End-of-Project Small Grant Report:

Conflict Sensitivity for Multi-Faith Religious Leaders in Mindanao

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Abstract

This project explores the applicability of conflict sensitivity, an organizational planning approach originating in the humanitarian aid sector, for improving the social impact of religious associations operating in multi-faith societies that are experiencing or at risk for destructive inter-group conflict. The project adopts a unique action research approach, collaborating with a local partner, the Davao Ministerial Interfaith, Inc. (DMI), to address the social impact dilemmas faced by religious workers in Mindanao, Philippines, with broader implications for Southeast Asia and international contexts. Data collection has explored the relevance and usefulness of the *Do No Harm* (DNH) conflict sensitivity tool (Anderson, 1999) through participatory social analysis workshops, surveys and interviews. DNH has contributed significantly to individual change, by establishing awareness of unintended negative impacts and overcoming deeply held biases, as a pre-requisite to organizational change. Nonetheless, DNH's impact analysis patterns need to be contextualized to reflect the nature of religious work, and the framework may also require a more explicit consideration of issues of structural violence. In contrast to existing associational theory (including Putnam, 2000; Varshney, 2002), the participating organizations display a multifaceted mix of positive and negative social impacts, resulting from both organizational structure and non-structural factors, and profoundly influenced by religious beliefs.

I. Background and Origins

In the post-cold war era, religion has become an increasingly prominent aspect of human security. This trend is evident in the influence of religion in many ethno-nationalist civil wars, and in the global debate over terrorism and counter-terrorism, often framed as a conflict between the Muslim and Judeo-Christian worlds (Huntington, 1996). At the same time, there has been an unprecedented increase in the scope and influence of civil society, a "global associational revolution" (Salamon, 1994 p. 109) of voluntary citizen action taking place between the sphere of family and the sphere of state. These trends have converged to produce a pivotal interplay between civil society, religion and conflict.

The contribution of non-state actors, including religious actors, to conflict prevention has become a prominent theme of peace research and activism. However, it is increasingly recognized that social mobilization is not inherently 'good.' There is a growing body of literature that explores the dual nature of civil society as a force that can either promote or retard liberal democratic norms in general (Ndegwa, 1996; Rossteutscher, 2005) and the prevention of conflict and violence in particular (Putnam, 2000; Varshney, 2002). Nonetheless the understanding of how religion influences associational impact remains underdeveloped in comparison to religion's current importance.

These challenges are global in nature, yet particularly prominent in Southeast Asia, where ethnic conflict is widespread, and religion is a vital aspect of public life. The region boasts astonishing ethnic diversity, yet post-colonial state formation has brought multiple ethnic groups together under centralized polities. As a result, ruling majority ethnic groups tend to push minorities toward the political and/or geographic margins, while maximizing the flow of economic benefit from the margins toward the center

(Kingsbury, 2005; Duncan, 2008). Further, ethno-political tensions often take on a religious tone, due to the strong demographic correlation between ethnicity and religion (Goh, 2005). Civil society frequently structures itself along ethnic and religious lines (Lee, 2004), such that conflict actors seek the support of religious associations,[1] and religious associations in turn influence the conflicting parties. These existing dynamics have been further strained following the attacks of September 11 and the Western framing of Southeast Asia as a "second front" in the "global war on terror" (Gershman, 2002).

Civil society practitioners are keenly aware of the local effects of these regional trends. Humanitarian aid workers have quietly but repeatedly suggested conflict sensitivity as a partial solution. In a regional workshop series[2] that I facilitated for the Christian non-governmental organization World Vision, Christian participants often suggested that conflict sensitivity training should be provided to nearby churches. World Vision Indonesia and World Vision Development Foundation Philippines (Presbitero-Carrillo, 2004) have begun to experiment with conflict sensitivity training for religious leaders. Likewise, staff members of several other faith-based humanitarian agencies have inquired about how conflict sensitivity training might be made available to communities of worship.[3]

What is conflict sensitivity? In referring to conflict sensitivity, these practitioners are drawing on an increasingly influential approach developed in the humanitarian and development aid sectors in the mid-1990s for improving the social impact of programs operating in divided societies. Conflict sensitivity can be defined as,

> the ability of your organisation to:
> - understand the context in which you operate;
> - understand the interaction between your intervention and the context; and
> - act upon the understanding of this interaction, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts (International Alert et al., 2004 ch. 1, p. 1).

Conflict sensitivity claims that any action an organization takes, even in seemingly unrelated pursuits such as distribution of relief goods or community organizing, may have an impact on inter-group relations in the surrounding climate of conflict and peace. This impact may be either positive (promoting peace) or negative (exacerbating existing conflict). The quintessential example of unintended negative impact is the humanitarian aid response that followed the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Despite meeting service delivery goals, aid exacerbated conflict because refugee camps were used by the perpetrators of genocide as a base for regrouping and rearming (Eriksson, 1997 p. 8),

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[1] The literature on citizen bodies and action is fragmented, with various organizational forms such as civil society, citizen networks and social capital being researched on separate tracks. Because my project covers a range of organizational forms, and because the popular term "civil society" is often interpreted as carrying Western assumptions that do not align with the experience of Southeast Asian practitioners, I use the broader terms "religious associations" or "religious organizations."
[2] Workshops facilitated by the author in countries including the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, India, Sri Lanka and Nepal, from 2002 to 2006.
[3] Marshall Wallace, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, e-mail message to author, 24 October 2007. Allen Harder, Independent Consultant, e-mail message to author, 5 November 2007.

thus contributing to the ongoing civil war in the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo.

