

Executive Committee of the Mindanao Conversations

Xavier University, Cagayan de Oro

April 14, 2014

Members Present

Fr. Joel Tabora (Chair)
Datu Mussolini Lidasan
Fr. Bong Dahunan
Fr. Willy Samson
Ms Gail de la Rita
Atty. Jimmy Hofilena
Mr. Vinci Bueza (Secretary)

1. *Prayer*

- Mussolini Lidasan led the prayer.

2. *Minutes of the last meeting*

- On agenda number 4, 7th item, from “Fr. Samson answered Atty. Hofilena” change to “Fr. Samson answered Ms de la Rita”.
- Chair moved that the minutes be approved.
- The motion was seconded.
- The Minutes were approved as corrected.

3. *Agenda*

- The focus of the discussions are on the short term agenda culled from the action points.

The Profile of Leader for Mindanao

- Hofilena: Can we tie it up with Action Point number 4? The Profile of the IP leader?
- Tabora: Yes, but at this point we should not focus on the IP yet.
- Fr Tabora asked the members for their initial thoughts on the profile of the Leader for Mindanao. For him, he said, the leader must be an advocate for the development of mindanao, and one who promotes religious diversity.
- Dahunan: One of integrity. One who works for peace, committed to peace. Integrity in terms of power.
- Samson: In-depth knowledge of Mindanao issues. Major knowledge in the different undercurrents in Mindanao. A general desire for changes in Mindanao. Openness for collaboration to change. Openness to learn.
- Lidasan: Leader who has knowledge of the pluralism in our cultures. Knows how to dialogue. Character-wise: credible. A track record of leadership.
- Tabora: Commitment to common good and social justice.
- Hofilena: Born, or if not born, has lived in Mindanao.
- Fr. Tabora added that “A lived experience here in Mindanao” may also be applied.
- Samson: Self-awareness of one’s prejudices and biases.
- de la Rita: An openness for embracing differences in cultures and peoples in Mindanao.
- Samson: Character-wise: the ability to discern. In order to lead the group, discernment is very important.
- Tabora: We can emphasise “the attitude of discernment”. Faith-based leadership that is open to other faiths. Leadership based on spirituality.

- Hofilena: If committed to peace, can we specify “one who denounces violence”?
- Tabora: In the light of the Zamboanga Siege, that might be difficult. But the concept may be evolved.
- Samson: Can we also throw the question of a “profile of Leader” to the different schools and institutions because each has a different profile of a leader?
- Tabora: That would definitely be part of the agenda. But we [the Execom] might call action that individual schools can not.

RESOLVED: That on the basis of this discussion a profile of the Leader for Mindanao will be drafted by the Secretary for the approval of the Execom

Ateneos and parishes to articulate how they are forming leaders for Mindanao

- Tabora: Each school and parish can write a report on this. The committee will follow up.
- Dahunan: For parishes, this can be coursed through the Bukidnon Mission District.
- Hofilena: Is this essentially a survey? What they are doing or what they intend to do?
- Tabora: The idea is to know what they are doing.
- de la Rita: This isn’t necessarily aligned with the profile we intend to do?
- Tabora: Not necessarily. But we can then check if what we are doing are aligned to what they are already doing.
- Samson: Does this include Iloilo, Culion, Cebu?
- Tabora: We can share our material to JBEC.
- Dahunan: We can also do this with the parochial schools in Bukidnon that the Society of Jesus are working with.

RESOLVED: Mindanao Ateneos and parishes to articulate how they are forming leaders for Mindanao. (Secretary will send a survey form to the different institutions)

Inventory of formal and informal leaders.

- Tabora: Mindanawon is already working on the inventory of formal and informal leaders that the Mindanawon Institute (ADDU) are engaged with.
- Lidasan: Al Qalam is also working on a list. Who to talk to and who not to talk to.
- Hofilena: Is this only for Mindanao?
- Tabora: Yes.
- Hofilena: This can also include national leaders for Mindanao. Society of Jesus Social Apostolate (SJSA), for example, has already worked on a list, “anak ng mga politico”.
- Lidasan: Will this also include the Bangsamoro leaders? Those in favour of forming democratic parties?
- Tabora: If the MILF or MNLF is working on a political party, we are open to that.

