



misfi

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The place that is Mindanao...



Mindanao is the second largest island in the archipelagic Philippines, comprising more than a third of the country's land area (10.2 million hectares).

Uniquely, Mindanao is largely populated by people of the country's three dominant faiths; the MORO people (Muslim) with its 13 ethno-linguistic groups, the LUMAD (indigenous/animists) with its 18 major tribes and the majority CHRISTIAN settlers.

Mindanao is blessed with many rich natural resources that greatly contribute to the national economy: nearly half of the nation's gold reserves, more than 65% of its nickel reserves, almost all of its rubber supplies, more than half of the nation's logs, and a substantial share of the nation's agricultural and fishing exports (banana, coconut, pineapple, mangoes, cutflowers, tuna, etc.)

In fact, more than 500 multinational corporations are currently operating in the island. Yet, the vast majority of the people in Mindanao still experience impoverishment and economic deprivation. The latest data has put more than 60% of Mindanaoans below the poverty threshold. So neglected is Mindanao that less than 15% of the national budget is allocated for Mindanao. More deeply affected are the MORO and LUMAD people by the ever-growing land expansion of the agribusiness sector and the never-ending all-out war of the government to "crush the rebellion". Today, Mindanao remains a bleeding ground where arrests, torture, disappearances, massive displacement and other forms of inhumanity are everyday reality.



Despite all these, Mindanao is still a land of promise. And the promise is its people, people who hope to attain justice, peace and prosperity in the land of plenty. Indeed, a new creation is set to emerge in Mindanao. This commitment to bring about hope has served as a virtual inspiration in the continuous formation and strengthening of programs and organizations to uplift the lives of Mindanaoans.

MIPC *and its birth.....*



The political turmoil that hit the country worsen in the late 60's and was greatly felt in war-torn Mindanao with the all-out war against the communist insurgents and the Muslim secessionists. More so, the Muslim-Christian conflict deepens as military personnel composed mostly of Christians are pitted against the Muslims rebels.

Hence in 1971, with the efforts of the Mindanao Catholic Bishops, the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference (MSPC) was established to help in the unification efforts of its people. Being extensively immersed with Mindanao realities, MSPC basically passed through a dynamic growth and development. MSPC evolved its programs vis-à-vis its expanding concerns and network.

It was in June of 1983, at its 5th Conference in Davao City that representatives of various sectors and faiths from all over Mindanao answered to the demands of the three faiths in the context of Mindanao realities and turned this activity into a momentous birth of the Mindanao Interfaith Peoples Conference (MIPC).



Today, MIPC continues to assume a key place in facilitating the formation of groups and organizations to pursue and strengthen the dream that is a just and peaceful Mindanao of different faiths living together in harmony and respect.

MIPC INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY DESK PROGRAM

SEE MINDANAO

Solidarity Exposure and Education in Mindanao



MIPC invites and accommodates friends here and abroad who are interested to experience the lives of Mindanao's tri-people poor. The integration program seeks to project Mindanao issues and concerns by immersion in the area.

The program organizes itinerary of Mindanao social landscape and offer a better understanding of prevailing issues that affect Mindanao like the Moro conflict, the backward, feudalistic Mindanao agriculture and other massive land conversion scenarios that displace the Moro and Lumad people, and the indiscriminate destruction and extinction of the very rich culture affecting the nation's 18 major Indigenous Tribes (Lumad).

Such cultural tours and immersion packages for local, national and international guests with the grassroots peoples in Mindanao greatly promote and inspire the Mindanao people's struggle for self-determination and empowerment.



**SAYAPO FALLS,
MANTAPAY,
BINONDO,
BAGANGA,
DAVAO ORIENTAL**

Backed by more than 27 years experience and expertise in facilitating guests to relevant parts around Mindanao, MIPC's exposure program is already well established and recognized by reputable entities and sectors here and abroad. Among the most prominent of these solidarity exposure and partnership alliances: the holding of INFOS convention of more than 100 international delegates in the 80s, the establishment of partnership with the Swiss group THERESA LADELI that was formally organized because of their exposure to Mindanao, among others, and the student internship program of MSU and USEP which is ongoing for 3 years now.