To identify and mitigate such risks, conflict sensitivity uses an array of context analysis methodologies, and then applies the findings to inform the organization's strategic and operational planning. This approach is highly adaptable, having been developed and tested in contexts of both violent and latent conflict. Despite the original emphasis on organizational planning, a number of practitioners have also found that conflict sensitivity sometimes promotes significant changes in the underlying values and behaviors of individuals (Garred, 2006; Collaborative for Development Action, 2001; Barbolet et al., 2005). From its beginning in the humanitarian aid sector, conflict sensitivity has expanded to the business sector, particularly in transnational resource extraction industries, as a form of corporate social responsibility (International Alert, 2005; Gossen et al., 2002).

Research Questions and Approach. In order to explore the potential for conflict sensitivity usage in the religious sector in multi-faith conflict-vulnerable contexts, I set out to study the following:
1. Is conflict sensitivity applicable (relevant and useful) in helping religious associations to improve their social impact? If so, in what ways, and to what extent?
2. How do the findings of this inquiry inform existing associational theory?

This project originated with, and seeks to inform, the work of practitioners. I have therefore adopted action research, not merely as a methodology, but also as a unique research philosophy which affirms the compatibility of thought and action, facts and values. The process is emergent and multi-phase in nature, built around cycles of data gathering, reflection and action, such that the findings of each phase inform the design of the next. The standard for validity centers around the notion of believability with a purpose: Are the findings believable enough to act upon (Greenwood and Levin, 2007 p. 67), in the eyes of both participating practitioners and external observers?

I began the inquiry with consultative interviews and focus group discussions involving over 60 Southeast Asian associational leaders between February and May of 2007. This led to field-testing of conflict sensitivity in collaboration with two inter-faith partner organizations in Mindanao and Singapore, using a similar multi-phase, training-centered approach. Among the various conflict sensitivity tools available, we tested new applications of the *Do No Harm* (DNH)[4] framework (Anderson, 1999), because it is exceptionally influential within the humanitarian aid sector, and it has proven amenable to uptake at the grassroots level (Garred, 2006). In both Mindanao and Singapore, data was collected through participatory DNH analysis workshops, surveys, and semi-structured interviews, and supplemented through my own participant observation. However, the Mindanao project was significantly larger in scope, because DNH was already known and considered a priority by the Mindanowan partner agency. IPRAF funds were used to support operational expenses of the Mindanao project, which receives special focus in this report.

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[4] *Do No Harm* (DNH) is alternatively called *Local Capacities for Peace*. For an outline of the DNH analysis process, see Appendix I. Further information on the original DNH tool is available from CDA Collaborative Learning Projects at http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/default.php .

II. Action Research: Mindanao, Philippines

The Philippines is a compelling context for conflict sensitivity testing. Over 90% of Filipinos are Christian and of that, over 80% are Roman Catholic. There is a significant Muslim minority concentrated in and around the southern island of Mindanao. A government resettlement initiative in the 1920s and 1950s moved Christian settlers from northern areas into the south, eventually making Christianity numerically dominant even in Mindanao. Violent conflict began to escalate during the1960s Marcos administration, and delicate peace negotiations between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front[5] (MILF) continue until today. The conflict is primarily political and economic in nature, but it has taken on a religious tone due to the demographic overlay of ethnicity and religious affiliation. At the same time, religious leaders play an active role in the peace process, as evidenced by the high-level role of the Bishops-Ulama Forum.

The primary research partner in this effort was the Davao Ministerial Interfaith, Inc. (DMI).[6] DMI is comprised of approximately 50 religious leaders from the Roman Catholic (Christian), Protestant[7] (Christian) and Muslim communities. The organization began as a predominantly Protestant gathering of leaders, and gradually became multi-faith in composition. DMI members collaborate on community-based social action in Davao City in collaboration with local NGO Hugpong sa Kalambuan - Dabaw Inc[8] and national NGO World Vision Development Foundation,[9] and they also mentor several inter-faith sister groups across Southern Mindanao. DMI's flagship project is the Purok[10] Intergenerational Care Group, a multi-faith gathering of neighbors for purposes of spiritual and relational growth, with an emphasis on community service. DMI has also been using DNH consistently and extensively since 2003, making the organization a unique pioneer of DNH uptake by religious leaders.

Research activities.[11] In preparation for action research, a DNH Training of Trainers was conducted in Davao in late 2007. The 12-member trained cohort included 3 Muslim, 7 Visayan (migrant) Christian, and 1 Lumad (indigenous) Christian religious leaders. Half were DMI members, while the other half were drawn from DMI's sister interfaith groups in nearby Sarangani, South Cotabato, Agusan del Sur, and Zamboanga City. The standard 10-day DNH Training of Trainers (ToT) process[12] was broken into two parts to accommodate the work responsibilities of the candidates.[13] ToT Part I included a review of DNH content, and an interactive exploration of methodologies for adult learning. ToT

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[5] The Spanish term 'Moro' originally referred to Muslims in a pejorative sense, as rooted in the history of Spain. However 'Moro' has now been adopted as a preferred term by many Muslim groups living in the southern Philippines.

[6] Board of Trustees Chair and Advisor to DNH Core Team: Pastor Ereberto P. Gopo. Vice-Chair: Ustadz Ahmad G. Ampuan Al-Hadj. Secretary: Sister Joan D. Castro.

[7] Protestants in Mindanao are typically termed 'Evangelicals.'

[8] Unity for Progress – Davao; Chair: Cecilia F. Magallanes.

[9] Peacebuilding Specialist: Herminegilda Presibitero-Carrillo.

