Setia Hati Terate (PHST) linked to the Social Democratic Party (Partido Social Democratica) and the Democratic Party (Partido Democratico).

Of equal concern was the fact that some martial arts leaders also held senior positions within the military and police. For instance, there was the case of Abilio Massoko, a former resistance leader, who also was a police commander and leader or 'warga' of Persuadaraan Setia Hati Terate. Massoko, also known as Abilio Audian, was arrested for distributing guns during the 2006 tensions.

The link to political parties and the security forces is of particular concern given the size of some of the more notable martial arts groups. For example Persuadaraan Setia Hati Terate, which originated in Indonesia, came to Dili in the early 1980s and boasts some 30,000 members. In 2008, Seti Seti (Seven Seven) claimed 11,000 members and Korka some 20,000 members. The mobilisation of these groups for political or violent ends is therefore very significant in a country with just over a million people in total.

While many martial arts group members claim their allegiance to their group takes precedence over their 'career' identity, this overlap does in fact raise the question of mixed loyalties. It also perfectly illustrates the complexity of the networks fuelling violent conflict in Timor Leste.

⁶ James Scambary 'A survey of gangs and youth groups in Dili, Timor Leste', August 2006, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)

The report went on to categorise the different groups. This categorisation included, disaffected groups with political grievances, martial arts, magic or mystical groups, large bairo based ethnic gangs, and youth groups. However, it is primarily with martial and ritual arts (known in the report as magic or mystical groups) which Action Asia and HAK Association worked with in 2007.

The report also offers some important recommendations for addressing the gang based violence prevalent at the time of publication. These recommendations include covering such issues as youth centres, employment opportunities, a youth fund, greater representation in national governance structures and activities around reconciliation.

Action Asia and the HAK Association, through their own consultations with members of martial and ritual arts groups concluded that more significant and focused work needed to be carried out with key leaders to foster a sea change in attitude. The conclusion is based on the hope that only with a sincere and deep analysis on conflict issues and non violent mobilisation, as well as conflict resolution mechanisms, would group leaders be equipped to best handle frustrations, anxieties and resultant tensions.

Chapter Two

Getting Involved

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In April 2006, violence once again rocked the small nation of Timor Leste. General wisdom states that the outbreak of violence lay in the decision to sack 600 soldiers from the national army of 1400. The soldiers had gone on strike in March in protest at what was seen to be regional favouritism in allocating military promotions and benefits to those from the east of the country. Simmering tensions eventually came to a head in April with a series of riots, street fights and political struggles.

While the final straw might have been the perceived assumption of favouritism, the root of the crisis was firmly entrenched in the painful legacy of the long and violent years of Indonesian occupation, as well as the post independent rivalries involving leading political figures and state institutions.

A few months after the crisis in April 2006, from September that year to the following February, Action Asia conducted a conflict analysis of the situation. Supported by Concern Worldwide – Timor Leste and Oxfam Australia, the analysis was based on several consultative workshops and meetings with different organisations and civil society groups from across the nation.

As workshops were taking place amidst ongoing security concerns owing to outbreaks of violence in different parts of Dili, there was a

palpable air of frustration, fear, anxiety and disillusionment amongst the participants. The “bright new future” that many had envisaged post independence was not to be seen. For this reason, the workshops opened every session with an appreciative enquiry-styled reflection on what Timor Leste had achieved, so as to stave off the growing sense of hopelessness.

In one session entitled, “Remembering what has been achieved since 1999” was able to catalogue the freedom from Indonesian rule, the introduction of free elections, the formation of a government and Constitution, along with the emergence of political parties. Beyond politics, free education and health care, as well a national currency and absence of national debt, were also listed. Increasing confidence in managing their own natural resources, particularly with the petroleum legislation and the involvement of civil society groups in administering income from petroleum, could only be counted as a positive.

For some of the participants, the crucial role of the women’s movement in society’s development, the burgeoning sense of national unity and the increasing opportunities for personal growth were all seen as achievements. Given that all these achievements had been acquired in such a short period of time, as pointed out by the facilitators from Action Asia, was probably the greatest source of optimism.

Building upon this positive foundation stone, participants were then asked to focus more particularly on Timor Leste in 2006 and work at identifying more specifically the conflicts that had arisen.

On the basis on these and other analyses sessions, Action Asia was able to make the following recommendations in terms of initiatives aimed at strengthening existing structures and building capacity amongst key people. These included:

- In-depth courses for key people in mid-level management positions within civil society, religious, government, political groups, for a four to six week period over the course of a

year, at which time focus would be on peace building and conflict transformation approaches as a means of building trust, improving dialogue and developing capacity.

- Peace Journalism for local editors and journalists highlighting the difference between war correspondence and journalism in a non-war scenario; the teaching of methodologies in how not to alleviate tensions with rhetoric and how to strengthen the peace process.
- Training for community facilitators in the Simu Malu process including developing skills in facilitation, mediation, handling dialogue, basic trauma healing, deep listening, summarising, paraphrasing and re-framing issues in restorative justice, reconciliation and identity.
- A conference for police and government personnel, along with members from Civil Society groups to focus on Community Policing and Community Security Forums. Based on the model from South Africa, a one to two day conference could be held with working group sessions applying the ideals to a local context. Resource people would include experts from South Africa.
- The formation of a Strategy and Analysis Group which would develop, facilitate and support groups of intermediaries to analyse and strategise together.
- Invite world renowned peace mediator, Johan Galtung, to meet with top level government and political leaders and discuss varying Models of Reconciliation and Mediation.
- Introducing the concept of conflict analysis and peace building methodologies for NGOs.

While many of these were taken up by different groups, Action Asia felt that the most pressing need was to work with leading martial and ritual arts groups and their leaders. This was because, very often, they were at the frontline of the ongoing violence across Dili. As a result, Action Asia proposed a series of Conflict Analysis and Active Non-

violence workshops for gang leaders and their members, together with its partners.

Partner for Peace: HAK Association, Timor Leste

When Action Asia works in any country in the Asian region, it always identifies local organization(s) as partners in implementing peace initiatives. The local partners become the forefront in executing necessary tasks, linking and following with individuals or groups who are involved in the program. It is important to trust the local organization in carrying out necessary work while guiding them with essential skills as much as they need. In Timor Leste for the martial arts work, that trusted partner has primarily been HAK Association.⁷

HAK Association (Hukum - Law, Hak Asasi - Basic Rights, and Keadilan - Justice) is an NGO in East Timor that works to realize a Timorese society that is self-sufficient, open, and democratic in a social order based on popular sovereignty. It began as a legal aid office founded in 1996 by East Timor activists during the Indonesian occupation to give legal aid to political detainees who struggled for independence. In 1997, it became the Law, Basic Rights, and Justice Foundation (HAK) and formally turned into HAK Association in 2002.

During the occupation, HAK sought to open the eyes of the international community regarding human rights abuses perpetrated by those in power during the Indonesian occupation. When East Timor regained its independence, it worked to realize social and national life that guarantees respect and fulfils the human rights of all people.

HAK works at three levels, namely national policy formation, enforcement of human rights, and people's empowerment. Its work is value-based, the key ones being: humanity, equality, justice on behalf of the people, and democracy based on solidarity, participation, freedom, and responsibility.

⁷ Action Asia has also worked with FONGTIL (the NGO Forum) on capacity building for conflict transformation and peace building especially for District Liason Officers and NGO leaders.

HAK Association has over many years built close relationships with the leaders of martial arts and has on occasion been called upon to mediate in disputes between them, or help to clarify information about those involved. To build on this relationship and to create an opportunity for these groups to reflect more deeply on the situation, Action Asia and HAK Association agreed to collaborate to implement the peacebuilding initiative for martial and ritual arts groups in East Timor.

Partner for Peace - Action Asia

ACTION Asia is network of individuals and organizations in the Asia continent committed to action for conflict transformation through the sharing of skills, knowledge, experiences and resources. ACTION Asia carries a vision of a world of justice and peace, where basic needs are met and dignity and human rights are respected.

Action Asia aims to:

- To generate a pool of resources for peace in our organizations and communities.
- To create a space for reflection and sharing of information, resources, experiences and learning.
- To nurture and energize one another in a supportive network and to promote linkages and solidarity with others working on conflict transformation.
- To address conflict at different levels, through non-violent means and promote good governance.
- To contextualize work on conflict transformation in the region.

Action Asia has agreed models, principles and methodologies that inform all its interventions. These are therefore applied to the program as a whole. A key principle is that Action Asia intervenes in response to requests from local peace organizations and networks, often activated by individuals who are already members, or familiar with, Action Asia. It is important that leaders are supportive to enable

training and initiatives to become on-going action focused processes. Interventions are therefore only undertaken if people in that country want and agree to the rationale and need for the work and its ethos. Action Asia works alongside its local partners in giving on-going support and capacity development as requested.

The Model as the Basis for Interventions

As an active intervention in a context characterized by conflict, all initiatives will be informed by the following understanding of an effective approach. Each phase will more often than not overlap with the next and will take account of the different levels.

- Analysis of the situation, relationships, power, attitudes, behaviors, root causes, links between the levels to gain better understanding.
- Identifying entry points and strategizing options.
- Taking action to transform situations of injustice and violence into positive outcomes.
- Reflecting on the outcomes of these actions, recording, disseminating and sharing the learning with others.
- Building in learning to future analysis, strategies, actions and reflection.

Planning needs to be flexible to take account of the rapidly changing context and to capitalize on opportunities arising. Therefore more detailed planning will continue to be built in along the way to take account of others' further input and needs, as they arise through the program.

Key Methodologies of Action Asia's Program Interventions

- Long Term Approach: When a culture of violence has taken root, action to move towards a culture of peace is necessarily a long-term process. It takes time to have lasting impact and attempts to speed-up the process are likely to have severely

negative effects on quality and long-term impacts. Thus once Action Asia prioritizes a particular situation it envisages a long term accompaniment of as much as 25 – 50 years, shaped by the needs and analysis of local partners and individual network members.