RESOLVED: Mindanao Ateneos and parishes to create an inventory of formal and informal leaders they are engaged with. (Secretary will send a form to the different institutions)

IP Leader Profile

- Dahunan: The IP leader must be rooted in the culture of his/her ethnolinguistic group desiring of the common good.
- Samson: I think we also need to hear their sentiments. We need to hear their voice in order to understand what is happening.
- Tabora: in this context, we need to affirm the current concerns and fears of the IP. Fr. Alejo talked with Ben Abadiano and they are optimistic with a collaboration on IP leadership. They are also locating the final site for a leadership centre. The best possibility now is Makilala in Mt. Apo. Further necessary step is serious planning for the leadership centre.
- Hofilena: Is the “born in” necessary in this case?
- Tabora: I don’t think advocates can be considered IP leaders.
- Hofilena: So this means, we need to qualify the profile as being born in an ethnolinguistic group.
- Tabora: In that case, yes.
- de la Rita: I think we also need to consult with our offices who are engaged with IPs, given their own experience.
- Tabora: “Do something until somebody can do it better.” We come up with a statement then people can improve it. If we don’t act like that, we don’t get things done. What we will do will be subject to improvement.

More Pakighinabi sessions

- Tabora: This will also be addressed to our presidents. Different issues will have to be addressed.
- de la Rita: we are also already facilitating different fora. Is this a specific format?
- Tabora: I think the important part here is that it is multi-disciplinal and it is backed up by the social media.
- Samson: In Zamboanga, there are so many conversations but the discussions are very localised. I agree that after the fora, there must be a certain level of communication outside.
- Tabora to Dahunan: Are the parishes ok with this?
- Dahunan: Yes. We have internet connection available.
- Lidasan invited everyone to the Pakighinabi Peace Lens.
- Tabora: Al Qalam will pay for the Execom members if they decide to come to the April 30 pakighinabi session. The April 30 topic is Shari’ah law.
- The books “Bangsamoro: Documents and Materials” and Yusingco’s “Rethinking the Bangsamoro” were distributed to the members.

RESOLVED: More *pakighinabi* sessions in the different Jesuit Mindanao institutions. (C/o Presidents and Parish Priests)

Support the forthcoming Muslim Intellectuals Conference

- Lidasan: The Muslim Intellectuals Conference is scheduled in the last week of May. May 26 to 28.
- Lidasan: We would like to listen to the different narratives in the ‘Bangsamoro’.
- Lidasan: We can work together for pushing for reforms.
- Lidasan: We also need to discuss the future of shariah in the Bangsamoro.
- The minimum qualification to be part of the conference is a Master’s degree (MA, MS). The conference will be a family of intellectuals. We have identified some of the AusAid scholars in Mindanao. ADDU has at least 30 AusAid scholars. Most of these scholars are members of the MILF.

- The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through their outreach foundations, has supported the initiative. They will also send speakers.
- Speakers who will bridge Arabic and Southeast Asian Islam were invited.
- Tabora: Among ourselves, are we on the same page with regards to Islam? Are there questions?
- de la Rita: there were a lot of questions in the CBCP-ECID event in Davao and even in social media about the various layers of this peace process. Eg. How come they do not talk to each other? Sharing this because this is a sentiment many of us share.
- Samson: There are so many interpretations of Islam that it is difficult to get speakers in some forum. Some groups will not attend a forum if they are not familiar with the speaker.
- Tabora: This conference is already ongoing. What is the support needed?
- Lidasan: Support for speakers, for participants. Identifying muslim intellectuals who “feel alone”. Also, assistance for venue.
- Lidasan: We plan to have this as an annual event.
- Samson shared his concerns about the Muslim Students Association in Zamboangag adding that they do not really know who controls them.
- Lidasan: I am not really sure how we can help them. Their friday prayers, even their facebook, is fundamentalist. I recommend to Ateneo de Zamboanga, that there be someone to manage them, from within the institution. Even the Islamic courses in Zamboanga must be updated because these are subjects already taken at home.
- Tabora: Do you have any recommendations of who can be a resource person to look at the courses?
- Lidasan: Mucha Shim Quiling can be a good resource person.