[10] Neighborhood

[11] I was based in Singapore throughout the process, as a visiting scholar at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. I made over 13 multi-week trips from Singapore to Mindanao, before relocating to Seattle, USA in February 2009. The budget of the Mindanao project was approximately $US 22,000, including donations from IPRAF, the Peace and Justice Studies Association, the Religious Research Association, Hugpong sa Kalambuan-Dabaw Inc., World Vision Development Foundation, and myself.

[12] Adapted from CDA Collaborative Learning Projects.

[13] ToT Part I was held 15-19 October 2007. ToT Part II was held 26-30 November 2007.

Part II included intensive practice, followed by a 2-day workshop successfully delivered by the new trainers during the annual "Mindanao Week of Peace" festival. Post-ToT mentoring structures were made available for follow-up support.

Upon commencing action research, DMI commissioned a six-member Action Research Core Team, including three new DNH trainers, with Sister Joan D. Castro as team leader.[14] Core Team members were the point of contact for all research participants, and worked together to collect and analyze data. The Core Team met approximately two days per month, in a series of structured participatory consultations that I designed and facilitated. With the Core Team, the broad research inquiry on the applicability of conflict sensitivity to religious associations was contextualized in the form of four locally-relevant questions:
1. What does DNH analysis reveal regarding the impact of religious programs on peace and conflict in this context?
2. What are the strengths of DNH in contributing to the work of religious leaders and organizations?
3. What are the limitations of DNH in contributing to the work of religious leaders and organizations?
4. Should DNH be adapted to make it more useful for religious leaders and organizations? If so, how?

During Action Research Phase I, our focus was internal to the DMI itself, examining how DNH had been used within DMI from 2003 to 2008.[15] We collected 41 open-ended surveys and conducted 14 selective follow-up interviews among DMI's own membership. The Core Team also commissioned a series of DNH assessments to analyze the social impact of five Purok Inter-generational Care Groups. To cap the process, participants in all five assessments gathered in a January 2008 Forum to share their learnings and to further elaborate their examples regarding the use of the DNH tool. The key learning from Phase I was that when DNH usage is shifted from the humanitarian aid sector to the religious sector, the most important change lies in the impact patterns of specifically *how* organizational projects and services impact on local inter-group relationships. The activities of religious organizations are different from those of aid organizations, so their patterns of social impact naturally differ as well. This finding implied that DNH impact patterns should be adapted for use in the religious sector, so impact patterns became the focus of our next phase of action research.

During Action Research Phase II, we broadened the scope beyond DMI, to include DMI's sister interfaith groups across Southern Mindanao and other external partner agencies in Davao City. We set out to explore how religious projects and services impact inter-group conflict, both negatively and positively, through the mechanisms that the DNH framework calls 'resource transfers' and 'implicit ethical messages.' Through 3 participatory DNH workshops,[16] plus data carried forward from Phase I, we collected

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[14] Sister Joan D. Castro is a Roman Catholic nun, serving with the Pious Union of the Little Sisters of the Divine Mercy. She is also the Secretary of the DMI Board of Trustees.
[15] Most Phase I activities were held between December 2007 and April 2008.
[16] Each DNH workshop was designed to contribute to build participant capacity, as well as involving the participants in collecting data. All workshops included a mix of Roman Catholic, Protestant and Muslim participants, and were 2-3 days in length. Phase II workshops included: Introductory DNH workshop for external agencies on 16-17 July 2008; Advanced DNH workshop (on impact analysis) for DMI and their sister interfaith groups (including new DNH trainers) on 19-21 August 2008; and Advanced DNH workshop

over 150 examples of such social impact, from participants' analyses of 50 different projects. We also conducted an additional 72 open-ended surveys and 11 selective follow-up interviews to probe more deeply how participants were using DNH for social impact analysis. While the overall quantity of data was sufficient, the proportion of examples drawn from external agencies was below target at only 23%, due to escalating violence and resulting organizational constraints in southern Mindanao in mid-to-late 2008. Workshop participant attendance decreased during that time period, and even facilitators were sometimes pulled out of the workshops to deal with emergent crises. Nonetheless, clear patterns were identified through Core Team analysis of the available data.

Each round of Core Team analysis followed a consistent process, though details varied depending on the nature of the data. Data was analyzed in chunks, as it became available, focusing on only one type of data at a time. First, the team members reviewed the data, and then summarized it in a wall-sized analytical matrix. Second, the team examined the data matrix in order to identify common themes. To support objectivity, the team posted common themes arising directly from the data on orange cards, and ideas emerging in their own minds on yellow cards. Third, the team discussed how to interpret the common themes, considering the meaning, the level of clarity (and/or the need for further investigation), and the relevance to the original research questions. Finally, at the end of each cycle, we consolidated the findings from each chunk of analysis, and again considered how the findings addressed our research questions, as well as the design of our next steps.

Research ethics. Due to the interventionist nature of action research, this project required active attention to the protection of a participant group totaling more than 150 individuals.[17] Ethical guidelines were jointly designed by the DMI Core Team and myself to address the key issues of informed consent and privacy. Every project document carried a brief description of project purpose, standard data usage protocols, and points of contact for requesting more information or alternative data usage agreements. However, participants were not asked to sign written consent forms, which tend to carry unintended connotations (such as payment) in the local context. The research reports acknowledge all participants via a collective list of names, but most participants will not be quoted by name or any distinguishing feature, due to the highly sensitive nature of inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations in their home communities. DMI Core Team members or DNH trainers may occasionally be quoted by name, because they have taken on a public role in the research.

