



MINDANAO PEACE STUDIES CONFERENCE VI
A SERIES OF WEBINARS
November 23-26, 2020
Fr. Saturnino Urios University, Butuan City

THEME: PEACE FOR MINDANAO IN THE NEW NORMAL

Real-World events bring to the table a bounded shift on the conversations for and of peace. Debates on the language and versions concealed in the depths of Global Peace intervention seized the red carpet that merit not only a few but all our attention.

The world awakening to the reality of its vulnerability with the resultant chaos brought about by the effects of COVID 19 pandemic that in turn has brought to light what has hitherto been unseen socio-economic and cultural asymmetries. Our responsibility has never been weighed down before us like this. An encumbrance of utmost urgency. Not only is this the time to regain and reboot our senses, our core, our values but it is that time to come together and decide to take action and actually hold on to what is essential to our very existence. A border-less campaign to battle global hunger, violent extremism and terrorism, short-comings in governance, internally displaced people, gender bias, perhaps even racism, with the absence of cura personalis and concern for the “Other.”

Given all this we carry on in pursuing the work of peacebuilding. And it is on this similar note that we continue holding the Annual Mindanao Peace Conference that began in 2015.

The worldwide scourge of COVID-19 is exacerbated by the contextual challenges brought about in a context where violent extremism is anew on the rise and effective strategies are needed for peaceful and inclusive conflict transformation, especially by fostering the role of young peace-builders. The responsible use of social media is crucial in this regard as they can – on the one hand – be used for positive peace messaging, but – on the other hand – are often misused to spread misinformation and foster discrimination and fear. These realities trigger and influence already existing conflict lines and, at the same time, manifest new conflict lines as people across different generations, genders, socio-economic and cultural locations are incommensurably impacted.

Owing to this, inclusivity and attention to various dynamics of “othering” become paramount as we struggle for peace keeping in mind that this transformation begins at the grassroots level and by forming mind sets and

educating a conflict-sensitive and dialogical life-orientation among the youth.

Mindanao Peace Studies Conference VI focuses on the new normal as an integral element to moving forward for Peace. The conference polestars on understanding ways to move forward amidst the limitations and challenges brought about by the preventive and causative measures of the COVID 19 pandemic. The conference aims to strengthen Mindanao Youth-led and Youth oriented peace building through empowering them as agents of change anchored and supported by multi-stakeholders of the academe, government and non-government organizations. A network of people marching towards a common goal in the new normal for Peace in Mindanao. Contributions on how systems, structures, government and organizations from all sectors can be rebuilt, upgraded and enhanced during and in a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world, in the anticipation of creating spaces for and sustaining peace. It targets to identify stories, narratives, practices and responses where the people and their communities are the reminders of Peace in their realities in the new normal.

With the United Nations' doctrines on peacebuilding and the World Health Organizations coverage on Health and Hunger as our guide, we are encouraging potential presenters to submit their papers on the following subjects:

- 1. Making use of mechanisms for peacebuilding and non-violent conflict transformation to prevent violent extremism: lessons learned and challenges ahead,**
- 2. The COVID 19 Pandemic: What does it mean for peacebuilding in Mindanao? How does it create new forms of exclusionary dynamics hence new lines of conflict? How do we adapt peacebuilding efforts in order to mitigate the effects of this pandemic? What opportunities can be maximized for the advancement of peace?, and**
- 3. Social Media: a blessing and a curse for youth-led and youth-oriented peacebuilding.**

Furthermore, this conference through a virtual vehicle aspires to deliver and to disentangle the different practices and modalities of the previous and somehow transition and bridge them into the new normal in order to showcase transformative and developmental change. It shall try to introduce a new conceptual reference to understand the interventions and modalities undertaken by international societies to establish, rehabilitate and welcome peace in the new normal even in turbulent circumstances.