- **Linking Analysis to Program Strategies:** Program initiatives need to be based on thorough, ongoing analysis and understanding of the dynamics and complexities of the context. Action Asia prioritizes the analysis of its local partners and network members but also relies on other sources to inform its perspective.
- **Holistic and Integrated:** This includes linking the levels, initiatives and integrating cross-cutting themes and issues to address different aspects of development and the causes of conflict. Root causes of conflict must inform the actions; ie structural and systematic causes are important, as are attitudes and behaviors
- **Challenging:** Recognizing fundamental power imbalances as a root cause of conflicts including economic inequalities and different access to power structures. Initiatives set out to challenge these both in the broader context as well as within ourselves. This approach recognizes and challenges individuals to bring about personal change in attitudes and behaviors as the starting point to bringing about effective change in their own context.
- **People Centered and Participatory:** Valuing unique contributions of unique individuals, whilst involving representatives from all affected groups and responding to stated needs. Giving a voice to people – the communities to the highest level - whilst linking diversities.
- **Learning and Reflecting:** Everything we do is a source of learning. Learning from past experiences is a valuable tool in deciding on future actions and initiatives with unintended outcomes often being an excellent source of learning. Sharing

the learning can assist others in similar situations and enable further learning for ourselves. Monitoring and evaluating are an integral part of the learning process.

- **Process-Oriented:** Development, peacebuilding and conflict transformation are ongoing processes rather than a final end point. Development, as change, is on-going. Disagreements will always exist and conflict is seen as important to challenge us and inspires creativity in solving problems and finding solutions. Sustainable processes are required to enable us to deal constructively and positively with situations as they arise and, before they become violent.

Most importantly, any initiative and interactions between all those involved, will reflect the values, approaches and practices it is endeavouring to promote.

Partner for Peace – Aksyon Para sa Kapayapaan at Katarungan (AKKAPKA), Philippines

AKKAPKA stands for “the radical response to violence: the power of truth, the power of love, the power of justice.” AKKAPKA is a non-governmental organization that promotes and supports active non-violence as an alternative expression of the Filipino people’s resistance to an unjust, repressive, exploitative and dehumanizing system.

AKKAPKA is an information bank — collecting, processing and disseminating information — on the efforts of peacemaking and active non-violence. Through training programs on Gospel values, key concepts and practical applications of active non-violence for individuals and organizations, AKKAPKA serves as a catalyst in the development of such a movement. It believes that the active non-violent movement must grow “if the country is to prevent further ideological polarization of our people; avert a bloody fratricide; heal the wounds inflicted on our nation by the deposed repressive

regime.” Active non-violence, according to AKKAPKA, is the only authentic avenue if there is to be absolute respect for the human person, without labelling him or her as a soldier, communist, rightist or leftist.

AKKAPKA open their base communities for the Martial Arts leaders to experience peace and community building processes at a very local level. This interaction also gave the participants the chance to visit Bilibid prison, Manila's notorious maximum security prison.

Partner for Peace – Balay Mindanao, Philippines

Balay Mindanaw Foundation Inc. (BMFI) is a Mindanao-based and Mindanao-focused Philippine NGO. BMFI's work and its people articulate a sense of fierce pride for Mindanao and a passion for transforming this poorest and most conflict-torn of the country's regions into a “balay”, a true home for its peoples – Christians, Muslims and Lumads, indigenous peoples of Mindanao.

It is a non-stock, non-profit foundation primarily engaged in peace-building, promoting sustainable integrated area development, developing the mechanisms and technology for democratic participation of peoples and communities in local governance and facilitating agrarian reform implementation. It was registered with the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on May 8, 1996.

BMFI's mission statement reads: Helping Build Empowered Sustainable Communities. Helping Build Peace in Mindanaw as it pursues its vision of Kaangayan, Kalambuan, Kalinaw sa Mindanaw, sa Pilipinas, sa Kalibutan (Equality, Development, Peace for Mindanao, for the Philippines and for the World). Its peace-building and development work in the rural areas of Mindanao are pursued through principled partnerships with the people's organizations, non-governmental organizations, local government units, government agencies and other sectors towards the building of a Mindanao which is truly a home

("balay" and "banay") for its tripeople - the Moros, the Lumads (Indigenous Peoples) and the settlers.

BMFI acts as the Mediator and Independent Secretariat of the Peace Process between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa sa Mindanao (RPM-M), a Mindanao-based revolutionary group, giving the guest from Timor Leste a unique opportunity to engage with military and political actors involved in mediation and peace processes.

Partners for Peace: American Friends Service Committee, Oxfam Australia, Concern Timor Leste and Trocaire Ireland

Throughout the program a number of key international organisations accompanied the process financially and emotionally. Without their contribution and willingness to take a risk on a politicised and



potentially violent interaction by martial arts groups, the significant steps taken would not have been possible. Further to the credit of these four international agencies, they maintained the necessary high degree of confidentiality required in the early stages. This put the relevant desk officers and personnel in challenging positions, trying to explain to their headquarters the nature and sensitivity of the program; yet this element was critical to the success of the process.



Chapter Three

Building Trust and Peace

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The first step on the road to peace is conflict resolution. And that one step begins with civic education. If peace is to be sustainable in Timor Leste, then education is a must. There are many within the country who are unable to identify their own roles in the conflict and project themselves as potential peace builders. Education is necessary for eyes to be opened and change to begin.

Civic education will focus on the power of the people to unify and demand more from their leaders. It will expose deep rooted prejudices and resistance. Civic education will also clarify the subtle use of manipulation and exploitation to achieve one's own end, just as it has the potential to inspire, through transformation and conscientisation, the possibility of an individual's strength and ability as builder and keeper of the peace.

Civic education will provide the necessary tools, knowledge and skills to deal positively with conflicts, without resorting to violence. This will necessitate a thorough analysis of the situation to identify proactive entry points and strategies in taking action to build trust across divides, with people coming together as part of a process towards positive change.

Given the influence of martial arts groups in the country, and their association with the violence of 2006, this is the entry point deemed most useful through which to build peace and trust.

Trust Building for Martial and Ritual Arts Groups in Timor Leste

The idea behind this capacity-building programme was to provide the necessary tools to analyse and respond effectively to conflict situations and to identify political manipulation, while also learning strategies of non violence to address frustration and conflict.

The programme provided the space for martial arts leaders to come together – and through learning, planning and strategising – to build strong relationships which could then depend on communication, rather than force, to resolve conflicts and misunderstandings.

Strategically, the programme aimed at establishing a sustained network of martial and ritual arts leaders as change agents and responsive citizens of the country. It contained the following primary objectives:

- provide knowledge and skills in analysing current and potential conflicts in society and identify strategies in addressing them
- build trust and relationships among martial and ritual arts leaders
- provide an avenue for participants to form their own networks and identify strategic activities which they wish to undertake and sustain

The format of the programme was rather strict. It was made clear to the participants that the same people should commit themselves to finish up all the four modules of the process training which was based on progressive learning and deepening trust building. No proxies or substitutions would be allowed as this would dilute the entire point of individualised development and transformation.

The programme encompassed four modules. Three of the modules were five days in length and involved a combination of Timorese and Asian trainers facilitating a process focused on conflict analysis, conflict handling, non-violence skills training and action planning. A fourth module (offered as the third module in the sequence) took the entire group to the Philippines to visit a variety of peace building initiatives including work with gangs in Manila, and to witness a political mediation processes in Mindanao.

The modular trainings were structured as follows:

Module 1: Making Sense of Conflict and Social Change through Non-violence (5 days):

Understanding conflict, violence and peace; practical tools in conflict analysis and application into own contexts; active non-violence; trust and relationship building

Module 2: Skills Development in Preventing, Managing and Resolving Conflicts (5 days)

Personal conflict styles; communication and listening skills; negotiation and mediation; joint problem solving; methods of non-violent action

Module 3: Exposure Visit to the Philippines – (10 days)

A visit to the Philippine national penitentiary maximum security compound and dialogue with inmate members of a non-violence community inside the prison; 'Dialogue of Life' with community members, including street gangs and ex-prisoners, of – Aksyon Para sa Kapayapaan at Katarungan (AKKAPKA), a non-violent organisation that was active during People Power Revolution; visits to various local communities in Mindanao; visits and dialogue with military officials and non-state armed actors



Module 4: Building Strategies and Networking – (5 days)

Dealing with issues of nationalism and racism; identity and conflict; prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping; identifying and planning long term strategies for intervention; networking

The Participants

The group was made up of seventeen group leaders, representing nine different martial and ritual arts groups. There were mostly two members from each group, one more senior and one junior. The senior person was either the highest rank person in the group or the second in command. Unfortunately, Seven Seven, a key group in the martial arts landscape of Timor Leste, was not able to attend as it was engaged in political discussions. However a senior leader in Seven Seven did attend some of the social functions of the programme later in its implementation, to show his solidarity for the activity.

It was evident throughout the workshop that the negative image of martial arts leaders weighed heavily on them. Most of them saw themselves as activists serving their country in the pursuit of justice.

Groups represented were:
Kera Sakti
KEMPO
PADJAJARAN
THS THM
TAEKWONDO
Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate (PSHT)
Five Five
SAGAS DE CRISTO
Colimau 2000
Korka
Kungfu Master

Owing to culture, history, and possibly religious teaching, they had strong convictions about standing up against injustice and did not see that the use of violence was an antithesis to justice.

The Methodology - training as an intervention

Training workshops for peace building have a unique component to them: they become a direct intervention into the conflict itself. Training workshops are, in fact, a dialogue between conflicting partners, and therefore, careful selection and preparation of the participants is critical.

