

Self-presentation

Initiative for International Dialogue

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Self-presentation of the Initiative for International Dialogue (IID) taken from their website, July 16, 2007.

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Beginnings

IID was officially founded in August 1988, two years after the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines. Even earlier, the founders – including the incumbent Executive Director — have been deeply involved in the anti-dictatorship struggle and were at that time engaged in generating international support for the cause. The support solicited was essentially political, technical, material and financial and most of these emanated from Western or advanced and developed countries.

IID's progenitors however also realized that the discourse on international solidarity had to be "two-way" and not only focused on getting "wherewithal" assistance for the Philippine social movement, but rather be a throbbing dynamic between two parties, or more so, two or more "peoples". They believed it should be about support and sharing of each other's oftentimes common as well as each other's unique experiences, learning, methodologies and stories. This brand of solidarity—south-south, people-to-people internationalism, was more lasting and is the discourse that IID wanted to develop, practice and propagate not only within the Philippine social movement, but also among partners and takers abroad.

Having ousted the dictator Marcos in part due to intense solidarity from overseas, the founders of IID felt that the Filipino people, particularly civil society — was a wellspring of acquired knowledge in the business of social struggle and was thus posited if not obliged to share these to others specially those communities, nations and peoples still fighting to win their own freedoms and development.

It does not mean that there was nothing to learn from those still struggling, as there was also much to, and thus IID's discourse of south-south people's solidarity was but an affirmation of how peoples tend to rediscover their passions in their own struggles while involved in the struggles of others.

Stages and Changes

IID has gone through at least five stages in its 17 years of existence. The first was the birthing and evolving phase where its south-south discourse had yet to be mainstreamed, where the institution had to plod on despite almost nil resources and support but with a robust attitude and belief in its mission. This was when IID developed and tested its methodologies on dialogue, advocacy, global education and campaigns. This was between the years 1988-1992.

The second phase, from 1992-1994, was when IID started to make its mark with pioneering programs and projects such as an internship program for Sri Lankan political refugees in the Philippines and with its handling of Asia-Pacific wide advocacy issues such as the debate on the impact of foreign military bases in the region. It was during this period that IID was asked to backstop an Asia-Pacific conference in Manila on the bases and continuing Western foreign influence in the countries in the region. This was the period where IID's methodologies were honed.

The third phase, 1994-1996, saw IID establishing itself as the pioneering and leading entity for south-south solidarity campaigns and processes in the region. Taking on the East Timor issue, IID led the campaign for their self-determination in the Asia-Pacific through the seminal coalition it established in Manila in 1994 called the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor (APCET). This was also the period where IID focused on establishing or working with networks, coalitions to pursue its objectives. APCET brought home to the region an issue that was not officially being discussed in the corridors of powers, among governments and even among civil society. Bringing the issue home — so to speak — broke the silence in the region about East Timor and thus contributed to the expansion of the space and discourse on human rights, democracy and governance as a whole. Other issues in the region that needed its own projection, support and solidarity such as Aceh, West Papua, Mindanao and most specially Burma were also at this point initially addressed by IID.

The fourth stage was when IID relocated from Manila to Davao City in southern Philippines in 1996.

This was to further animate its discourse of being a "south-south solidarity" entity at the time that the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) project of these four countries' governments was taking off. Davao was the center of this experiment which IID and its partners in the "growth" area felt lacked again the benefit of people's participation. This engagement was supported by the various OXFAM donors in the country led by NOVIB.

But transferring to Davao— away from the center, also gave IID the opportunity to further breathe life into its "south-south" discourse. Where better place to be than in an island of myriad, struggling, restless, ascendant, assertive "south" peoples and nations but in Mindanao?

Being grounded in Mindanao also gave IID's regional campaigns an edge in linking the macro and region-wide campaigns to issues and akin campaigns on the micro level. Conflict, ethnicity, self-determination, human rights, democracy, and governance issues in the region such as of Burma, Aceh, West Papua, Sri Lanka was a daily concern of the various peoples and "nations" in Mindanao. Thus, the regional and macro (East Timor, Burma, Aceh, conflict prevention) and micro (Mindanao) advocacies enriched, complemented and sometimes fed on each other.

It was during this period that IID's then foremost regional campaign issue achieved its unprecedented victory: the independence of East Timor in 1999!

The move to Davao also proved to be the catalyst of the fifth stage that IID is currently in.