Further, the DMI Core Team and I worked to ensure that the project held internal believability (Greenwood and Levin, 2007 p. 67) for those who contributed. For action research participants, believability typically depends on the extent of their own benefit from, and collaborative ownership in, the project that they undertake. In the current project, participants have thus far benefited primarily from capacity building on conflict sensitivity, ranging from the introductory level to the equipping of new trainers. In the near future, project participants and religious leaders across Mindanao will benefit from

DMI's publication of research findings. In terms of collaboration, we negotiated a detailed memorandum of agreement between myself the Core Team, as approved by the DMI's Board of Trustees. Despite the fact that I initially proposed the partnership, the role of the Core Team has been intentionally and continually expanded, moving us along the "continuum of positionality" (Herr and Anderson, 2005 p. 31) towards increasing local control. The Core Team is the public face of the project in Mindanao, and they will continue to provide DNH services to local religious organizations in the future. The Core Team and I share the rights to all locally-generated data, and we analyzed that data together.

III. Conclusions in the Mindanao Context

During September and October 2009, the DMI Core Team's monthly consultations were focused on data analysis and consolidation of learnings. Four key themes were identified within the research findings.

Themes of Exclusion and Inclusion. Religious associations in Mindanao operate in an atmosphere rife with patterns of systemic exclusion. There is a strong tendency for faith-based associations to be totally mono-religious and primarily mono-ethnic in composition, and to serve primarily the needs of their own identity group. Thus one frequent determinant of social impact is the level of inclusion or exclusion in the selection of members and beneficiaries. In addition to religion and ethnicity, participants consistently raised the issue of exclusion along socio-economic lines, in the form of tensions between 'haves' and 'have nots.' Where such identities overlap, as in the case of the rural Bangsamoro, who are predominantly Muslim and relatively poor, marginalization can be extreme, and associational activities are particularly likely to reinforce social segregation and majority control.

Further, there is a great sensitivity around religious proselytism, and the suspicion that Christian agencies may use social action as a means of conversion. The proselytism issue is deeply rooted in a long history of successive waves of conversion, brought about through colonization and colonially-influenced migration. Thus even if an organization is unusually inclusive in its beneficiary selection, the perceived or actual existence of a conversion motive, particularly if not disclosed, may ratchet up inter-group tensions. The majority of religious leaders and workers participating in the project readily attest to the existence of such negative social impacts, and they see DNH as very useful in addressing these challenges.

DNH for personal growth and transformation. A major strength of DNH has been its use as a personal development tool, contributing significantly to changes in the attitudes and behaviors of individual religious leaders and workers. The following is typical of participant comments: "LCP (DNH) transformed my mind . . . and changed my perspective."[18] Such changes often include an increased awareness of how one's own actions affect inter-group relations, an incremental shift from exclusive to inclusive mindsets, and a spark for formation of relationships and collaborative activity across religious and ethnic lines. This growth is difficult to categorize, but our preliminary typology of DNH-related changes includes the following: becoming more aware of the social context, accepting those who are different from oneself, extending equal respect

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[18] Evangelical Pastor, male, focus group discussion, 20 April 2007, Davao City.

to all people, taking initiative to form unusual inter-faith relationships, becoming a better follower of one's own faith through relating rightly to others, and the development of desirable personal characteristics such as humility and patience.

These individual changes, which have occurred among a significant number of people[19] and in the lives of key leaders, have also resulted in change in DMI as an organization. DNH training was very instrumental in shaping DMI leaders' vision of the organization as interfaith, and in catalyzing the original Protestant members' decisions to progressively open the organization to Roman Catholics and Muslims. Further, DNH was a key factor influencing the conceptualization of the Purok Intergenerational Care Group as an all-ages, multi-faith gathering that avoided religious exclusivism and proselytism. DMI members tend to describe their learning in spiritual terms as a 'transformation,' and they desire to expand it to others. DMI therefore requires DNH training[20] for induction and values formation among all new members. Importantly, personal growth was not the original purpose of DNH, but DNH does often have a strong influence in the inner life of the individuals who use the tool.

At the same time, the originally intended purpose of the DNH tool, which is impact analysis and planning of organizational activities, has not occurred with the same frequency in the DMI members' own churches, mosques and home organizations. To a significant extent, personal applications of DNH often come first, and lay the foundation for broader organizational uses of the tool. Organizational application of DNH becomes easier when significant numbers of people within that organization have been trained. Further, action research participants tended to be very conservative about stating that they use DNH for planning purposes, since 'planning' was viewed as implying a formal, written output. Nonetheless, there is evidence that religious leaders in Mindanao may find it difficult to use DNH for rigorous project impact analysis and planning applications. DMI has identified a number of factors contributing to the lag in organizational uptake, as described below.

DNH impact analysis patterns. The impact patterns identified in the original DNH framework require adaptation to ensure that they align with the experiences of religious audiences, and therefore become easier to understand. The two primary impact mechanisms identified in the original DNH framework, 'resource transfers' and 'implicit ethical messages,' both hold true in the Mindanao religious sector. However, there is a relatively greater emphasis on ethical messages in the religious sector, and perceptions about the role of religious leaders in a highly religious context influence impact in ways not normally found in the humanitarian aid sector. The DNH framework's 5 sub-types of 'resource transfers' and 7 sub-types of 'implicit ethical messages' require adaptation to better reflect the dynamics of religious services. DMI has also identified another mechanism, which we call 'Magnifier Effects.' The preliminary patterns identified in the Mindanao research are summarized below, with an asterisk (*) marking those that also appear in the original DNH framework.

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[19] In a written survey, nearly 100% of responding DMI members either agreed or strongly agreed with sentences stating the usefulness of *DNH* in various contexts, both inside their own church/mosque and out in the community.
[20] Together with one other training module called the *Culture of Peace,* developed by Catholic Relief Services.