It is not a matter of the transfer of skills, but a facilitation of the inherent dynamics, where participants use a range of tools, frameworks and inputs to stimulate their own reflections, analysis and perception of the violent conflict in which they themselves have been engaged.

Time is required to build trust and relationships, while also learning how to explore other examples of conflict. One important part of the process is the projection of self into other contexts. That is, to allow



participants to analyse similar situations while surreptitiously drawing parallels to their own reality.

While this approach is clear, facilitators and trainers need to be explicit about the intention of the workshop so participants do not feel that their context or circumstances might be made peripheral. With an open ended agenda like this, there are bound to be both positive and negative reactions, either building up or razing expectations and trust.

Peace trainers and facilitators also need to be open about their own stand in the process. Can they be fully neutral? The fact of the matter is that while they might empathise, their allegiance is firmly on the side of non-violence and they do not condone violence as a legitimate or justified method of conflict resolution. Consequently ground rules are critical when it comes to discussing issues and documenting sharing sessions in order that the boundaries of confidentiality are clear.

The workshop also controlled outside observation, particularly from funding partners or other interested parties to the conflict, as much as possible. Building trust and relationships needed to be carried out in an environment that was comfortable – and secure – for the participants without a constant flux of visitors.

Trust-Building: The Essential Component

The fundamental start of the training was building up trust. This had to be achieved on several different levels, most particularly when individual participants had a history of hostility with others in the room. Building trust was also essential between all the participants and the organisers.

Participants had to feel secure that information was not being gathered to use against them at a later point. They were particularly concerned that nothing would be reported back to the government or international defence forces, especially Australian troops. Their wariness seemed to be confirmed when there was a visit from the Australian Defence Forces based on a 'tip off' that there was a martial arts convention of some hundreds of people going on.

For the participants, but for the facilitators as well, the visit provided a graphic illustration of what it meant to be constantly under surveillance, exacerbating the feelings of hopelessness and frustration.

By the third day of the first module, participants refused to proceed on analysing conflict situations between martial and/or ritual arts groups. Their preference was to assess conflict situations outside of their own.

The question was then asked why the reluctance? Their responses were as follows:

- The culture of martial arts groups – and also within the wider context of Timorese society – to do what the leaders demand
- Not feeling safe enough to exchange sensitive issues with others
- Fear of revealing information that could be used against them, especially with the already negative connotations surrounding them

This required the training team to be as transparent as possible about their motivation, agenda and the history of the project. This was not easy to achieve given that the initial reaction was 'how could a four week programme, including a visit to the Philippines, be for us?'

The participants believed that more people would be added to the mix and that in the end, only a few chosen ones would make the trip to the Philippines. They were unsure as to whether people would think the trip to the Philippines was to buy weapons and to make contact with rebel groups. But most of all, they were unconvinced that there had been so much time, effort and resources invested in them as persons.

At the end of the course, during the final evaluation, all those who participated were asked how and when they began to trust not only each other, but also the organisers.

Their responses are listed below:

- *On the first night of our training we chose who to sleep within the room. Knowing Emma as Australian, we suspected when the Australian forces came to our training venue. We were worried we were going to be arrested. We suspected our shadows even during the struggle. (Jose Cardoso, KORK)*
- *I started to trust you when you helped us and protected us from the Australian army, because then I thought the Australian force was there to arrest us. I thought then Action Asia just works together with the Australian army to gather us and arrest us. Action Asia works with HAK, so I feel good about that. During the first module, I still suspected my eastern friends. I asked my friend to sleep on the bed and I slept on the floor, so if they came to kill us, we would know. The team building exercises, especially the 'electric fence', were really helpful. It made us feel unified and we started to feel comfortable with each other. (Julio da Silva Salsinha, Kung Fu Master)*
- *During the first module, we did not speak freely. When we did our conflict analysis, we started to open up, and spoke to each*

other about our thoughts and we started to face and understand the reality. (Isolino Vaz de Alegria, Kera Sakti)

- *First we had doubts about each other but when we came to the third module (exposure visit to the Philippines) we started to see each other as one. If it was not because of HAK we might not have become friendly to each other.*
- *We never participated in government or other programmes, but because it was HAK, we joined in. We trust Action Asia because of HAK. I like Action Asia because the programme is continuous, unlike others which are just one-offs, one meeting, one seminar and it's over. Action Asia has carried us along continually from the beginning until the end. (Ozorio Leque, Colimao 2000)*

One of the most poignant parts of the programme was the screening of the Gandhi video which brought deeply emotional reactions. Some cried as protestors were beaten and others left the room. As they watched the Salt March where Indians were beaten by soldiers and did not retaliate, they called out saying this was unacceptable and that people should fight back.

Participants discussed the possibility of creating a 'peace martial arts' network. It was evident that this was a step too soon, and that they need more time, trust, understanding of each other and concepts before taking such a step. It was agreed to discuss this idea again after module three.

Applying Learning between Modules

An important part of this process training was the challenge to make practical what the participants had learned in the class. The purpose was for those present to be able to reflect on the successes and failures of their experience and allow for follow-up discussions. It was also hoped that this would serve as a motivator and contribute towards the building up of a support system between each of the members.

Neutrality is more dangerous but it is necessary

I have identified that 60 – 70 per cent of the problems we have are a result of internal conflicts within our own organisations. I now realise that many of our members joined our group as a kind of refuge or shield, or as a vehicle for seeking revenge for personal vendettas.

For example we have one member, one of our coordinators who is ex-Falantil. His father was killed during the resistance by a man who is now in the police force. He was trying to use our group to kill that man. This is a personal problem which should not be part of our group dynamics.

Since I joined this peace and conflict training, I started to teach my members to take responsibility for their own actions. Previously, when a conflict came up, I would listen only to my members. Now I go to consult with leaders of other groups. This is very important and necessary. It is also a huge risk for me, as my group start to doubt my loyalty. It is very hard to be neutral when I am the leader of my group.

During a recent incident, I did not go to the site immediately. In the past I would go straight to the place, but now I waited for the other martial arts leaders to go together with me, so we could solve the



problem jointly. Our members want to react and retaliate, but instead I went to the police and reported the suspect. If I had followed the suggestion of my members, probably I would be killed too.

In this way I think transparency and trust are crucial. It also takes courage to do this, and it's very risky.

Realising the power of influence

After module one, I also managed to do something. I was called to a conflict which also affected me as it involved my group members. On the surface it looked like two communities fighting, but actually it was a group of teenagers. I can describe this as typical teenage violence.

At 1:00 in the morning, the teenagers got drunk and started beating each other up. The next night they repeated their actions. I went there and asked my members to return to their homes. Then the police taskforce came and intervened. I went to speak to the community leaders from each of the communities affected. Together they made a statement to say what had happened and to show they were not in conflict with each other. Then I called those young people to come back and reconcile with each other. I encouraged them to solve their personal problem now, rather than postponing it. I believe if they delayed it, they would collect other members together to retaliate against one another. I also explained that in fact no one was right or wrong; they simply needed to agree to stop fighting each other. Now the situation is normalised.

Building Peace from Home

In my community children swear a lot. I noticed that all the swearing ends up causing conflict. That results in parental involvement and then more and more people interfere until the whole community is in conflict. And all this because of children swearing!

So I made a deal with the children that there would be no swearing

within a 50-metre radius of the centre of our community. If children were caught swearing they would be flicked on the ear or given something bitter to eat. This worked so well that we all agreed to expand it a further 50 meters and so on.

I also found that women in the community seem to have a lot of time to gossip and spread rumours. So to prevent rumours from starting within my own home, I started buying my wife books to read. Now she has read many books and has good stories and jokes to tell, so all the children in our 'bairio' come to hear her tell stories and jokes.

Many people have asked me to be godfather to their children because of this – what I can see as leadership. I have even heard a new rumour which says our family is the happiest!

My wife and I have also started a new way of handling our own conflicts. In the past, when we were angry with each other, we used to throw things. Now we stopped throwing things and we go inside the house and talk about the problem until we can make some agreement and understand each other.

Finally there was a conflict with our MA group. A Korean Master wanted to have our members take certain exams. He also wanted to teach us certain aspects of the art. Many of our leaders and teachers were not happy and did not agree. I convinced them to allow the Master to teach his way, and then we would teach those areas not covered by him. Everyone was happy with this compromise.

Past Conflicts

In August 2003, Torka and 5-5 joined together to fight against us (KORKA). Many houses were burned during that conflict. After module one training, I talked to our members about trying to find ways to solve that problem. In three districts our members were facing this conflict, so we started to teach them how to avoid a violent response.

On January 3, 2008 we established a Commission to investigate and review the previous conflicts. Commission members went to meet with the victims' family. We submitted a funding proposal to some NGOs and to the government for these activities. We met with government officials, parliamentarians and political party members to learn their perspective on the conflict and to find out more what happened.

After the investigation we held a mass. Three martial arts groups attended, and we invited the leaders of all martial arts groups. During the mass we dug a hole in the ground and burned coals. Each member buried a piece of coal into the hole, and then we covered the coals with dirt to symbolise that our conflict was finished.

Now we will go on training our members in peace building. To date we have not yet been able to fully implement all we learned but we are trying.

Peace Builders as Traitors and Cowards

After our training we want to work for peace, but our members do not want this. We are very scared of being called cowards. They say we are trying to take the side of our enemies. We did try to negotiate but when it became too difficult, we simply went to the police. We need more input – how can we come up with the solutions?

We found out that problems are often caused by our own members going to other neighbourhoods and creating conflicts. We decided it would be good for them to have more activities to do. So we created a focal point for proposals, and asked members to propose activities they would like to do. We have submitted those proposals for funding and are now implementing them.

Working and strengthening the police force

As a member of a martial arts group and as a high school teacher, I gathered my students together and told them they could not bring

their martial arts conflicts into the school. This was my first step.