A battleground of unresolved historical conflicts, Mindanao was plunged into an “all-out war” in 2000 launched by the Estrada government against Muslim rebels despite a standing ceasefire agreement. Thousands of civilians were again displaced as the cycle of violence, evacuation, social disruption, relief and rehabilitation came into full swing the nth time around. Concerned community leaders of the so-called “tri-people” of Moro, indigenous and settlers, from various and perennial grassroots conflict-areas were convened by IID to sort out and determine a sustained and comprehensive response to the tired but deadly cycle of war and violence.

This initiative led to a sustained grassroots engagement of the peace process where stakeholders in the communities themselves convened now under the Mindanao Peoples Caucus and accompanied by IID and other civil society supporters and stakeholders engage government, soldiers, generals, rebels, guerillas, donors, missions, media and international monitors with their perspectives of the war, its roots and attendant issues. NOVIB has once supported IID’s and its partners’ attendance to observe and engage the formal peace talks.

This has been the foundation of IID’s current discourse on peace-building and conflict prevention while it continues to sustain its regional networks on lobbying and campaigns on issues outside of Mindanao.

IID’s long experiences in advocacy work in the region further enrich its Mindanao engagement, while the latter grounds its regional work.

IID is thus currently engaged in conflict prevention initiatives in the regional and global levels, informed by its persistent regional solidarity campaigns and rooted by its Mindanao peace-building work.

Vision, Mission and Goals

IID envisions a world where peace, justice, freedom and democracy reign. Where nations and peoples are sovereign but interdependent, their interactions guided by the ethics and principles of equality, respect and self-determination. Where peoples have become truly independent. Where there is a new global order characterized by democracy, equality, justice and humane living

IID shall develop and promote an international orientation as integral to the framework for social transformation- whether in the local, national or global sphere.

IID will project the aspirations and struggles of the Filipino people in the process of building their nation. This, in the context of the evolution of an equitable and just world order.

IID will initiate, evolve and popularize internationalism, South-South solidarity and people’s diplomacy through the involvement in global campaigns and by advocating the issues of other South peoples.

IID will endeavor to build partnerships among peoples organizations, communities and sectoral formations with their international counterparts and advocate groups. Partnerships will be developed through internships, exchanges, study tours and joint campaigns.

IID will also implement a popular global education program targeting the grassroots and the broad NGO-PO community, integrating the discussion of global issues with the ideals of internationalism and people-to-people solidarity. The education program consists of workshops, research projects, fora, publications and establishment of a resource center.

South-South Solidarity and Internationalism

IID aims to provide one resolute link in the chain of solidarity among social movements, which are creating and shaping the civil society at a regional level.

IID's South-South framework and call for international solidarity among peoples in the South help address the gap in international development intervention. IID's relevance is shaped by the current weak intervention on the side of solidarity that address power relation and governance. Hence, the South-South framework.

IID's niche is in South-South solidarity that harnesses the potential of other groups into actions to create changes in power relations and social arrangements within each country, within the South and between the North and South. While other solidarity efforts focus on changes on economic relations, IID focuses on the political economy of such relations.

Peace in Mindanao

IID believes that any peace must not only involve the armed combatants, but also other stakeholders especially the communities affected by the conflict. It seeks to strengthen participation of grassroots Moros, Lumads (indigenous peoples) and Christian settlers in the peace process. It also works towards ensuring the indigenous or traditional ways of peacemaking are recognized, sustained, institutionalized and popularized.

IID also helps build a peace constituency in Mindanao by gathering peace advocates from various sectors. In 2001, IID organized the Mindanao Peoples Caucus (MPC) a gathering of Moro, Lumad (indigenous peoples) and Christian grassroots leaders from communities in conflict areas. In 2003, IID co-organized a conference of the major peace networks in Mindanao and Manila resulting in the formation of the Mindanao Peaceweavers. (MPW)

Democratization in Burma

IID is lobbying governments, particularly in Southeast Asia, as well as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to initiate and sustain the process for dialogue between the military junta, democratic forces and ethnic nationalities. It will pay special attention in ensuring that the substance of the demands of the ethnic nationalities is embedded in the dialogue process.

IID, along with other Philippine groups, organized the Free Burma Coalition - Philippines (FBC-Phils), a gathering of groups and individuals from various sectors campaigning for the democratization of Burma. IID is also co-founder and member of the steering group of the Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (Altsean-Burma).

Rebuilding East Timor

IID supports East Timorese civil society in seeking international sanctions against the masterminds behind the crimes in East Timor from 1975 to 1999. this includes leaders from other nations who encouraged, recognized or supported the Indonesian occupation of East Timor.