SIGNIFICANT PLACES TO VISIT IN MINDANAO

SITIO KAULIBAWAN, SITIO LABURON, SITIO NAHALIN BARANGAY MATUPE, SAN FERNANDO, BUKIDNON

The mountainous communities of Kaulibawanan, Laburon and Nahalin are located at the very remote section of Barangay Matupe, San Fernando, Bukidnon.

The three communities are home of the Ata-Manobo- Matigsalog tribe. Sadly, the residents are perennial victims of evacuation because they are often caught in armed confrontation between the rebels and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Nevertheless, the persevering and resilient residents of Sitio Laburon and its neighboring communities did not look at such challenges as obstacles. With their lives in constant danger, they still continue to tend their farms. That's why in 2008 MISFI, with the support of the European Union, equipped the residents with necessary knowledge through trainings in conflict management, community-based disaster management, conservation agriculture, basic health skills and sanitation, and psychosocial therapy for parents.



Subsequently, MISFI also provided the farmers of Sito Laburon with basic infrastructure like RICE/CORN MILL with WAREHOUSE, CORN SHELLER, SOLAR DRYER and most importantly, a LEVEL II WATER SYSTEM. Sitio Nahalin are also provided with a SOLAR DRYER while the residents of Sitio Kaulibawan are given FARM TOOLS, SEEDLINGS and FARM ANIMALS.

Up to now, all the trainings and the infrastructure provided by MISFI are put to good use. It didn't not stop there as the children's education in the communities was also considered.

The nearest Day Care and Primary School for the children of Sitio Laburon and its neighboring communities is in the poblacion of Barangay Matupe where the children will walk and cross the perilous river several times for two (2) hours just to reach it. Due to the distance and unsafe condition especially during rainy season, the children are not able to sustain their schooling.

Then in 2008, MISFI provided a Day Care Center in Sitio Laburon. Two years after, MISFI was accredited by DEPED to provide Grade 1 classes in the community. This year, it was also accredited to provide Grade 2 classes. Hopefully in time, Sitio Laburon will have a complete Elementary and High School education in the area.

It must also be noted that the Parents, Teachers and Community Association (PTCA) also plays a very active role in the management of the school while its People's Organization, the Laburon Farmers Association (LABUFPA) is also very supportive in the supervision of the school, especially in school campus development.



**MUNICIPALITY OF
TALAINGOD,
DAVAO DEL NORTE**



Talaingod is approximately 3 hours away from Davao City. Talaingod was created as municipality in 1991, its area was then part of the municipality of Kapalong.

Talaingod is the home of the indigenous ethnic ATA tribe that still practices centuries-old cultural and agricultural traditions. At present, the Ata population is estimated to be around 9,000 scattered in more than 90 communities along the borders of Bukidnon and Davao City.



The remaining rainforest in the area can be found in the core of Pantaron mountain range. Second growth forest can still be found scattered in peripheral communities although most of the land already has no forest cover left with just cogon encroaching the swidden fields.

Farming is mainly done by hand. The main food crops are upland rice and sweet potato. This variety of upland rice though takes 6 months before it can be harvested and given the backwardness of their farm technology, can only be produced in very limited amount.

The harvest season peaks in October but the rice holds out only until January. After harvest, the people then clear the rice stalks and plant sweet potato. For the rest of the year, sweet potato is the people's staple food.

Sitio Natulinan, Barangay Palma Gil, Talaingod, Davao del Norte



Sitio Natulinan is located in the boundaries of Davao del Norte, Bukidnon and Davao City. When MISFI first started its project implementation in 2007, the community can only be reached by horseback or by walking, crossing the river 17 times and passing through hilly trail for two to three hours. Today, it is already accessible even by trucks.

The populace belong to the Ata Manobo tribe although more Christian settlers have started to dominate in the community due to current accessibility to the area and the fast land conversion. Currently, more than 80% of the 100 households in the community are already Christian settlers while the Lumad people are forced to live in the upper hilly part of the community.

Farming of upland rice and corn is their main source of income with root crops such as sweet potato, gabi and cassava as their secondary produce. Gathering of forest twigs as firewood is also another source of income for some while others work as agricultural farm workers in nearby communities.



Looking at the radical eviction of the indigenous people in the area, MISFI, with the support of the European Union, equipped the residents with necessary knowledge through trainings in conflict management, community-based disaster management, conservation agriculture, basic health skills and sanitation, and psychosocial therapy for parents and children among others.