Preliminary Impact Patterns Identified in the Mindanao Religious Sector

Mechanism:	Resource Transfers:* infusions of tangible or intangible resources impact inter-group relationships, either negatively or positively.	Implicit Ethical Messages:* the attitudes and actions of project implementers can either reinforce or challenge the paradigms that drive violence.	Magnifier Effects: the way the implementer deals with certain context-specific interaction patterns can amplify the impacts of both Resource Transfers and Implicit Ethical Messages.
Sub-type of mechanism:	• Distribution Effects* • Legitimization Effects*	• Disrespect, Mistrust and Competition* • Different Perspectives on Material Aid • Using Material Aid for Purposes of Persuasion • Spiritual Transformation • Blaming the Other Group	• Clarity of Intentions • Religious Leader has Authority • 'Washing my Hands' of Social Impact

* indicates mechanisms also found in the original DNH framework.

Challenges in DNH usage. Many religious leaders have used DNH extensively for developing inclusive mindsets in themselves and others, but have not maximized DNH in the planning and implementation of their work activities. The institutional culture of religious organizations tends to emphasize the positive and the spiritual, making it difficult to embrace the concept of unintended negative impacts in the social realm. Further, rigorous DNH use is analysis-driven, yet many religious audiences in Mindanao are not motivated by analytical activities.

Importantly, despite the fact that inclusive mindsets begin to form after just one DNH workshop, newer users of the DNH tool sometimes overlook systemic inter-group dominance, which Johan Galtung (1969) would term "structural violence." DNH analysis is often conducted as a self-assessment, and most religious leaders are 'insiders' to the social conflicts that they are analyzing, so they experience an understandable difficulty in adopting an objective perspective. It is not unusual for new DNH learners to enthusiastically improve communications between estranged groups, while at the same time failing to acknowledge the depth of the other's grievances. The DNH framework does in fact create an implicit 'space' for the consideration of deep grievances, which can be drawn out by a skilled facilitator. Participant perspectives typically deepen significantly over time, through a process of repeated DNH practice and mentoring, including exposure to minority perspectives. DMI has found it helpful to pair DNH with another training module[21] that examines deeper historical divisions in the Mindanowan social context. These are good solutions, but they require an intensive level of training

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[21] The *Culture of Peace* module, developed by Catholic Relief Services.

that may not be broadly sustainable in the religious sector. Thus it is also necessary to consider whether the DNH framework itself could be adjusted to include a more explicit consideration of structural violence in its context analysis component.

Project next steps. In the Mindanowan religious sector, DNH has proved transformative at the individual level, and promising at the organizational level. Nonetheless the limited proportion of examples coming from external agencies precludes us from making definitive statements about the impact analysis patterns found in the religious sector. Further, the usage challenges described above indicate that the original goal of publishing a fully contextualized DNH module during 2009 is premature. Instead, DMI will publish practitioner-friendly booklet on the lessons learned to date,[22] which will benefit religious leaders who are learning DNH in Mindanao and potentially across the Philippines, while prompting practitioner discussion as a step towards continued work in contextualizing DNH for the religious sector. The draft booklet is currently under editing and stakeholder review, and is targeted for release in September 2009. Meanwhile, demand has grown for DMI's DNH training skills, with workshop requests coming from religious groups of all faiths, plus the Davao City Multi-faith Chaplaincy Program and the chaplains of the Davao City Jail.

IV. Preliminary International Implications

Returning to the original research questions, this section draws out the preliminary implications for conflict sensitivity usage in the religious sector beyond Mindanao.

The Applicability of Conflict Sensitivity to Religious Associations. The significant attitudinal and behavioral changes observed in individuals, as well as their slower, cumulative effects in organizations, are promising findings that encourage investment. Some of the limitations encountered, such as the need to adapt DNH impact analysis patterns for the religious context, and the tendency of participants to overlook structural violence, appear to be specific to the DNH tool rather than the broader conflict sensitivity approach. Nonetheless, some of the strengths encountered, such as the ease of understanding basic DNH concepts at the grassroots level, and the unique emphasis that DNH places on personal responsibility, are also specific to the DNH tool. Thus it will be profitable to adapt the DNH tool for use in the religious sector, rather than replacing it with a different conflict sensitivity framework. The current Mindanao findings will be disseminated through journal submissions and professional networks to prompt and inform practitioner discussion, but testing is needed in a wider variety of contexts before DNH adaptations can be considered definitive for the religious sector.

Some preliminary learning is available from the religious sector in other contexts, such as my own parallel smaller-scale DNH testing in Singapore, in collaboration with the multi-faith Harmony Centre at An-Nahdhah Mosque. Most strikingly, Singapore testing confirmed the influence of DNH training on the mindsets and attitudes of religious workers, with some participants describing the resulting paradigm as the "DNA of DNH."[23] Singaporean participants also discussed behavioral change, but this has not yet been confirmed through testing, due to the limited time elapsed since DNH was

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[22] I am assisting with writing, but the DMI Core Team holds the right of editorial decision-making over the content of this practitioner-oriented publication.
[23] Anglican lay leader, female, DNH introductory workshop, 15 March 2008, Singapore.

introduced. Likewise, impact analysis patterns in Singapore do show a need for adaptation from the aid sector to the religious sector, but there is not yet enough data to determine what those new patterns might be. The primary difference between the Singapore and Mindanao findings is that Singaporean participants appear to experience fewer problems in using DNH for impact analysis and preliminary applications to organizational planning, suggesting that these challenges may be a function of using DNH in different socio-cultural contexts, rather than a problem with using DNH in the religious sector.

Based on the worldwide usage patterns observed in the humanitarian aid sector, if DNH proves applicable to the religious sector in several different contexts, then it will likely be applicable to the religious sector in any context that exhibits conflict or tension between two or more identifiable groups. The results of DNH analysis would vary widely, reflecting the endless diversity of local realities, but the applicability of the analytical framework itself would remain consistent.

