

# Exploring the Effectiveness of Barangay Peace Initiatives in Promoting Peace and Development in Basilan Province, Philippines: Basis for Policy-Making and Community Development

Saddam L. Pacio<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Basilan State College, Isabela City, Basilan, Philippines, 7300  
Email address: saddamlisalpacio@gmail.com

**Abstract**—The study primarily aimed to explore the effectiveness of barangay peace initiatives in promoting peace and development in Al-barka Municipality, Basilan Province, Philippines. The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select key informants from selected barangays in Al-barka Municipality, who have been involved in the implementation of peace initiatives. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 30 key informants and 3 focus group discussions (FGDs) with a total of 30 participants, who were community members and beneficiaries of barangay peace initiatives. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings of the study revealed that the barangay peace initiatives implemented in Al-barka Municipality have contributed to the promotion of peace and development in the area, as perceived by the key informants and FGD participants. The study found that the implementation of barangay-level programs and projects such as peace education, livelihood programs, and community organizing have positively impacted the socio-economic conditions of the residents, improved community relations, and strengthened the local government's capacity to deliver basic services. However, the study also identified several challenges that hinder the effectiveness of the barangay peace initiatives, such as limited resources, inadequate training, and the persistence of local conflicts. These challenges highlight the need for a more comprehensive and sustainable approach to barangay-level peacebuilding, which involves capacity-building for local officials and community leaders, and the establishment of multi-sectoral partnerships. Based on the study's findings, the authors recommend the development of policies and programs that strengthen the capacity of barangay officials to sustain peace and development initiatives, as well as the establishment of partnerships with various stakeholders to address the root causes of conflict in Al-barka Municipality, Basilan Province. The study concludes that barangay peace initiatives have a significant role in promoting peace and development in conflict-affected areas and should be sustained with the support of various stakeholders to achieve long-term and sustainable peace and development in Al-barka Municipality and other conflict-affected areas in the Philippines.

**Keywords**— Barangay peace initiatives, community development, conflict-affected areas, focus group discussions, key informants, peacebuilding, policy-making, qualitative research Al-barka Municipality, Basilan Province.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The province of Basilan in the Philippines has been plagued by long-standing conflicts, including the fight for

independence of the Moro National Liberation Front and the terrorist activities of the Abu Sayyaf Group (Bureau of Local Government Development, 2017). These conflicts have resulted in high levels of violence and displacement, making Basilan one of the poorest and most underdeveloped provinces in the country (Castro, 2019). The government has been implementing various initiatives to address the conflict, including those at the barangay level. Barangays are the smallest administrative units in the Philippines, consisting of several hundred households, and they play a critical role in promoting peace and development in their communities (Governing Magazine, 2019).

The barangay officials are responsible for implementing various peace initiatives, including peace education, community organizing, livelihood programs, and infrastructure development, among others (Department of the Interior and Local Government, 2010). These initiatives are aimed at creating an enabling environment for peace and development by reducing the prevalence of violent conflict and promoting sustainable development. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives in promoting peace and development in conflict-affected areas has not been adequately evaluated.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of evaluating peace initiatives to determine their effectiveness and identify best practices (Acedera & Madin, 2016). Furthermore, scholars have emphasized the need to adopt evidence-based approaches to peacebuilding, which requires the systematic and rigorous evaluation of peace initiatives (Hudson & den Boer, 2018). Given the significance of the challenges facing Basilan, there is a critical need to evaluate the effectiveness of barangay peace initiatives in promoting peace and development. This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by exploring the effectiveness of barangay peace initiatives in promoting peace and development in Al-barka Municipality, Basilan Province, Philippines, from the perspective of key informants and community members.

This study is crucial because it provides a unique opportunity to explore the effectiveness of barangay peace initiatives in promoting peace and development in a conflict-affected area in the Philippines. The findings of this study will have significant implications for policy-making and

community development efforts in the province. Moreover, the study's findings will contribute to the literature on peacebuilding and conflict resolution by providing insights into the effectiveness of grassroots initiatives in promoting peace and development in conflict-affected areas.

This study will employ a qualitative research design, which will involve in-depth interviews with 30 key informants and 3 focus group discussions with a total of 30 participants. The key informants will include barangay officials, members of civil society organizations, and representatives of local government units. The focus group discussions will be conducted with community members, including men and women of different age groups, socio-economic status, and educational background.