Then after the training, shots were fired in our community by the military forces. We managed to go and pacify the mob. We talked straight with their leaders. And then we talked with the police who were not being professional but firing indiscriminately. We told them not to shoot, and requested them to return to their station. We also sent the young people home. We helped the victim of the violence to go to Dili to get medical care. Then we went back to meet with the police and convince them that a proper investigation into the incident was necessary, which also required the publishing of their findings for everyone to see. We also went to meet the perpetrators of this violence and requested them to surrender to the police, which they did.

After that, we decided to hold more positive activities. We organised an event with Japanese martial arts teachers and representatives from all the groups. We did not have money so we simply gathered the money ourselves.

Finally out of this event we were able to put together a team to go to the South East Asian Games and participate in the Kempo events. It was fantastic for us to see other countries and to participate. We won a gold and silver medal there and it made the young people feel very good. My message to all martial arts leaders is to participate in regional and international events as much as possible. Simply participate!

Negotiating to End the Spiral of Violence

In our community a small boy was throwing rocks onto the roof of people's houses. It happened that the house he was throwing rocks onto was a member of the 7-7 martial arts group. That boy came from my community which is predominantly PSHT. So the house owner assumed this was an attack of PSHT on him, and therefore on 7-7. Things got out of hand very quickly.

I quickly tried to meet with the 7-7 leader but he refused. So we all started throwing rocks at each other. 7-7 members came to our community and burned down seven houses and three kiosks. My community retaliated, which resulted in the death of one person. This conflict happened over a period of about four to five months.

After this incident I decided to investigate the root causes of this problem, as I had learned from our training. This is when I discovered the story of the young boy who had been throwing rocks out of boredom. I found a way to send a message to the leader of 7-7 and asked if he would meet me at the priest's house so we could talk about the problem. The priest helped to provide a neutral place for us to meet in his house. The two of us talked privately and together tried to identify the root cause of the problem, and the story of the conflict. We agreed we had to do something, as the economical activities of each community had stopped because of the violence.

We agreed that the person who had killed the man should be reported to the police. We agreed to do this together. Then the 7-7 leader told his people to come to the main road which serves as the main boundary between the two communities. I also told my people to come to the other side of the road. All the community members came together and we told them what had happened: that so much violence stemmed simply from a misunderstanding. That was the day the conflict ended.

From this experience I learned how powerful rumours are and what happens when we cannot trust each other. I also saw that the ones who started the problem in the first place, went home to rest and were not bothered by the violence; the others who were not affected were the ones who carried the torches to burn the houses. Throughout this experience I felt frustrated. I felt trapped. Others saw me as involved even though I was not.

Helping fellow students

There was a conflict between students in my school due to a misunderstanding. The conflict turned to violence and the students ended up hurting each other. As a student leader, and also having the experience of conflict analysis, I intervened in the situation and used the "ABC triangle" to analyse the situation with both groups. The analysis has helped them to better understand and acknowledge that fault lay on both sides. This realisation has led to a resolution of conflict and the rebuilding of relationships. Since then, I have earned the respect of both groups.

A rumour that led to violent conflict

This conflict that happened in our village on 21 November 2009 started between two boys who are studying in the same school. They both have elder brothers who belong to two different martial arts groups. One of the boys who is living in the IDP camp has been discriminated against by the other which ended up in a fight. When the boys returned home later, both of them reported the incident to their older brothers. The brother of the one whom felt aggrieved went to the other boys' house and shouted at them for insulting his brother, thus escalating the provocation leading to violence. There was also a rumour that a member of one martial arts group was killed in the incident. I interceded by trying to convince all parties involved not to believe in rumours, that it is not a fight between 7-7 and PSHT but only between two young boys. I gave them correct information and the police is handling the situation better now. This experience made me practice to talk to people how wrong information and assumption can lead to a violent conflict.

Dialogue is the lightest and most effective approach in conflict resolution

Land belonging to my father had been used by people in the community to play football. Thinking that this land belonged to

the government, one family started putting up a house. They also put up a fence preventing passage at the front area of my parents' house. Annoyed by this, my father closed the back part of the house so that the entire neighbourhood could not use the road. Seeing the situation, I talked to my father and convinced him not to punish all the neighbours for what one family has done. I further encouraged my father to take the case to the village chief. After carefully studying all the documents, the village chief announced a decision that the land belonged to my father. With my help, a dialogue took place between my father and our neighbour. An agreement was reached that my father will allow the neighbour to use the land and finish their house, as building their house could prevent dust coming into my parents' house. The neighbour agreed to destroy the fence he built to let other people use the road.

Aborted retaliation

There was a conflict between PSHT and Padjajaran in the Delta two weeks after our module one training. PSHT started the conflict and a member of Padjajaran tried to pacify the situation, but he was stabbed. Because of what I had learned from the training, I advised Padjajaran members (my own group) not to retaliate. I invited them to analyse the situation with me and examine the root causes of the conflict. I used two other analysis tools and eventually I was able to invite representatives from both groups for a dialogue. In the end we were able to solve the conflict and the parties involved owned up to their shortcomings.

Ending the conflict between two communities

After learning negotiation and mediation skills from module two, my colleagues and I in the HAK Association mediated and facilitated dialogues in Ainaro district as well as in other districts. One particular conflict involved youth groups in two different Sucos, burning houses that resulted in the villagers living in fear. No one

wanted to go to court. Our team gathered the communities from both villages and tried to explore with them the causes of the problem. Using joint problem solving strategy we let them tell their versions of the conflict respectively, guided them on reaching solutions to their problem and ended up writing an agreement that they willingly signed. It took us two days to finally reach a solution. We invited the community police commander to join in this dialogue. The people from both communities promised to end the conflict and they slaughtered a buffalo to celebrate a ritual of resolution and reconciliation. This conflict took place in December 2008 and we did the mediation just recently (2nd and 3rd weeks of April 2009). The two communities promised to have another celebration of peace on 16 May. We are happy that our programme is succeeding and we are working with police officers for peace in the communities.

Helping resolve disputes between siblings

I practiced my skills on mediation and dialogue between my brother and sister. My younger brother just graduated from secondary school and my father wanted him to continue his studies in Dili. My older sister however said that the father did not say so; she insisted that my younger brother will only study in Ainaro district and not in the capital city, Dili. My younger brother took a machete and ran after my sister; he was very angry and cut my sister's foot. Weeks after my sister went to Dili for her studies and was followed later my brother but they did not speak to each other. My brother asked for my help to mediate. I asked him first if he's willing to apologise and reconcile. I was able to convince my sister to meet my brother. He even cried, and on 10 April 2009 my entire family had dinner together for a celebration. My brother used his savings to buy a necklace (a traditional stone) and offered this to my sister, and in return she gave a scarf as a symbol of acceptance. My brother was on his knees while giving the necklace.

Traditional approach in resolving conflict

On one occasion it was reported to me that one of our members who was drunk at a party pulled a woman and forced her to dance with him. I decided to use traditional ways to address this problem. We summoned our member and together with the local leaders in the community, we reprimanded him. He apologised to the woman, gave her one goat, a case of beer and some money as a symbol of reparation. She gave the man back a scarf to signify the acceptance of his apology. We have similar traditional ways like this in settling disputes and we want to use them in our communities.

Building bridges between martial arts groups

I was personally involved in dialogues in three villages in Vequeque district. The local leaders closed the market in that district because it became the venue for martial arts groups involved in violent conflicts. One martial arts member had already been killed. Yet the community people were not in favour of that decision. When they invited me to intercede, I told them I was not representing my martial arts group (Kera Sakti), but I am joining the process as a resource person in the dialogue – that I was representing a conflict transformation group. I gave suggestions and recommendations and the communities accepted them. I was able to convince the local leaders to reopen the market as it was significantly affecting the livelihood and the daily lives of many people. I further suggested to the martial arts groups that they should go to the market but should refrain from wearing their group's signs or symbols. After three months, the market reopened again. I showed them some of our pictures taken during our visit to the Philippines where they saw me together with their own group leaders. Then they believed we were no longer enemies. They come to realise that the leaders of some martial arts groups were now working together for good. Our new network has now made a name and has a good reputation!

Leading a colleague to a right path

I was working in a discotheque and one of my younger (MA) brothers together with his friends came to our place and got drunk. After getting drunk, he got into a fight and became belligerent. The cause is usually about women. They ask for a fight against another gang. They do this to disrupt the bar's operation, and because of my presence, they think I will protect them. My brother asked me why I didn't make any move and did not protect them and said that I am not his friend anymore and that I'm siding with the enemy. I knew they are guilty so I did not support them. I told them to go home because I might lose my job. When we went back to our village he did not like me anymore, he considered me his opponent. Actually, he is a good person when he is not drunk. I explained to him that I do not support his liking of getting into fights every time he gets drunk and I continued to give him good advice. He slowly started to understand my position and he began to like me again. Unfortunately, one day the Portuguese police arrived in our village and arrested him and his friends. It is a cultural problem and has been a practice among many martial arts that the group must support its members no matter what. But then I realised from our training that "a fire could not put out a fire!" Hence, it is very important that HAK and Action Asia organised this kind of training so that we can minimise the harm people do to each other.

The Challenge of Transforming Our Own Martial Arts Group

As expected, participants faced different levels of challenges:

- inner struggle within oneself – from a culture of violence to the practice of non-violence, a paradigm shift which they admitted could be an ongoing struggle
- conflicting leadership styles with fellow members in each respective organisation – dialogue instead of retaliation whenever fighting or clashes occurred; empathy and understanding the 'other', instead of supporting fellow

members even if they are wrong; the challenge of passing on to their members what they learned from the training

- How to sustain the network of different martial and ritual arts as leaders prove to the public that they can be effective agents of change for the country
- The practical difficulties faced by members as they undertake the training

A real challenge

Our organisational structure is hierarchical and monarchical and we lack an effective communication system within our group. As we differ in our ideas, I discussed this concern with the other leaders. Some leaders and members now see me as a “challenge” to the organisation, a threat to what they want. I shared with my members all the experiences I’ve gone through in these trainings. There are still internal problems and they can only look at the internal structure of our organisation, rather than cross-organisational cooperation. I discussed this issue with them, but my ideas always differ from theirs.