At the same time, emerging learnings from the humanitarian aid sector demonstrate that even in its original context, DNH learning is not yet complete. It has long been known that DNH fosters individual change among aid workers, albeit arguably to a lesser extent that that seen among religious leaders, and that such personal change often lays the foundation for operationalizing DNH in organizational planning (Collaborative for Development Action, 2001). However, emerging research now indicates that DNH usage in formal planning is also influenced by other factors. Even among aid workers, some use DNH as a mindset, while others use it as a tool (Collaborative for Development Action, 2009). Both approaches are effective, although the use of DNH as a tool produces an evidence chain that is easier to track. Thus CDA is now considering potential adaptations to the DNH framework used by humanitarian aid workers. In the religious sector, particularly in certain socio-cultural contexts such as Mindanao, there appear to be comparatively more mindset-type users and fewer tool-type users than in the humanitarian aid sector, thus making the question of adaptation even more pressing. DNH adaptations in the religious sector must take account of parallel developments in the humanitarian aid sector, synchronizing the learning where appropriate to ensure the best possible outcome for practitioners.

Informing Associational Theory. My research informs the small body of theory on the conflict impacts of civil society associations whose mandates are not directly focused on conflict, but which nonetheless influence inter-group relations through their pursuit of their other goals. The works of Robert Putnam and Ashutosh Varshney serve as points of reference for this debate. Putnam's research on social capital in the United States (2000) makes an influential distinction between bridging and bonding social capital. Civic groups whose membership aligns with major social cleavages are said to bond members of the same identity group together. On the other hand, groups whose membership includes people on both sides of the divide are said to have a desirable bridging effect. Varshney (2002) developed similar themes in his research on Hindu-Muslim relations in India, concluding that civic linkages that are inter-communal (i.e. including both Hindus and Muslims) are key in withstanding provocations that could otherwise lead to violence.

Scholarly responses to Putnam, Varshney and the issues they raise have created a cluster of debates on how civic associations impact inter-group conflict. These efforts have surfaced useful insights, yet they tend to generalize the causes of social impact in

ways that overlook the complexity and dynamism of associational sector, and obscure the role of practitioners. The findings of the current action research project provide a micro-level exploration of the social dynamics faced by practitioners on the ground, which illuminate and sometimes call into question the scholarly generalizations, in order to develop effective solutions to the dilemmas found in the associational sector.

First, current associational theory tends to strongly emphasize either positive or negative impacts. Putnam and Varshney give more attention to the positive, while others such as Uvin (1998) and Cochrane (2005) challenging positive views by arguing that the associational sector in divided societies may itself be highly divisive. Most of these authors do acknowledge, if fleetingly, that both positive and negative impacts are possible, but they do not explore the inter-relationship between the two extremes, or the ambiguous nature of mixed impacts. In contrast, DNH analyses conducted by religious workers suggest a level of complexity and dynamism that is not captured in the current scholarly debates on the nature and causes of associational impacts. It is not always accurate to characterize sector-wide social impact as being mainly positive, or mainly negative. In many cases, social impacts vary across organizations, activities, and time frames, resulting in a simultaneous mixture of the positive and the negative. Thus the key question is not whether the overall impact is positive or negative, but rather how to assess the relative magnitude and causes of the impacts, in order to select priorities for action and position the associational sector for improvement.

Further, the current scholarly debates place a great deal of emphasis on associational structure. Putnam and Varshney emphasize heterogeneous composition as the determinant of positive impact, implying that this is true across many different locales. Social network theorists who draw on Putnam (e.g. Pickering, 2006) likewise focus on structures of human interconnectedness. Among the neglected non-structural factors, there is a notable lack of attention to religion. This is particularly surprising in the case of Varshney, who is researching groups identified in religious terms as "Hindus" and "Muslims." Since the 11 September attacks, there has been much discussion in the broader social sciences on religion and politics, but this discussion is not yet reflected in theories on the associational social impact. Nonetheless, exceptions do arise from scholars of the American trend towards faith-based organizations in service delivery (e.g. Lockhart, 2005; Wood, 1999).

In the current action research project, DMI is seen as a prominent form of "bridging" social capital (Putnam, 2000), affirming the importance of associational structure vis-à-vis major social cleavages. Nonetheless, the participants' analyses of these social cleavages consistently point to the underlying power of perceptions, values and behaviors that are non-structural in nature. DMI members indicate that it was primarily ethno-religious bias that previously kept them from forming any structural entity together with leaders of other faiths, and it was a significant change in perception that later made them willing to transcend those boundaries. Bias drives organizational exclusion and fuels the systemic dominance of the majority, while the resulting segregation of civil society in turn further reinforces bias. In DMI, a shift to inclusive mindsets has in some cases broken this cycle. Thus theories that consider organizational structure as a primary determinant of conflict impact should not overlook the key intangible elements that give those structures power.

Further, in the religiously-oriented contexts of Singapore and Mindanao, religious mindsets exercise a powerful influence in shaping public opinion and defining the

contours of ethno-religious inclusion or exclusion. Religious belief is not only important, but it is also theologically diverse and changeable. Many participating religious leaders acknowledge that all major religions contain some teachings that may promote exclusion, and others that may promote inclusion, depending on how scriptures and traditions are interpreted. Adherents of these faiths, when made aware of alternative interpretations, can and do exercise personal agency in deciding which variants of religious teachings to embrace. DMI members do not consider the adoption of theologies of inclusion and non-violence to be a sign of compromise, but rather as a part of the process of becoming a truer follower of one's own faith tradition.

