Farms not Arms: The Role of Women in Conflict-vulnerable Communities in the Philippines

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AMAEP (ACIAR Mindanao Agricultural Extension Project)

- September 2013 March 2019
- Funding Agency: ACIAR (Australian Centre for International Agriculture Research)
- Implementing Partners:
 - RMIT University, Landcare Foundation of the Phils. Inc., UP Los Banos, and UP Mindanao
- Monitoring Team:
 - PCAARRD-DOST (Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic, Natural Resources for
 - Research and Development Department of Science and Technology)
- Conflict-vulnerable areas:
 - Koronadal, South Cotabato
 - Ampatuan, Maguindanao
 - ▶ Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay

AMAEP (ACIAR Mindanao Agricultural Extension Project) Sites



Livelihood improvement project through developing a better agricultural extension model (LIFE) in conflict-vulnerable communities



ACIAR Mindanao Agricultural Extension Project (AMAEP) key outcomes

- Increase in farmers' income to as much as 80% and presence/increase in savings
- Positive correlation between social capital and economic improvement
- Significant breakdown in barriers between previously distant groups (eg tri-people)
- Interest in adoption of the LIFE model approach by more than five local government units and development agencies
- Changed their identity as a place associated with conflict (eg massacre) to a productive agricultural place where people have more mobility







Capturing women's experiences

- Baseline survey (185 respondents)
- Observations
- Workshops and activities
- Case study (interviews with 16 women in the three sites: Koronadal, Maguindanao and Zamboanga Sibugay)
- Among the 16 women, 2 were presidents of the association, 8 were officers and the rest were members

Project outcomes for women farmers

- Economic empowerment
- Developed self-confidence (participated and won in contests, recognised as a legitimate actor in conflict dialogues)
- Took on leadership roles
- Expanded networks and developed trust
- Improved well-being through social gatherings
- Provided hope (agnafat) and the chance to dream again





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Some observations and recommendations

- Livelihood improvement is an important peacebuilding mechanism. When you address the need for food, you also restore the dignity of people who have been displaced, oppressed and abandoned.
- Women are agents who help build resilient communities. An enabling environment can be developed through local government unit programs on gender and development (GAD).
- Action-research approach helps the team and the community reflect.
- Hope is as important as food.



https://sites.google.com/site/improved extensionproject/