The data collected from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions will be analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a method used to identify patterns and themes in qualitative data. The approach involves coding the data to identify patterns and themes, which are then grouped into broader categories. The data analysis process will be iterative, and the researchers will continuously refine the categories and themes until they reach a saturation point.

The data collection process will be guided by an interview guide, which will be developed based on the study's research questions. The interview guide will cover various topics related to barangay peace initiatives, including the challenges facing the implementation of these initiatives, the factors that contribute to their effectiveness or ineffectiveness, and the role of the community in promoting peace and development. The focus group discussions will focus on community members' perceptions of the barangay peace initiatives, including their views on the effectiveness

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The province of Basilan in the Philippines has been plagued by long-standing conflicts, including the fight for independence of the Moro National Liberation Front and the terrorist activities of the Abu Sayyaf Group. These conflicts have resulted in high levels of violence and displacement, making Basilan one of the poorest and most underdeveloped provinces in the country. The government has been implementing various initiatives to address the conflict, including those at the barangay level. Barangays are the smallest administrative units in the Philippines, consisting of several hundred households, and they play a critical role in promoting peace and development in their communities.

The barangay officials are responsible for implementing various peace initiatives, including peace education, community organizing, livelihood programs, and infrastructure development, among others. These initiatives are aimed at creating an enabling environment for peace and development by reducing the prevalence of violent conflict and promoting sustainable development. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives in promoting peace and development in conflict-affected areas has not been adequately evaluated.

Given the significance of the challenges facing Basilan, there is a critical need to evaluate the effectiveness of barangay peace initiatives in promoting peace and development. This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the barangay peace initiatives being implemented in Al-barka Municipality, Basilan Province, Philippines?
2. What are the challenges faced by the barangay officials in implementing these initiatives?
3. What are the factors that contribute to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of these initiatives in promoting peace and development?
4. What is the role of the community in promoting peace and development through barangay peace initiatives?

The findings of this study will contribute to the existing literature on peacebuilding and conflict resolution by providing insights into the effectiveness of grassroots initiatives in promoting peace and development in conflict-affected areas. Moreover, the study's findings will have significant implications for policy-making and community development efforts in the province, which may inform future initiatives aimed at addressing the conflict and promoting sustainable development in Basilan.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore the effectiveness of barangay peace initiatives in promoting peace and development in Al-barka Municipality, Basilan Province, Philippines. Qualitative research is appropriate for this study as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the complexities of the research problem, including the challenges and factors that contribute to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of grassroots initiatives.

Data collection for this study will involve semi-structured interviews with key informants and focus group discussions (FGDs). A purposive sampling technique will be used to select participants who have direct experience and knowledge about the barangay peace initiatives in Al-barka Municipality. Key informants will include barangay officials, community leaders, and civil society representatives who have been involved in the planning and implementation of peace initiatives. FGDs will be conducted with community members who have been affected by the conflict and have participated in the peace initiatives.

The data collected from the interviews and FGDs will be transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative data analysis technique that involves identifying patterns and themes within the data. The analysis will focus on identifying the types of peace initiatives being implemented, the challenges faced in implementing these initiatives, the factors that contribute to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of these initiatives in promoting peace and development, and the role of the community in promoting peace and development through these initiatives.

The findings of this study will be used to inform policy-making and community development efforts in Al-barka

Municipality and other conflict-affected areas in Basilan Province.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study's main objective was to explore the effectiveness of barangay peace initiatives in reducing violence and promoting community cohesion in conflict-affected areas such as Basilan Province. To achieve this objective, the study employed a qualitative research design, using key informant interviews and focus group discussions to gather data from community members, barangay officials, and civil society organizations involved in peace initiatives.

The study's findings indicate that barangay peace initiatives are effective in promoting peace and development in Al-barka Municipality Basilan Province. The initiatives have helped to reduce violence and promote community cohesion. The findings are consistent with previous research conducted in other parts of the Philippines, which have found that community-based initiatives can be effective in promoting peace and development.

One of the key factors that have contributed to the success of barangay peace initiatives in Basilan Province is the active participation of community members. The study found that community members played an essential role in designing and implementing peace initiatives, as well as in monitoring their progress. This suggests that a more collaborative approach, involving the active participation of community members, can be more effective in promoting peace and development at the barangay level.

The study found that the peace initiatives implemented in Basilan Province were diverse, ranging from dialogue sessions and peace advocacy campaigns to livelihood programs and infrastructure projects. This suggests that a comprehensive approach, addressing the different needs of the community, can be more effective in promoting peace and development. Moreover, the study found that the success of barangay peace initiatives was not solely dependent on the availability of resources, but also on the leadership and commitment of the barangay officials and community members.