IID also helps in building the capacity of civil society organizations in East Timor, especially in areas such as issue advocacy, network-building, solidarity work and institutional development, among others. IID is currently accompanying Timor Leste Coalition with Asia and the Pacific (TILCAP), an East Timorese solidarity organization, which is an offshoot of the transformation of the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor. (APCET).

Role of the Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict

the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict is a response to the UN Secretary-General's recommendation in his Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict, (June 2001) to "organize an international conference of local, national and international NGO's on their role in conflict prevention and future interaction with the United Nations".

The GPPAC process in Southeast Asia will explore venues for cooperation by civil society organizations in existing conflict prevention mechanism in ASEAN and the UN and, if necessary, develop new mechanisms. It will also attempt at consolidating efforts by civil society organizations working in conflict prevention, security, peace building and other crosscutting themes. IID is GPPAC's Regional Initiator for Southeast Asia.

Asia-Pacific Solidarity Coalition (APSOC)

The Asia -Pacific Solidarity Coalition (APSOC) is a regional formation started in May 2004 to forge solidarity for peace, justice and human rights in the region. APSOC has founding organizations from eight Asia-Pacific countries, most of which are former affiliates of the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor (APCET) convened by IID in 1994. IID is APSOC's secretariat.

APSOC hopes to consolidate efforts of the various groups already working on national issues and amplify those efforts in the regional and international arena. APSOC's bases of unity are advocacy for human rights of peoples in the region; support for the right to self-determination of peoples as enshrined in UN principles; and prevention or resolution of conflicts.

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Partners and Networks

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Mindanao Program

Bantay Ceasefire

Mindanao Peoples Caucus (MPC)

Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP)

Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute (GZOPI)

Balay Rehabilitation Center, Incorporated

Muslim-Christian Agency for Rural Development Inc, (MuCARD)

Tri-people Partnership for Peace and Development

Panagtagbo

Immaculate Conception Parish in Pikit, Cotabato

Peksalabukan Bangsa Subanen in Zamboanga Peninsula

United Youth for Peace and Development (UNYPAD)

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

Notre Dame University (NDU) Peace Center

Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Pangligal (SALIGAN-Mindanao)

Technical Assistance Center for the Development of Rural and Urban Poor (TACDRUP)

Solidarity Networking Program

Kedalak Sulimutuk Institute (KSI) - Timor

Timor Leste Coalition for the Asia-Pacific (TILCAP)

National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB)

SOLIDAMOR- Solidarity Without Border - Indonesia

Action in Solidarity with Asia and the Pacific - Australia

Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM) - Malaysia

Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict Program

Center for Peace Education, Miriam College, Philippines

Institut Titian Perdamaian (ITP), Indonesia

Institute for Peace and Development (IPD), Indonesia

Southeast Asian Centre for e-Media (SEACEM), Malaysia

Forum Asia (Thailand)

Muslim Pattani Committee (South Thailand)

Kadalak Sulimutuk Institute (KSI), Timor Leste

Women's League of Burma (WLB)

Working Group for Weapon Reduction (WGWR), Cambodia

Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT), Cambodia

Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR)

Southeast Asia Conflict Studies Network (SEACSN)

United Lao Action Network (US-based)

Vietnam Peace and Development Foundation

Networks

Mindanao Program

Mindanao Peaceweavers (MPW) whose convenors are:

Agong Peace Network (AGONG)

Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS)

Mindanao Peace Advocates Conference (MPAC)

Mindanao Peoples Caucus (MPC)

Mindanao Peoples Peace Movement (MPPM)

Mindanao Solidarity Network (MSN) – Manila-based coalition of peace groups

ZambaSulTa (Zamboanga-Sulu-Tawi Tawi) Coalition of Peace Advocates

Burma

Asia-Pacific Peoples' Partnership for Burma (APPPB)

ASEAN Inter Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC)

Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (ALTSEAN-Burma)

Solidarity Networking Program

Free Burma Coalition-Philippines

Asia-Pacific Solidarity Coalition (APSOC)

West Papua Solidarity Network

Support Committee for Human Rights in Aceh (SCHRA)

Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict Program

Southeast Asia Centre for e-Media (SEACEM)

Asean Civil Society Conference (ACSC)

ASEAN Peoples Assembly (APA)

NGO Process for the Community of Democracies

World Forum for Democratization in Asia (WFDA)

Solidarity for Asian People's Advocacy (SAPA)

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United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP)

Umverteilen

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

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