Finally, implicit in these scholarly debates lies the question of how much power an association has to determine its own social impact. Putnam and Varshney are optimistic about the formation of heterogeneous organizational structures, and give little attention to the factors that bring such progressive organizations into being. In contrast, Uvin (1998), Cochrane (2005) and Molenaers (2005) see the surrounding socio-political context as the determining factor, arguing that a divided society will almost automatically produce a divisive associational sector. Fennema and Tillie (2005) argue the same principle in terms of democratic culture, stating that democratic values flow from the surrounding context into the organization, and not vice versa.

In contrast, conflict sensitivity theory argues that neither the organization nor the context is the sole determinant of social impact, but rather the impact arises from the complex and changeable interaction of both forces. DMI is an example of religious leaders who clearly do not conform to the social cleavages prevalent across Mindanao. The context does yield a powerful influence, and the associational sector in Mindanao has long been deeply divided along ethno-religious lines. Most DMI members had previously accepted and perpetuated these divisions. Yet in joining an interfaith group, DMI members have made a counter-cultural choice to promote inclusion, as have some other civil society organizations in Mindanao. DMI has evolved from a Protestant membership towards an increasingly proportional gathering of Protestants, Catholics and Muslims. This is a challenging effort in progress, and the outcome is not guaranteed.

DMI is one of a growing number of such integrated multi-faith, multi-ethnic associations in Mindanao. Their existence highlights the peril of assuming that contextual pressures will always dictate an organization's course of action. DMI's decisive change is due not only to intentional organizational decision making and the availability of 'political space' (as acknowledged by Ndegwa, 1996, and Uvin, 1998), but also to a process of individual awareness-raising and mindset changes, as a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for organizational change. DMI has thus transcended and begun to challenge the systemic exclusion found in the surrounding social context. DMI members attribute these changes in significant measure to their long-term use of the DNH tool, thus marking the adaptation of DNH as an innovation that holds significant potential for improving the social impact of religious associations operating in multi-faith conflict-vulnerable contexts.

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Appendix I: DNH Analysis, Step-by-Step Version[24]

Context Analysis

1. **Identify which groups are in conflict** or tension with each other in this community. (If there are many conflicts, then select the one that appears most likely to lead to violence or socially destructive behavior in the near future).

2. What are the **sources of tensions** (dividers) or conflicts that exist between different groups?
   - in the past, current or potential in future?
   - local, regional, national?

3. What **connectors** (things that bring people together) or capacities for peace exist between the above groups?
   - systems, institutions
   - attitudes, actions
   - values, interests
   - experiences
   - occasions, symbols

Program Impact Analysis

4. **Describe the program** *in detail* (current, future). Use the following questions to guide you:
   - Why?
   - What?
   - How?
   - With whom?
   - By whom?
   - When?

5. For each action that you plan to undertake (described above), you must check:
   - In what ways does the program **increase or decrease tensions**?
   - In what ways can the program **support or weaken the connectors**?

6. For each impact (positive or negative) identified as a side effect of the planned program:
   - **Develop program options** that might decrease negative effects and increase positive ones
   - **Check the options** developed for their impact on other connectors and dividers

7. Check the questions. Repeat the process as required, to reflect changes in your context.

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[24] CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, revised by author.

Appendix II: DNH Action Research Core Team
Davao Ministerial Interfaith, Inc., Mindanao, Philippines

Ustadz Ahmad Guinar Ampuan Al-Hadj (DNH Trainer, Vice-Chair of DMI). Ustadz Ampuan is a Press Relations Officer of the Ulama League of the Philippines and a member of the Bishops-Ulama Conference. He serves as a Muslim Chaplain of the Davao City Jail, where he received a 2007 certificate of appreciation for the good harmonious relationships between Muslim and non-Muslim inmates. Ustadz Ampuan is also a City Mayor's liaison to the local Muslim community, and a member of the anti-smoking campaign. An active educator, Ustadz Ampuan is a BEED graduate in Islamic Studies from the University of the Southern Philippines.

Reverend Rueland Badoy. Pastor Rueland serves as the Pastor of Ma-a Community Christian Church in Davao City. He grew up in Cotabato City, and studied a Bachelor of Theology at Ebenezer Bible College and Seminary in Zamboanga City. He was married to the late Aida Marie Collado and they were blessed with one son, Emmanuel Joshua Rophe. Pastor Rueland has served on the ministerial staff of PEACE Int'l Apostolic Ministries in Quezon City, Metro Manila. As an active member of DMI, Pastor Rueland serves as a trainer for the Culture of Peace seminars. His DNH experience has paved a better understanding of how to effectively bring God's message to communities.

Sister Joan D. Castro (DNH Action Research Project Core Team Leader, DNH Trainer, and Secretary of DMI). Sister Joan is a Roman Catholic Sister from the Pious Union of the Little Sisters of the Divine Mercy. She is also affiliated with the Davao Medical Center Chaplaincy and the Catholic Renewal Movement of local Santo Rosario Parish. Sister Joan has seven years of experience in community development and advocacy, serving as a trainer of Culture of Peace and Effective Parenthood seminars, and an affiliate of the Mindanao Week of Peace Celebration.

Pastor Shirley E. Papio (DNH Trainer). Pastor Shirley is a minister of the Assemblies of God currently pastoring the Communal Worship Center in Davao City with her husband, Bonie Papio. She is also a Chaplaincy Coordinator for a congressional district in Davao City, and an after-care program implementer of the Department of Health's program for Recovering Drug Dependents. Both Pastor Shirley and Pastor Bonie are actively involved with DMI. As an active DNH trainer and advocate, DNH helps Pastor Shirley to decrease community tensions in all of the services and programs that she implements.