When I started this training, I was cautious because some of our members stopped being friendly with me. However, I think fighting for peace is a worthy cause and it is more important. I do not want to be a dictator. However, if members of our group commit wrong things I will warn them verbally and if they still continue I will punish them. If they still do not stop doing it I’ll give up on them and if they get into trouble on the street and call for help, I will not help them until they learn their lesson. We have to obey our martial arts doctrine to have good discipline. I also need to confront other leaders in my organisation who support bad behaviour. I need to show them that I am doing this in order to improve our martial arts group. It is important to address the problems throughout our organisational structure, especially with leaders at the community level.

I also have the same experience because I am senior in my organisation. What I do is just to calm them down. Some don't like it and say they do not want to join peace activities anymore. In attending this training I learned to know about my mistakes. We have sentiments and fear about the east/west conflict, yet the positive change is that the training helps us to understand things better. Now we can talk to each other – among martial arts groups – when we have problems. That is why conflicts between martial arts groups have gone down with less people getting involved in violence. Now I know how to settle our problems peacefully.

I apply what I have learned from this training and some members in my organisation neither understand nor like it. When I attend this course my rank was not so high in the organisation, so I said to them that if they wanted to lower my rank, it didn't matter much to me but I will continue to talk about what I have learned from the course. Yet some of our members like it and asked me to attend more trainings so they can learn from me. They also want to encourage female members to attend the training too.

The Trust Building continues in the Philippines

The idea to take the participants to the Philippines for a ten day exposure visit was three fold:

- to teach participants how to analyse current and potential conflicts and provide them with the tools to find coping and dealing strategies
- to build trust and partnerships between the leaders of martial arts and ritual arts
- to provide a platform for participants to form their own network and identification strategies in the hopes of building a sustainable future.

The key strategic goal was to establish a sustained network of martial arts and ritual arts leaders as catalysts for change and as responsible citizens of the country.

The exposure visit to Manila and Mindanao included:

- visits to museums and historical sites in Metro Manila, including the People Power EDSA Shrine and Fort Santiago
- a one-day visit at the maximum security compound of the National Bilibid Prison to dialogue with inmates who have undergone training on non-violence and who formed themselves into a base group to give witness to the power of non-violence, including inmates on death row
- exchanges with representatives of different base groups from AKKAPKA, an organisation espousing non-violence as a way of life and as a means for social change;
- learning and sharing experiences with Balay Mindanao and their affiliate peace communities, including local government officials and tribal leaders;
- to learn about the negotiation process between the Philippine Government and the Revolutionary Workers' Party of Mindanao (RPM-M)-M and, to have a sharing session with representatives of both parties; and,
- to expose participants to a different conflict affected area in Lanao Province and visit with military officials who have been doing peace building work.

Reflection on the Philippines Trip by Ozorio Leque, Colimao 2000

Both countries were colonised by three different powers: the Philippines by the Spanish, the American and the Japanese, with Timor Leste was colonised by Portuguese, Japan and Indonesia.

The similarity of independence struggles and subsequent occupations (the Philippines invaded by Americans once the Spanish left and Timor Leste occupied by Indonesia after Portugal withdrew) is striking.

Millions of freedom fighter died in Philippines and hundreds of thousands died in East Timor. It was therefore important to learn from each other.

Historically beyond foreign occupation, there are also similarities between the two groups: economically, as hunter-gatherers and traditional farmers with up land agriculture system still very common in both countries. And each place is slowly becoming industrialised. There are also similarities in culture, and life stories.

The People Power struggle in 1986 against the dictatorial regime of Ferdinand Marcos was a success. In East Timor many believed that People Power existed in 2006 and 2007. But unlike the Philippines, it was not a non-violence movement due to the participation of the military, which did not remain neutral and actively contributed to instability.

This leads me to the following observations:

- *Non violence actions of a movement depend on the actors, along with their preparation, skills and knowledge*
- *It is important to influence other relevant institutions, such as the military, police and church*
- *There has to be a full commitment on everyone's part*

One of the most interesting things was to hear from people of base communities was how their lives changed after becoming involved in peace building initiatives. This made me think that something happened to me too, especially when I decided to reduce my political participation. I have now become more aware of a non violent approach to conflict and am committed to this, even if there is not much success to be seen.

I have changed and this will no doubt influence members of my group. From this experience, I learnt that peace building programmes can be applied at all levels: from the individual to the family, community, public institutions and even nations.

In East Timor there are conflicts between individuals and communities, as well as within institutions. The sharing of personal histories about how change has occurred is the most effective indicator of effectiveness of peace building and a non violence approach. The process of changing that began with one person can have a ripple effect which is very important. From the lessons learned, it is clear that the steps of change

and peace building start from an individual and make the way into the family, community, nations and the world.

Peace begins in the mind and through faith shows up in personal action. So said one prisoner. The prisoners spoke about how they came to love each other when envy was wiped from their minds. They began to change their mentality towards each other and began to look at non violence as a solution. Many wished they could have known this in the past. But they understood that they too could become peace builders and that nothing was impossible.

The Revolutionary Worker's Party of Mindanao (RPM-M) put down their guns and started peace talks with the government. They argued for compensation of the war with investment in development for elimination of poverty.

Putting down the gun also ended ordinary people's fear and suffering. After 34 years of fighting, it was obvious that people would always remain poor and hungry.

The need was development and the need to inculcate moral responsibility. A separate nation could still not guarantee a sound infrastructure, good education, available health care and agricultural reform.

Everyone wants to be prosperous and war does not fit in with the interests or needs of the people. Political interests had fuelled conflict.

For me, in East Timor, I understood that for peace to come, investment in education and health had to be equal in all 13 districts, along with the elimination of racial discrimination and a sense of inferiority.

It is important to conduct non violence training with soldiers. This must also include a respect for the community and how former rebels can be included back into society. The people's fear of the military had to be transformed into trust and confidence. In East Timor, soldiers from the West felt alienated and felt that the current defence force was not 'theirs'. They wanted a dismissal of those from other

areas. The winning back of trust on all our parts, particularly the leaders, is very important.

Village life is replete with conflict, from land disputes to other relationship problems. That is the structure and reality of village life. In Barangay village, they sought how to deal with these issues through a traditional mechanism that was based on traditional laws, culture and a legal frame work. This type of structure helped to raise the capacity of farmers. This is very similar in East Timor. And we also need to have a system in place for agrarian reform, as well as the full authorisation to the village chief to solve problems.

How the military can also adopt a non violent approach Peace talks between the MILF (Mindanao Islamic Liberation front) and the government.

There are no winners in war; everyone suffers, dies, is abandoned or is in poverty. With amnesty granted to former rebels and the military helping the government to implement reintegration programmes for former rebels, a semblance of peace is restored to the community. Thus, the image of the military changes too: from oppressor to protector, the builder of trust between the community and facilitator of cooperation between the people.

Reflections on the Philippines Trip by Aniceto Neves, HAK Association

Organisationally, HAK and AKKAPKA are similar; the only difference is that AKKAPKA has achieved social transformation through non-violent means but in Timor we have not achieved complete transformation.

In AKKAPKA they are at the frontline of non violence, while we are in the frontline of violence. Violence is our response against colonisation. We are not yet prepared to do ANV because for so many years we have experienced violence and now we are not well-prepared to implement non-violent strategies. Violence is in our culture and our work has been done through the dictates of our political leaders.

That is why we came to the Philippines to learn and to change ourselves, our attitudes and behaviour; to do things in a peaceful way. We thought that peace is only for Timor but I learned that peace should be spread out with each of us getting involved, reaching out with other countries like the Philippines. Let us



remember what Martin Luther King said "I will win in the last". Let us continue to struggle for peace and peace will come.

Historically the leaders of East Timor tried to solve conflicts with Indonesia in a peaceful way, partly as initiatives of the United Nations but also of the Timorese. We voted for independence in a peaceful way and then had to face the violations of the Indonesian military. The UN could have transformed the mentality that divided us, and could have led us to sustainable peace, but it did not really happen and instead brought us internal conflict.

The efforts done in Mindanao is what we intend to do in Timor Leste. We were in the frontlines during the Indonesian occupation. We have just emerged from violent rule and we want to change our strategies through active non violence.

Sometimes we are jealous that even though Mindanao is filled with conflict, the military can still promote peace and win back the trust of communities. It changed our minds that the military could also build peace – this is now our dream in East Timor.

Previously the military led the movement for freedom. But after we gained independence, they became lost and instigated conflicts. We admire the military in the Philippines for protecting the dignity of the people and its natural resources.



Chapter Four

Transformation – in the words of once violent men

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While the first group of martial arts leaders who were trained through this programme were less than 20 in number, owing to their influence and commitment within their own groups, they have gone on to train many others in the tools, skills and strategies for non violent change. The shift from a life of violence to one of peace is however not easy, and it took a major transformation to sustain it. The following reflections show how some of these key leaders have changed through this process.

“Peace has to be planted and blossom in every person’s heart’

By: Isolino Vaz de Alegria, Vocal Point of Kera Sakti TL

The political and military crises that hit Timor Leste in 2006 had an enormous impact on many sectors in the country, including martial and/or ritual arts groups, who were also seen as the instigators of violence. While this was true, in many cases the violence was individualised and not necessarily on the orders of leaders.

While various efforts were made by leaders to control their members and minimise conflicts, the leaders did not have the skills or capacity to transform potential conflicts into peaceful resolution.

The contribution of HAK Association, in cooperation with Action Asia, to organise the Conflict Transformation and Peace Building Training was positive. It is hoped that the skills and knowledge acquired after the training will empower the leaders of the martial and ritual arts groups find solutions to any existing conflicts within their organisation and be able to manage their organisations better.