Support multi-level inter-faith and intra-faith dialogue

- Lidasan shared that a Strengthening Grassroots Interfaith Dialogue and Understanding (SGIDU) training conducted by the Al Qalam is ongoing.
- Tabora: How do you address intrafaith dialogue in this training?
- Lidasan: There are sessions where they discuss from among themselves.
- Lidasan: There is already a template for the 3-day training. Al Qalam can share it to the different institutions.
- Some of the major topics discussed in the SGIDU training: historical perspectives, current events, spiritual journeys. What works in our communities? What are the cultural similarities in our communities. Success stories are also shared and celebrated aside from the conflicts happening. The Common Word is also discussed in this training.
- Tabora: That is an example of an interfaith dialogue. But we also want to encourage the schools and parishes to do intra- and interfaith dialogues. To address and articulate historical wounds that have been experienced, and work towards healing. The prejudices are very strong. It is not doctrinal, it is experiential. It is important to talk about these from among Catholics ourselves.
- Samson: the pain still lingers in Zamboanga. Interreligious dialogue is heavily damaged because of the war. Discussion on current events in Zamboanga and about the internally displaced evacuees are ongoing in Zamboanga.
- The call is for all the Ateneos to do interreligious and intrareligious dialogue.
- Tabora: Each university will commit itself to 4 sessions, any type. We will see what happens and then we will evaluate them.
- Bueza: Maybe this also includes dialogue with the NPA?
- Fr. Pedro Walpole has good experience dealing with both Military and NPA.

- Samson: Perhaps we can also send feelers and tell them that we are willing to talk.
- Tabora: the Provincial also asked us to address the issue with the NPA.

RESOLVED: Each university will commit itself to four intra- or interfaith sessions for 2014-2015. (C/o Presidents)

Other Matters

- Tabora proposed a Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines - National Association of Bangsamoro Education, Inc. (CEAP-NABEI) teacher volunteer program. Under the NABEI are 1500 madaris. They are religious institutions for the proclamation and living out of the Islamic faith. The DepEd is integrating more secular type of education through content courses. Under this proposed program, CEAP member-schools send volunteers (newly graduates) to partner madaris in Mindanao and teach some of the DepEd-mandated subjects. The volunteers will be adopted by some of the families in the community.
- Tabora shared that he already talked with Br. Erguiza (CEAP) and Br. Luistro (DepEd) and both shared their support to the idea. Fr. Provincial Moreno also expressed support to the proposal.
- Tabora added that if people could be welcoming, the volunteers will be helpful.
- Tabora: this is something that would need money. But if packaged rightly, this would be worthy of all the expenses.
- Tabora: In a pitch for peace, let Murad invite Pope Francis. Animate prejudiced Christians to think again.

RESOLVED: Approval for the further exploration of the CEAP-NABEI teacher volunteer program. (C/o Chair)

4. *Varia*

- Lidasan shared that a Ligawasan Marsh study is ongoing.
- Hofilena shared about the Action Point Deliverable on Developing Economists for Mindanao. He said that graduate and postgraduate degrees in economics are being given by ADMU. He already talked with the chair of the ADMU Department of Economics. In principle, the Department supports the initiative. There are costs involved, but the Execom can still explore the costing, transportation, etc. The courses will be given in Mindanao.

5. *Adjournment*

- The Execom member agreed to have the next meeting on May 25 (Sunday) in Cebu. Details to be sent my email.
- The Execom adjourned at 12:05 pm.