Pastor Alan G. Richa. Pastor Alan is the senior pastor of Dumoy Family Christian Church & Learning Center in Davao City. He is also the Vice President of Faith & Light Mission Ministry in Mindanao Phil. Inc., and is active in service to Lumad communities. In Davao, he collaborates with the City Chaplaincy Services Office and the Pentecostal Fellowship of Ministers.

Brother Salvador O. "Buddy" Veloso, Jr. Brother Buddy has long served as a Roman Catholic Officer of Lectors and Commentators of the Mass in Santo Rosario Parish, Toril, Davao City. He was one of the original incorporators of the DMI Board of Trustees, served as the 2008 Chair of DMI. Brother Buddy is also a trainer of Effective Parenthood seminars for DMI. He feels that DNH has changed his outlook in life, helping him to be a better peace advocate in his family, work place and community.

Appendix III: Research Participants – Mindanao, Philippines

1. Abdul Maula P. Darindigon
2. Abdul Wahab M. Hossien
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8. Ahmad Guinar Ampuan Al-Hadj
9. Alan Richa
10. Alfredo F. Adlao
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12. Alicia T. Altamarino
13. Allan Gumarao
14. Allan Tonto Abdul
15. Alvaro Senturias
16. Ana Maria Baladad
17. Analie Lupina
18. Andres Fonagel
19. Antonio Apat
20. Argie Melicio
21. Ariel Antiporda
22. Arnel B. Cabanigan
23. Arnold N. Repoponio
24. Asuncion Janette A. Calubag
25. Aurelio P. Padura, Jr.
26. Bert Layson
27. Bonie Belonio
28. Bonifacio Papio
29. Caharodin B. Mohamedan
30. Carmencita A. Manalo
31. Cecelia Magallanes
32. Cecil Tampos
33. Charisma Bayoy
34. Christopher P. Samosino
35. Cristy C. Gallano
36. Danilo M. Muñoz
37. Digna B. Borja
38. Domingo D. Famulag
39. Edna Tion
40. Elinda Gorzalen
41. Eliseo Paquit
42. Elma Neyra
43. Elmer Obillos
44. Emilio Galleto
45. Ephraim A. Antala
46. Ereberto P. Gopo
47. Erlinda Senturias
48. Ernesto M. Artuz Jr.
49. Estrella
50. Estrella D. Rosada
51. Fe Lupian Apas
52. Felipe Bagon
53. Fred Pandian
54. Gerry Boniao
55. Gilda Llego
56. Gionaed Kasan Takulanga
57. Glenn B. Olea
58. Gus Miclat
59. Haddy S. Glamado
60. Hermie Carrillo
61. Inday Mata
62. Isau Lanzo
63. Ismael S. Barungan
64. Ismael Usman
65. Jaafar Kimpa
66. Jacinta L. Alcoriza
67. Janet Baring
68. Jerry D. Casidsid
69. Joan D. Castro
70. Jocelyn Tripoli
71. Joji Pantoja
72. Jorge T. Que
73. Josephine M. Manuel
74. Josias Llego
75. Jovito T. Gayan
76. Joyce Concepcion
77. JunJun
78. Kristine Navales
79. L. Daniel Pantoja
80. Lanie O. Barida
81. Laverlyn Fernandez
82. Leo D. Enguas
83. Leonilo A. Talaugon
84. Lerma A. Veloso
85. Levi P.Arellano
86. Lorenzo M. Talino
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88. Ma. Gemelina T Gaudicos
89. Ma. Mena J. Rollen
90. Magompara M. Magandia
91. Mahmod Mala Adilao
92. Manuel D Faan
93. Manuel Navarro
94. Maria Elena J. Bicaldo
95. Marinor Ogario
96. Marivic F. Erasquin
97. Martin S. Tutor
98. Mary Jane L. Quiao
99. Mayolito A. 'Boy' Amto
100. Mendoza Sucal
101. Meriam Rollen
102. Michael
103. Milagros Leun
104. Milo
105. Mohammed Taha Ainin
106. Monet Sabellano
107. Myla Leguro
108. Nelly D. Telebrico
109. Nelson M. Tactacon
110. Nolie P. Darindigon
111. Norie Bañados
112. Ophelia R. 'Ping' Sitjar
113. Orlando Pandato
114. Pablo Bañados
115. Pablo Besagas
116. Paciano Vistal Suarez, Sr.
117. Panny Solano
118. Perlito Lanzo
119. Pin Gallero
120. PR
121. Qashim Macadator
122. Rebecca S. Dalde
123. Richel Solania
124. Roberto P. Agsao
125. Rodrigo Ilustrisimo
126. Rodrigo 'Ojie' Bicaldo
127. Roel Plaga
128. Romeo G. Bacang
129. Romeo Reyes
130. Romulo Loreco
131. Ronie A. Intes
132. Rosita Bucao
133. Roxanne C. Patino
134. Ruben Cañada
135. Ruby M. Coma
136. Ruby Magtoto
137. Ruel Plaga
138. Rueland Badoy
139. Salvador O. 'Buddy' Veloso, Jr.
140. Sarah N. Abdullah
141. Seth A. Fabian
142. Shirley E. Papio
143. Solaiman R. de la Peña
144. Sonny Micoy
145. Teddy C. Ruaya
146. Teresita R. Antala
147. Thelma Teresita A. Castulo
148. Veronica Damosag
149. Victoriano B. Montilde
150. Willy Mosqueda
151. Anonymous
152. Anonymous
153. Anonymous
154. Anonymous
155. Anonymous
156. Anonymous
157. Anonymous
158. Anonymous
159. Anonymous
160. Anonymous