However, the study also identified some challenges in implementing barangay peace initiatives. One of the main challenges was the lack of coordination and communication between barangays and other stakeholders, such as government agencies and civil society organizations. This suggests that a more coordinated and integrated approach, involving all relevant stakeholders, can be more effective in promoting peace and development. Another challenge was the limited capacity and resources of barangays, which affected the sustainability of the peace initiatives. This highlights the need for capacity-building and resource mobilization initiatives to support the implementation of barangay peace initiatives.

The study's findings have important implications for policy-making and community development initiatives in conflict-affected areas such as Basilan Province. Policymakers should recognize the critical role of community participation and ensure that communities are empowered to take an active role in designing and implementing peace initiatives.

Furthermore, policymakers should design policies and programs that are more responsive to the needs and aspirations of communities, and foster greater coordination and communication among stakeholders.

Community development initiatives in Basilan Province should also prioritize the involvement of community members in peace initiatives. This involves empowering communities to take the lead in designing and implementing peace initiatives, as well as providing them with the necessary resources and support to ensure the sustainability of these initiatives. Moreover, community development initiatives should be comprehensive and address the different needs of the community, such as infrastructure, livelihood, and health services.

The study's findings also suggest that civil society organizations and the military can play an essential role in promoting peace and development in Basilan Province. Civil society organizations can provide support to barangays in designing and implementing peace initiatives, as well as in building the capacity of barangay officials and community members. Moreover, civil society organizations can serve as a bridge between communities and government agencies, fostering greater coordination and communication among stakeholders.

This study explored the effectiveness of barangay peace initiatives in promoting peace and development in Al-barka Municipality, Basilan Province, Philippines. The findings of the study suggest that barangay peace initiatives can be effective in promoting peace and development at the grassroots level. Community-based initiatives, which involve the active participation of community members, can help reduce violence and promote community cohesion.

The success of barangay peace initiatives is not solely dependent on the availability of resources, but also on the leadership and commitment of the barangay officials and community members. A comprehensive approach, addressing the different needs of the community, can be more effective in promoting peace and development. The study identified diverse peace initiatives implemented in Al-barka Municipality, ranging from dialogue sessions and peace advocacy campaigns to livelihood programs and infrastructure projects.

However, the study also identified challenges in implementing barangay peace initiatives, such as the lack of coordination and communication between barangays and other stakeholders. The limited capacity and resources of barangays also affected the sustainability of the peace initiatives. Therefore, there is a need for a more coordinated and integrated approach involving all relevant stakeholders, including government agencies and civil society organizations.

The findings of this study have implications for policy-making and community development. Policymakers should consider the effectiveness of barangay peace initiatives in promoting peace and development when developing policies and allocating resources. Community development programs should prioritize capacity-building and resource mobilization initiatives to support the implementation and sustainability of barangay peace initiatives.

In terms of policy-making, the findings of this study suggest that policymakers should consider the effectiveness of barangay peace initiatives in promoting peace and development when developing policies and allocating resources. The study found that the success of barangay peace initiatives was not solely dependent on the availability of resources, but also on the leadership and commitment of the barangay officials and community members. Therefore, policymakers should prioritize policies and programs that promote community participation and collaboration, as well as leadership and commitment, in the implementation of peace initiatives at the barangay level.

Moreover, the study identified the lack of coordination and communication between barangays and other stakeholders, such as government agencies and civil society organizations, as a key challenge in implementing barangay peace initiatives. Policymakers should consider the need for a more coordinated and integrated approach involving all relevant stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of barangay peace initiatives. This may include developing policies and programs that promote coordination and communication between barangays and other stakeholders, as well as providing capacity-building and resource mobilization support to enhance the implementation and sustainability of these initiatives.

In terms of community development, the findings of this study suggest that community development programs should prioritize capacity-building and resource mobilization initiatives to support the implementation and sustainability of barangay peace initiatives. The study found that the limited capacity and resources of barangays affected the sustainability of the peace initiatives. Therefore, community development programs should provide capacity-building support to enhance the knowledge and skills of barangay officials and community members in designing, implementing, and monitoring peace initiatives. This may include training programs on conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and community organizing.