Subsequently, MISFI also provided the farmers of Sito Natulinan with basic infrastructure like RICE/CORN MILL with WAREHOUSE, CORN SHELLER, SOLAR DRYER and most importantly, a LEVEL II WATER SYSTEM. The residents were also given FARM TOOLS, SEEDLINGS and FARM ANIMALS.

MISFI also built an adjoined school and wellness center for its literacy-numeracy program and training for basic health services. The educational and health program of MISFI operated for two years until the Department of Education and Municipal local government finally took over in the management of the community's school services using MISFI's structure. For school year 2011-2012, there are 43 enrollees.

MT. DIWATA, MONKAYO, COMPOSTELA VALLEY



Popularly known as DIWALWAL, Barangay Mt. Diwata can be found at the topmost part of Monkayo, a 1st class municipality in the northeastern part of Compostela Valley province.

Mount Diwata is haven to tens of thousands of small and medium scale GOLD miners. Population in Diwalwal stood at around 46,000 as of 2009, more than half are mine workers (abantero) and laborers. In the mining area, more than 700 businesses thrive, among which, are gold processing plants, ball mills, gold smith and gold buying stations. There are now around 400 ball mills, 170 ball mill plants and factories in Diwalwal.

The 729-hectare Diwalwal mine site sits within the 8,100-hectare mineral reservation area declared by the Arroyo government in 2002. It is believed to contain \$14 billion worth of gold and \$4.5 billion worth of silver and about \$840 billion to \$1 trillion worth of other mineral resources in the country. This massive natural wealth has been the center of interest of mining giants locally and internationally.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) estimates that some P2 billion worth of gold is extracted in Diwalwal every year with P25 million worth of gold bought by BSP from Diwalwal miners on regular days. This could reach up to P180 million on high yielding days. According to Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Diwalwal alone produces 25% of the country's gold.



PAQUIBATO DISTRICT, DAVAO CITY



Barangay Tapak is still part of Davao City but it will take more than 5 hours from downtown Davao City aboard a private 4x4 vehicle and another 2 hours aboard an improvised motorcycle that can take at least 6 passengers, to reach Barangay Tapak. Popularly known as "HABAL-HABAL", this amazing two-wheel vehicle will traverse the arduous trek to reach this remote Ata-Manobo-Matiasalao community of Davao

Sito BUTAY is the last stop for all vehicles. In Sitio Butay, there is a Wellness Center MISFI built in 2008 as the community's center for health training, first aid application and establishment of herbal garden. MISFI also constructed a Level II Water System and Solar Dryer.

Another 2 hours trek from Sitio Butay is the next community of LABO. MISFI also donated to the community a rice/corn mill and corn sheller and a warehouse, solar dryer as well as a community wellness center.

It will take another 2 hours to reach Sitio MANGANI. MISFI also donated to the community a wellness center, rice field turtle and collapsible tent. MISFI also provided a pre-school program in the community.

Then, it's another hour to reach Sitio MIROL-O. MISFI also donated to the community a rice/corn mill and corn sheller and a warehouse, solar dryer as well as an adjoined community learning center and wellness center. MISFI also provided a pre-school program in the



As the four communities in this part of Davao City experience countless evacuations due to recurring armed confrontation between government and rebel forces, MISFI also gave trainings on Conflict Management, Community-based Disaster Management, Psychosocial Therapy for parents and children, basic health skills for community health workers, basic and advanced conservation agriculture training for farmers and basic training for community-based teachers for pre-schoolers.

MISFI has served these far-flung communities in Paquibato since five years ago. Sadly, it only takes the recent 2010 ELECTION news report of the inaccessibility of Barangay Tapak, for city officials and downtown city dwellers to take notice of the sad state of this last frontier of Davao City.

**SITIO KAHUSAYAN, BARANGAY MANUEL GUIANGA,
TUGBOK, DAVAO CITY**



Sitio Kahusayan is occupied by the Guiangan indigenous tribe with pockets of Bagobo blood.

In the 60's, an ethnocentric settlement was formally established by Datu Kaunda and Datu Awian in Sitio Kahusayan emerging from the assembly of remnant tribesmen and their generation scattered throughout the area. In the 70's, insurgency rose to alarming level that forced the people to temporarily vacate the area. In the 80's, a group from the lowlands entered the area and claimed the land.