I personally believe that the training changed my life. I used to be easily provoked and often times I imposed my own ideas on others. I also realised that sometimes I used offensive words which might hurt my colleagues, and to a certain degree, some of my acts were against the principle of peace building. I do believe that the training will allow me to make gradual changes in my daily life.



I feel that peace will not come by itself, or even be imposed; rather, it has to be based on each and every person's attitude. Peace has to be planted and blossom in every person's heart. Otherwise, our efforts thus far in peace building will be in vain.

It is true that as long as the world exists there will be conflict, or rather as long as people have conflicting interests, there will always be conflict. As long as there is competition, there will be conflict. Yet, we can end a conflict when every one of us offers our heart to be the place where the seeds of peace can grow. I hope it can happen soon.

Nationwide dialogue can create a peaceful and stable Timor Leste

By: Carlito Pereira, PSHT and HAK Association

Conflict transformation and peace building training are important steps to improve my skills in the area of understanding conflict. The training helps me to deal with conflicts arising in my family and also in my neighbourhood through dialogue, especially when martial arts groups are involved.

The dialogue should be conducted nationwide to create a peaceful and stable Timor Leste. I also understand that conflict mediation is very important and that the knowledge I gained during the training needs to be passed on, especially to my colleagues in martial and ritual arts on how to build peace with other groups.

The training helps me how to organise peace marches involving martial and ritual arts groups in the country. I believe that conflict transformation is not an easy task and the way towards achieving it is very long, which could be a lifelong project. However, those who are patient and ready to tackle differences can be actors of conflict transformation.

I hope that this kind of training will also be provided to community and government leaders in Timor Leste.

Need to cooperate with the government

By: Henrique João Mariz, Secretary and Spokesperson of KORK – Kmanek Oan Rai Klaran

In 2006, Timor Leste faced a huge politico-military crisis, a crisis which affected almost all Timorese. During the crisis, Timorese stood up against their fellow countrymen using violent means, which resulted in setting people on fire, slicing them up or simply taking revenge. The youth of the country distrusted each other and had no self-confidence. The nascent nation was once again

in the international spotlight due to their lack of capacity to find solution to the roots of the crisis.

Given that violence is predominant in Timor Leste, Action Asia approached youth leaders, especially leaders of martial and ritual arts groups, to attend a series of conflict transformation and peace building training. This effort was a very positive step which allowed the youth leaders to reflect on the harsh realities facing the country.

As a leader from a martial arts group, the training provided me the capacity to control myself better and to manage my organisation. The training indeed helped me to apply the methods and techniques I learned in my organisation, the members of which were very enthusiastic.

Leaders of the country often alleged that martial and ritual arts groups mastermind all the crises in the country. Some members of the groups indeed got involved in certain acts of violence. Their involvement is purely for personal reasons and there was no instruction whatsoever from their leaders to do so.

This repeated unfounded allegation has motivated different martial and ritual arts groups to promote good relationships among the groups. This happened because certain irresponsible people had used their organisations for their own benefits.

Youth should become partners for the development of the country. I made myself available for the training because I believe that the youths can organise themselves. Through the training I realised that even in the Philippines there are different groups, yet some of these groups cooperate with the local government.

We in Timor Leste can also cooperate with the government in establishing stability and peace in the country. If the people of Timor Leste are united, the country will be developed based on the principles of democracy and rule of law instead of violence, arson and hatred.

In order to contribute to the peace building process in the country I would do the following programmes:

- *together with my seniors I will organise trainings to our members nationwide*
- *cooperate with other martial arts groups to enter a new chapter of good relationship*
- *share the information with our group members, especially those who are in remote areas*
- *organise good relations with others*
- *be committed to helping the development process of the country and to supporting all programmes of the government*

I am convinced that the training will allow me to be energetically involved in controlling any accidents involving martial arts groups so that peace building is not merely lip-service.

My biggest enemy is myself

By: Osório Leque, Colimau 2000

When I initially joined the Colimau 2000 group, I was often informed by teachers about the programmes and objectives of the groups, saying that our group is big. However, they never told me the group also involved in wrongdoings. So when there is group fighting I always try to defend the position of the group in whatever situation. I generalised and disseminated the rumours coming from the members of our group, arguing that our group has never done anything wrong and it is others who do wrong things. I now realise that this position does not help resolved violent conflict.

During the first training held in Dare, I noticed that we even did not trust each other. However, after being together for one week I learned that even some groups suffered from the acts of my group members. I also learned that leaders of different martial arts groups denounced violence and they are not as bad as my imagination about them. They did not even say bad things about my group.

After the first training, I positioned myself as a central figure in making peace with others. I chose to make friends with those, from different organisations rather than talking to my group members. The impacts of such thing was that some members started to see that I did not defend our group but tried to explain that other groups would accept us if we admit our mistakes.

When members of Colimau 2000 were attacked in Odomau Maliana I did not organise the members to protest as I preferred to resolve the case with the police. In the beginning, some group members did not agree with this approach because some of them were injured. In the end however, they realised that it was the best solution in order to prevent more victims.

During the second and third modules, I started to notice that so far I tended to do what the group members wanted, and at my own will. This act unfortunately made other groups hostile against us. If I had chosen to be a leader I would have established peace. In this sense, I have to put aside my will and also the will of my group members. My biggest enemy is myself.

I became aware that the biggest factor of conflict within our organisation was the lack of communication between the leaders and members due to lack of resources, weak structures and a vision and mission not clearly understood by members. During the last training, I came to realise that capacity building at all levels is necessary to deal with the organisation's internal challenges.

As for the future, we will produce a training manual so that we can train our members in all the districts. In cooperation with HAK Association, it would be great that the participants of the first modular training will organise one or two day workshop at all the districts in which the role of martial and ritual arts groups is discussed in the context of peace and national development.

Peace has to come from our own hearts

By: Domingos da Costa, Kera Sakti

The training really changed me personally. Before the training I had my own ideology to defend. And during the crisis in 2006 I also destroyed certain things, such as properties and houses.

I believe that the training organised by Action Asia helped me to rectify my attitudes and to better understand any conflict.

In working together with others we cried out for peace in our neighbourhood. Peace has to come from our own hearts. We all have to fight for peace for Timor Leste.

I organised a group in our neighbourhood and we approached Care International for assistance to acquire the materials we needed to spread our through graffiti. Through the messages, we denounced violence and promoted peace.

I have a lot to say and a lot to do as well. But given that I am only a secondary school graduate, I will only fight for one Timor Leste, no east or west. I will also try my best to influence my friends and my neighbourhood in order to be agents of peace so that we have a peaceful future. We Timorese have long legacy of violence and many people have suffered from this legacy, including our parents and grandparents. We have to end violence because we deserve a better, peaceful country to live.

Political leaders should be trained as well

By: Simão da Costa M. Guterres, THS – THM

I have been personally transformed through the knowledge and skills I learned from the trainings. The most important thing is to transform ourselves, and it is through our organisation that we can work towards social transformation. It is commonly perceived that martial and ritual arts are instruments of violence and therefore it is hoped that through trainings, levels of violence in the country will be diminished.

I believe that in order to bring changes of peace and stability, formal and non-formal education should be provided to both martial and ritual arts groups, to the communities and even to leaders of political parties as well as police (PNTL) and the defence force (F-FDTL).

Changing bad habits

By: Júlio da Silva Salsinha, Kung Fu Master

In terms of personal transformation, from now on I would like to change the bad habits I have acquired and no longer perpetrate negative things against others.

I would like to be a trainer to my colleagues in terms of conflict transformation and peace building so that the knowledge and skills I have gained do not stop only with me. I would like also to suggest to HAK Association to establish peace building networks in the country where the participants of the training can share their ideas on how to build peace and stability in Timor Leste.

Preventing the recurrence of cycles of violence

By: José Cardoso, KORK

The training is a learning experience in which I developed my capacity which will be of benefit to my organisation and to Timor Leste. I also hope that it will allow me to do more in terms of conflict transformation and peace building. The knowledge I got from the training will be passed on to my organisation and my community.

On November 16, 2007 I set up a committee within my martial arts group to look for funds so we can do some peace work in Suro-Kraik Village of Ainaru. In 2004 some KORK members set fire to 53 houses belonging to the local community and because of that the people of that community hated our organisation. Even the government called our organisation a militia group. However,

after the training the community once again trusted me to re-organise our martial arts group in order to gain wider confidence from the local communities.

Any violence that happens in Timor Leste is due to the lack of an immediate response from the government. I believe that the trainings we attended increased our capacity to transform conflict and build peace in the country. And thus Timor Leste can prevent the recurrence of cycles of violence.



Chapter Five

Outcomes of the Martial Arts Peace Building Program

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Since the completion of the first course there have been a number of initiatives following up the program including a martial arts course for women martial arts leaders and a training of trainers for graduates of both courses. Further the martial arts leaders have taken their own initiatives for peace – a Martial Arts March for Peace and the registration of a new peace organisation Ita Ba Paz. In the broader context the government of Timor Leste has enacted the Martial Arts law and commission for Martial Arts.

The Martial Arts March for Peace

The group of martial and ritual arts men leaders who made an exposure visit to the Philippines was deeply motivated from listening to stories and experiences of people from different communities and organizations. They were so inspired especially when they personally met and held dialogues with military officers as well as some ex-convicts who shared with them stories about their efforts in doing peacebuilding work. One of them commented: *“If these soldiers and inmates can do something relevantly positive despite the intricate situations they are in, why can’t we do something in East Timor?”* That experience made them conceive the idea of organizing a peace march once they are back in East Timor.