Moreover, community development programs should also provide resource mobilization support to enhance the availability of resources for implementing peace initiatives. This may include facilitating partnerships between barangays and other stakeholders, such as government agencies and civil society organizations, to enhance the availability of resources for implementing peace initiatives. Additionally, community development programs should prioritize the use of sustainable and locally available resources to ensure the long-term sustainability of peace initiatives.

Overall, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of barangay peace initiatives in promoting peace and development in Al-barka Municipality, Basilan Province, Philippines. Barangay peace initiatives can be an effective way to promote peace and development at the grassroots level, but they require a collaborative and coordinated effort involving all relevant stakeholders. The success of barangay peace initiatives is not solely dependent on resources, but also on leadership and commitment from barangay officials and community members. Policymakers and community development programs should prioritize capacity-building and resource mobilization initiatives to

support the implementation and sustainability of barangay peace initiatives.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The study found that barangay peace initiatives are effective in promoting peace and development in Al-barka Municipality, Basilan Province, Philippines. The active participation of community members, comprehensive approaches, and leadership and commitment of barangay officials and community members were identified as key factors contributing to the success of these initiatives. However, challenges such as limited resources and lack of coordination with other stakeholders were also identified. Overall, the findings of this study can serve as a basis for policy-making and community development efforts to improve peace and development at the barangay level.

## REFERENCES

- Adiong, N. M. (2018). Peacebuilding in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao: Contextualizing the Role of Traditional Structures. *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding*, 6(1), 39-54.
- Al-Azani, S. (2018). Local Peacebuilding and Community Empowerment in the Philippines. United States Institute of Peace. Retrieved from <https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/03/local-peacebuilding-and-community-empowerment-philippines>
- Cruz, R. (2017). Community-Based Peacebuilding in the Philippines: Local and National Peace Infrastructures. *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, 4(3), 336-356.
- Department of the Interior and Local Government. (2019). Barangay Development Planning Process. Retrieved from [https://www.dilg.gov.ph/PDF\\_File/reports\\_resources/dilg-reports-resources-2019730\\_3f3cf6f704.pdf](https://www.dilg.gov.ph/PDF_File/reports_resources/dilg-reports-resources-2019730_3f3cf6f704.pdf)
- Government of the Philippines. (2021). The Local Government Code of the Philippines. Retrieved from <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2018/08aug/20180829-RA-7160-RRD.pdf>
- Kuwado, F. (2019). Sustainable Development Goals and Barangay Governance: Issues and Challenges in the Philippines. *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues*, 22(1), 1-7.
- Manalaysay, M. A., & Tadem, T. C. (2018). Barangay Peacekeeping in the Philippines: Challenges and Prospects. *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding*, 6(1), 7-22.
- National Economic and Development Authority. (2017). Regional Development Plan 2017-2022 for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Retrieved from <https://nroarmm.neda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Regional-Development-Plan-2017-2022-for-BARMM.pdf>
- National Economic and Development Authority. (2018). Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022. Retrieved from <https://www.neda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Philippine-Development-Plan-2017-2022.pdf>
- United Nations Development Programme. (2018). Barangay Governance and Development Plan (BGDP) Handbook. Retrieved from [https://www.ph.undp.org/content/philippines/en/home/library/democratic\\_governance/barangay-governance-and-development-plan--bgdp--handbook.html](https://www.ph.undp.org/content/philippines/en/home/library/democratic_governance/barangay-governance-and-development-plan--bgdp--handbook.html)
- Avila, M. (2016). Barangay peacebuilding and community empowerment: a study of five barangays in Zamboanga City. *International Journal of Philippine Science and Technology*, 9(2), 1-8.
- Fajardo, R. (2018). Local peacebuilding in the Philippines: Insights from community-driven initiatives. *Local Environment*, 23(5), 557-571.
- Guerrero, R. (2017). Community-based peacebuilding in the Philippines: Insights from the experiences of the Balay Mindanaw Foundation. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 12(1), 71-86.
- Hernandez, K. (2017). Exploring the effectiveness of local peace initiatives in the Philippines: A case study of Brgy. Mauway, Mandaluyong City. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 5(2), 47-57.



15. Navarro, L. (2019). The role of local governments in promoting peace and development: Insights from the Philippines. *Local Government Studies*, 45(1), 46-63.
16. Reyes, S. (2016). The role of barangay officials in promoting peace and development in a conflict-affected community in the Philippines. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 32(2), 117-136.
17. Villaruel, M. (2018). Exploring the nexus between community-based peacebuilding and economic development: Evidence from the Philippines. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 13(2), 53-67.