But an actual ocular inspection verified that the indigenous people are the true occupants of the area. But just the same, the said area was reverted back to the Mt. Apo National Park.



Classically the men wear short long-sleeved jackets with elaborately ornamented trousers and brass pendants around the buttocks, kerchiefs on the heads, saches on the waist with war knives in double-pointed sheaths. Meanwhile, the women's dress designs and skirt are made of abaca fabric, with meticulously ornamented pendants on the waist.

The Guiangans are also adorned with body adornment such as armlets, pendants, bracelets, earrings and leglets. The adornment of the body comes not only by wearing such ornaments but by tattooing parts of the body in various designs with the male marking their war records in the past. The tattoos of women are also believed to be inspired by spiritual beings.

**Sitio Punol, Pagagawan, Datu Montawal,
Maguindanao**



Sitio Punol is located in the interior part of Barangay Pagagawan, Datu Montawal, Maguindanao which is about two kilometers from the national highway and about ten kilometers from the municipality of Kabacan, North Cotabato. The community is composed of 207 families as of 2009. The farmers sell their produce in Kabacan or in Pikit, North Cotabato. Sadly, the farmers always gamble with nature as the Pulangi River swells and eats up a portion of their land every time heavy rains come. The river used to be 400 meters away years ago but recently, it had already gobbled up a mosque, a madrasah and a five hectare mango plantation.

Worse, Punol is one of the communities that gets flooded every time the Malitubog-Maridagao Dam overflows. So far, the dam already submerged five barangays.

But the natural calamities are just one of their problems as they are also uprooted every 2-3 years because of the regular combat between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

These natural and manmade disasters did not deter the residents to organize the Punol Farmers Association. Such resilience inspired MISFI to assist the residents of Sitio Punol since 2004 with various projects such as agriculture trainings, feeding sessions, corn sheller, hand tractor and trailer.

With the association's earnings, it was able to extend emergency loans without interest, payable on the next harvest. Recently, it was also able to donate sacks of rice as relief assistance when the community was hit by flood. Also, every time the community footbridge is swept away by flood, the association leads in rebuilding the structure. The association has also established a multi-purpose cooperative/store that sells affordable commodities for residents' daily needs. Slowly, the people of Sitio Punol are learning to rely more on their collective strength to solve their problems.



Sitio Sinawilan Manarapan, Carmen, North Cotabato



Sitio Sinawilan is located in the hinterland of Barangay Manarapan, Carmen, North Cotabato. Sinawilan is home of the Maguindanao Muslim tribe with 62 households as of 2009. The only available public transport from the barangay proper to the community is through a motorcycle.

The community always experience evacuation due to sporadic fierce gunbattle between government forces and the Muslim rebels. Lately, the community was also hit by natural calamities like flood and drought.

Farming of corn and rice is their main source of income with coconut, banana, root crops and vegetables as their secondary sources. Other members of the family also work as agricultural farmworkers and some work as domestic helpers abroad to help in the family's basic needs.

In 2008, MISFI assisted the farmers in Sitio Sinawilan by providing them with a Rice/Corn Mill, Corn Sheller with hand tractor, Warehouse, several farm animals and farm tools. MISFI also provided the community with two (2) semi-artesian water system pumps. The MISFI assistance was part of the ACTION REPAIR PROJECT that supported by the European Union (EU).

MISFI also facilitated and conducted several trainings in the community such as Community Based Disaster Management Training, Conflict Management, Conservation Agriculture, Basic Health Skills Training, Psychosocial Therapy for adults and children, among others.

MISFI continues to monitor the community and its development until now.



The MISFI assistance did not end there. The nearest school from the community is located at barangay Manarapan proper. The children of sitio Sinawilan will walk for more than an hour to reach the school, trekking through muddy road and crossing a creek when it rains. Such harsh conditions are factors that several children stopped attending school.

In response, in 2008 MISFI built a modest school in the community for its literacy-numeracy program for adults and pre-school children. The Parents, Teachers and Community Association (PTCA) was also organized to oversee in the management of the school. For school year 2011-2012, there are twenty four (24) students in the pre-school program.

SEE MINDANAO



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