The peace building unit of HAK Association held some discussions with martial arts leaders under the umbrella of ARMA-PAZ, KUPAZ and AVIATOR regarding the violence involving martial arts members, and what they could do to change the negative image of these groups. They came to a conclusion that they need to show the public the positive side of martial arts and ritual arts groups. They all agreed that in the commemoration of East Timor Independence Day in 2008, a Peace March would be organized to be participated in by all martial and ritual arts groups. The main purpose was to demonstrate to the public that they are nonviolent organizations or that they are not associated with any sort of criminal activities. They wanted to prove that their groups could become potential actors in building peace in East Timor if they are organized in a positive way.

They were positively convinced that they would be able to convey the message that the leaders and members of martial and ritual arts groups are social assets in promoting a spirit of national identity, nationalism and patriotism; that they can potentially take important role in advancing peace and development in the country.

For the first time in the history of East Timor, a peace march was organized by martial arts groups themselves. It was told that the government had attempted for a number of times to organize similar activities among the martial arts groups but the latter did not support the plans as they did not have trust in the government.

The first peace march took place in May 2008 and this was followed by another one in December of the same year. Initially, under the guidance of HAK Association, the march was intended to be participated in only by martial and ritual arts groups but it turned out that many other organizations were also interested to get involved. Those who also joined in the peace march were church groups, some national NGOs, Ombudsman Office (Provedoria Dereitu Humanu no Justisa), and even members of PNTL and F-FDTL. The march was launched by the Speaker of the National Parliament accompanied by the Secretary of State for Youth and Sports.

After some opening speeches, the marchers went around the main roads of Dili properly marshalled and coordinated. People went out of their houses and were cheering to the marchers, expressing their content on the positive attitude shown by the marchers. It created an environment where everyone was enjoying interacting with members of other martial arts or ritual arts groups, and even with the police and military forces. It left an impression to the public that these groups can make positive change in the society.

Leaders of different groups who helped in organizing the peace marches reflected on their experiences, not only looking at the impression it has done to the public but more importantly the change it has brought forth on the relationships between and among different martial and ritual arts groups. Here are some of their reflections:

After we came back from Philippines, we organized a Peace March to celebrate the Independence Day. This event manifested our message to the public – we belong to different Martial Arts and Ritual Arts groups but now we are one! We want to defend our spirit as Martial Arts and respect for others. We shared with our

members in the organization all the lessons we got from Mindanao and Manila, and they are very thankful. We were struggling for independence together, now we are talking about peace in our communities.

Together with HAK Association, we were doing the Peace March not just for ourselves – we did it for the public. We want the public to see us differently – as promoters for peace. They always see us as violent groups. In fact, martial arts principle is for peace.

The peace march was one big manifestation from what we have learned from the training. Our good relationship (martial arts groups) was the impact from the visit to the Philippines. The community expressed that they are happy about the good relationship between martial arts groups and they encourage us to continue organizing more peace activities.

We could have organized a bigger peace march but the situation was not so secured so we limit to 25 participants per group. We want to invite other groups to join in the process because we do not need to fight any more. We approached local leaders and martial

The community expressed that they are happy about the good relationship between martial arts groups and they encourage us to continue organizing more peace activities.

arts groups in the villages and communities to convince them to come to a dialogue and accept IDP returnees. There are two impacts I see from the trainings and the trip to the Philippine: 1) the martial arts related

violence has reduced, and 2) the number of IDP's has also reduced as a consequence of this.

The Philippines trip helped me see both internal and external issues. We had agreement among ourselves that we should not follow the idea of east/west division. I visited the 7-7 martial arts group and invited them to join the march. Ritual arts groups' representation

was less compared to the MA groups. I conducted meetings in the southern districts and shared with them the dialogue process between martial arts groups. I also continue to work with university students and we had discussion on conflict analysis, looking at structures and root causes of conflicts.

Since coming back from the Philippines, I went to talk with martial arts groups who caused so much violence and convinced them to have training course like this, but we need support from both international community and from our communities. Many martial arts members are young and have no education, we need cooperation amongst youth organization, and they normally talk

Comparing the before and now – violence involving martial arts has reduced after the peace march.

only about sports. I talked to Care International to see whether they can support some of the courses. The image of youth is very bad right now; it has never been like this before during the Indonesian

time. Yet, there is always negative perception that we always have to endure, like when I was helping in the peace campaign painting peace message on the wall, people see me as a two-dollar a day worker though it's not true.

People have different ideas while we tried to organize the Peace March; the public was suspicious about us. It was really difficult

It was really difficult but what we did it to save members from killing each other. When the march was happening, people came along the roadside cheering and welcoming us.

but what we did it to save members from killing each other. We tried our best to convince the public that we only try to do good things. We contacted people to help us pass the message, including media and state radio to explain about our clear

objectives of peace march. They appreciated what we were doing.

For myself it was a very unique endeavor because it has never happened before, even compared to those organized by the government. When we talked to the police, they said they will support the march and they will send troops to protect the march.

Peace march was a positive space that came right in time. I discussed with the leaders of 7-7 and though they did not join the march they said what the other groups did was very positive as it has conveyed messages of peace and development. Some people in communities however, were worried and said it was a crazy idea and it might lead to clashes between martial arts groups. When they saw the outcome of the peace march, they changed their mind and believed that it is a positive thing and asked us to organize it again.

We can organize more peace march. When conflict involving martial arts happens, people are really scared; so peace marches need to be organized again and again.

We should not look at each other as East and West but as one. The sun rises from the East and sets on the West but Timor is always one.

Some of our group members did not even come out to join us thinking we are crazy, but it did not bother us. We still did it. Though marches like this cannot solve all the problems in our society, it certainly had

brought personal transformation in us.

We wanted to organize more people to join the peace march yet I felt scared as I thought it was a risky business when more people get together. However, it turned out fully successful – it created positive impact to the community as well as among martial arts members themselves. One of my friends who is a policeman said to me that now he sleeps better because he is not often called to intervene in fights involving martial arts.

In my personal opinion the Peace March was successful. It was just a small group but we can organize more people even more

than the government can do. It was really positive, leaders and youths were involved. If we look back, the government and others tried to mobilize martial arts for their interest, but it has never been successful. Peace is positive and it needs commitment. Peace needs leaders – leaders who lead the fight for justice. We can commit violence or kill each other but peace will always win. One positive impact the peace march brought is that people in communities feel safe during night time and they can go around without worrying about security. Even myself I could go out anywhere now and stay up late until 2am. I have no intention to be proud of this, but it is the reality.

Women Martial Arts Program

Exactly a year after when the men leaders completed their modular trainings, the women martial and ritual arts leaders inspired by the transformative attitude and behaviour of their men counterpart, also undertook the same process. We started with around 22 participants in the first module but later waned to 17 towards the last module due to either conflicting schedules with university studies or health issues. Unlike the training for men leaders however, only three modules of the training were given to them, integrating the topics of module 4 into module 3 which was a 2-week exposure visit to Cambodia.

We believe women members of martial and ritual arts groups play essential role in their organizations as they hold the group together, sometimes they are the ones behind the scene to soothe things out. In the succeeding stories on how they applied what they had learned from the course, most of these women used their peace building skills in sorting out disputes within their families or between members of their own martial arts group.

When asked at what level of leadership they hold in their respective organization, they readily admitted that they cannot get to the top post as it is maybe attributable to the patriarchal culture of the society as well as a doctrinal practice among martial arts groups. Despite this

reality however, we believe that by developing the skills and confidence of these young women in peace building and conflict transformation they can become effective change agents and can potentially take the leadership role onward.

Egoism and greed are main sources of violent conflict

By Palmira Martins Soares da Costa, PSHT

It is my personal belief that conflict can escalate violently over time if there are no responsible groups who will take necessary action to deal with them. In developing countries like Timor-Leste, intertwined causes of conflict are still unaddressed even after we gained our liberation. Deep seated and unresolved causes of conflict of the past still continue haunting us. As far as I am concerned, the main sources of violent conflict or war are egoism and greed. Hatred does not come from outside but from our inner being and if we cannot deal with it properly, as the time goes by, it will only propel to more hostilities.

I was very happy with the visit to Cambodia where we were guided into the history of Cambodia by trainers from Action Asia, particularly from Baht and Ngarm. I was appalled by the dark history of Cambodia in which many human rights violations were committed by the Khmer Rouge. I hope that together with my colleagues in the different martial and ritual arts groups, we will continue to fight for a peaceful Timor-Leste. Our visits to various groups and local communities in Cambodia affirmed our commitment to keep fighting for justice, even if it has to be passed on to future generations.

I was shocked to know that private investors and the government do not pay proper attention to the oppressed communities in rural areas of Cambodia, and the latter remain victims of 'development' that do not feed even their basic needs in life. The rich become richer and those who are poor desperately plunge into more poverty and suffering.

On our visit to Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, I was appalled by what I saw from the documentary films and I did not understand why human beings were killed like animals, and why the international community allowed it to happen. I also wondered why people could not get together to stop that barbaric act. I hope that such thing will not be repeated in Timor-Leste.

I am extremely happy to be a participant in this conflict transformation and peace building training. This training is very important to me in terms of my capacity development. Before, I was easily stirred by unfounded rumours without involving any level of analysis. Rumours cannot solve conflict, let alone, violence. However, after the training, I come to value the importance of having a clear understanding of an issue before jumping in to find its solution.

In terms of managing or transforming conflict, I also learned the skills on how to prevent conflict from becoming violent. In order to be an effective mediator, it is pivotal that I gather as much information about the conflict to know my position in that my impartiality cannot be question during the process.

We should not just sit back and watch if there is conflict, violence and war. We have to contribute to end conflict, violence, and war.

Furthermore, I should have to manage my personality in such a way that I am not easily swayed by others to get involved in any circle of conflict, violence, and war.

One principal pre-condition for peace building is trust and unwavering commitment to justice. Other necessary ingredients for peace building are honesty and openness from all stake-holders in that unity can be strengthened.

In order to build peace, I have to say NO to violence.

I hope that all these will be beneficial for the peace building efforts in Timor-Leste. It is also my hope that those who participated in the training would work together, based on mutual trust and respect, so that the dream of peace building in Timor-Leste can become a reality in this country.

“We should denounce violence from now on!”

By Madalena Soares do Carmo, 5-5

The training built my understanding in terms of analyzing problems such as violence, conflict and war taking place at the personal level up to national or even international level. The experience about the training is very positive because I got more knowledge to better understand conflict and any other problems. I hope that after this training I can analyze conflict at personal level and also in the wider context.

As participant of the training I would like to be an agent of peace. I would like also to pass on the skills and knowledge I got to others in that the people may live in a peaceful Timor-Leste. For me the most important thing is to transform oneself first and changes at wider context will ensue from that. We should denounce violence from now on.

Our people deserve to live in peace and harmony

By: Clara da Silva Sanches, PADJADJARAN

Participating in the conflict transformation and peace building training is a new experience for me and the experience has been very positive. The training provides me tools to be a peace builder and I am confident that I can resolve problems at family and community levels and thereby I can contribute to the peace and stability in Timor-Leste. I hope that I could transfer the skills and knowledge I have to my friends so that the youth of the country can become instruments of peace in their respective communities and also Timor-Leste in general.

After going through centuries of conflict, Timor-Leste and its people deserve to live in peace and harmony. I hope that the training will give us chance to build long-lasting peace in our country.

Introducing dialog process in community conflicts

By Berta Monteiro, AIKIDO

The training thus far has been very instrumental to me. For those of us who visited Cambodia as part of the training, our experience there was very positive in the sense that we were introduced to the history of Cambodia, their civil war and also the political and military intervention into Cambodia whereby a lot of sufferings were inflicted upon the Cambodians.

The training provided me with a lot of skills needed in terms of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. All these skills will make me a new person in dealing with a lot of life's problems. I really want to be an agent of peace and be a resource person for the youth. I learned a lot from the training and I am extremely happy for this opportunity provided to us.

I would be cool-headed in facing life problems after the training, applying the negotiation and mediation skills I have learned and introduce dialog process in community disputes.

Ongoing personal transformation is my commitment

By Delvina L. Guterres, KERA-SAKTI

Before the training I understood conflict as an unhealthy environment, now I realized conflict is a life inherent reality.

During the training I learned about important skills on conflict analysis and intervention. During our stay in Cambodia, we had information sharing with women's development agencies, Cambodia Documentation Centre, Youth for Peace, YRDP, Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre and the local communities. We

also visited the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum. From our interaction with the grassroots communities, I listed to the people's stories how they keep fighting for their rights despite the fact that the government continue to neglect them. There is also a huge gap between the poor and the rich in the capital city. The poor people work a lot but their life is still difficult to cope with. As we are developing Timor-Leste, we should learn from Cambodia's experience so that the huge gap between the poor and the rich cannot be replicated here.

As part of my personal transformation, I have to change my attitude and worldview about other organizations. Previously, I hated other martial and ritual arts organizations. However, after we came together for the first part of the training the feeling of hatred dissipated.

I now believe that I can be a resource person to prevent violent conflict within my family and my organization. I hope that by being a resource person within these circles, I could contribute to larger peacebuilding efforts in the country. Before I did not have capacity to solve problems but after the training, I feel I have more responsibilities to take. And I am ready and committed to take these responsibilities. Ongoing personal transformation is my commitment from now onward.

Not to follow Cambodia's war experience

By Ivónia A. Barros, KORK

The most important part of the training was the exposure visit to Cambodia because we can learn from what happened in Cambodia's civil wars. I do not want to see Timor-Leste follow the footsteps of Cambodia just because of failing to solve its internal conflicts and problems. I hope that our group will use our critical thinking skills to influence the policies of the government in peace building efforts.

The skills I have gained so far have been very instrumental. Upon my return I hope I could contribute more to peace building efforts in my family, community and organization where I belong.

I firmly believe that peace building is possible and that it has to start with every one of us. If every one of us has peace, then we can establish peace in the larger context such as Timor-Leste.

In order to build peace, I am committed to carefully think about a problem before taking any action. I will listen to more people and be assertive in making decisions. In the process of building the peace, I have to act locally and think globally.

Right to education is imperative

By Carla Maria Marques, Karate Federation

In my comparative study between Cambodia and Timor-Leste situations, I come to understand that those who are in power tend to violate the rights of the people who may even have elected them. I also realized that efficient education system is crucial to the development of any nation. When people are not well educated, they do not have the aptitude to address the wrongdoings of their government simply because of their ignorance. No education, no critical thinking.

In the Khmer Rouge era, worst was massive killing of those who were educated as they were a threat to the ruling party. Those who are in power have to do this so that they can rule the country as they wish without having criticism from others. They have to take this position so they can keep ruling the country and not allow others to take over the power from them.

The experience of Cambodia under Khmer Rouge was so horrendous. Never in my life had I witnessed such brutal civil war. Timor-Leste fought for its independence and it was a bloody battle. However, Cambodia was the worst. I hope that what happened in Cambodia will not happen in Timor-Leste.

The training has been useful because there was peaceful interaction between the participants, though we came from different and conflicting martial arts groups. This training is a life investment process in the area of conflict transformation and peace building. Hopefully we can serve our people and our nation better from now onward with the skills we learned.

I would like to be courageous in telling what is true and what is wrong. I would like to have more friends and be more understanding and more committed to fighting for justice. I want to be a principled leader, for my family, my organization and my country.

New Structures for Peace - ITA BA PAZ (We Are for Peace)

ITA BA PAZ is a Timor-Leste's institutions working in the field of peace-building studies and social transformation. ITA BA PAZ is as a new institution which was declared a separate establishment of the HAK Association, and was officially declared on May 5, 2009. As an institution, its foundation based on institutionalization strategies Conflict Transformation Program Development and Peace. Which earlier this program is one of the special Division HAK Association to address the situation of political-military crisis in 2006.

Next ITA BA formulate PAZ more strategic orientation program and collaboration with institutions in this country the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) and the Self-Defense Organization (Martial arts group) in the field of Conflict Transformation and Peace Building. This is to answer the needs of the community police officers in order to increase the professionalism and skill in the field of peace-building and community policing.

Through this program, has conducted consultations on the study of conflict transformation application paradigm and the role of peace-building through Community-Police Unit of the PNTL and the organization split-self during the 2006-2007 crisis becomes an active instrument of conflict and violence in society. Concrete Ideas from this consultation identified the needs and development of materials for

special training. This effort to actualize the role of the PNTL through Department Institutions Community Policing and Self-Defense Organization;

ITA BA PAZ standing with the fundamental reason that the context of Timor-Leste as a new state in post-conflict. Because as a new state in post-conflict situations, ITA BA PAZ clearly states its commitment to engage in the process of peace and social development in Timor-Leste that covers the following aspects of this:

1. Culture of violence in society;
2. Development of delivery problems of discrimination, social injustice and dependence
3. Political structure, social, economic and cultural, still vulnerable and repressive;
4. Transformation is not realistic, fair and sustainable.

BA ITA PAZ declared its founding on May 5, 2009 in Hall Association RIGHTS Farol Dili, Timor-Leste. This institution is still new, but driven by the leadership as well as some staff which previously had been working on Peace-Building Division (Conflict Transformation and Peace Building) Rights Association for the military-political crisis in 2006 until the establishment of a BA ITA Paz. BA ITA PAZ standing with vision "to realize the people of Timor-Leste to live in a peaceful environment and enjoy the freedom of the individual, hold fast to the socio-cultural identity, an active and participatory and uphold human rights".

To realize this vision, BA PAZ ITA will perform its mission include:

- a) The transformation of the potential and resources of the youth with National Police elements, martial arts and ritual arts school as an agent for change and peace building.
- b) To study and education about peace by adopting the principles and values of non-violent action (Active Non-Violence);
- c) Strengthen partnerships with the state apparatus from the Department of Community Policing to live peacefully in a fair, realistic and sustainable in Timor-Leste.

ITA BA PAZ works on three levels of the society:

- 1) at levels associated with conflict, violence, peace, identity, human comfort, social transformation and social injustice;
- 2) the skill level associated with the capacity to study (assessment, surveys, research and analysis), empowerment capacity (facilitator & coach), transformation of conflict (dialogue, negotiation and mediation);
- 3) at the level of advocacy-related strategic policy, the concept of role, seminars, media campaigns and publications and networks.

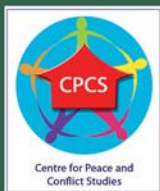
Appendix One – A timeline of the Martial Arts Peace Building Initiative

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| Early May 2006 | Clare Danby, Director of Concern Timor Leste approaches Action Asia about conducting a conflict analysis and Peace building intervention in Timor Leste |
| 4 -26 Sept 2006 | Conflict & Peace Methodology Analysis workshops. Held with Youth leaders, women's groups and Concern staff. Also held reflections sessions with Management teams of Concern, Oxfam, CARE and AusAid. |
| 3 – 7 Sept 2007 | Building trust between Martial and Ritual arts leaders in Timor Leste course, Module 1: 'Conflict Analysis and Non-Violence'. |
| 22 -25 Jan 2008 | Building trust between Martial and Ritual arts leaders in Timor Leste course, Module 2: 'Skills building in preventing, managing and transforming conflict'. |
| 16 -23 Apr 2008 | Building trust between Martial arts and Ritual arts leaders in Timor Leste course, Module 3: Exposure visit to the Philippines. |
| 16 May 2008 | Martial and Ritual arts groups Long Peace March through Dili |
| 1 – 5 July 2008 | Building trust between Martial arts and Ritual arts leaders in Timor Leste course, Module 4 |





The Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies is home to a range of interconnected programmes that promote the advancement of peace processes, research and learning. It creates opportunities for practitioners, students, academics and analysts to access information and resources that are contextually grounded.



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