

Peace for All: Making Peace Accessible Through Cultural Exposure and Community Engagement

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Introduction of HWPL's peace work in the Philippines

Spreading a culture of peace is a central objective outlined in Article 10 of the Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War (DPCW), a document being proposed by HWPL for adoption as international law at the United Nations. One effective approach to making peace more accessible to the citizens through culture involves utilizing community spaces such as libraries and museums. Before delving into this topic further, it is important to consider the historical background that led us to engage with these institutions.

The Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light (HWPL) was founded by Chairman Lee Man-hee here in South Korea in 2013. In order to spread his peace movement, he traveled around the world meeting leaders from various sectors. A year after, HWPL expanded its peace movement in the Philippines starting in Mindanao. On January 24, 2014, Chairman Lee initiated a civilian-led peace agreement to call for the cessation of wars in the region. In the presence of 300 representatives from various sectors, it was signed by Archbishop-Emeritus Fernando R. Capella and then Governor of Maguindanao, Esmael Mangudadatu in General Santos City. Later on, the agreement was known as "Mindanao Peace Agreement." Eventually, to honor this agreement, January 24 was proclaimed as a Day of Peace by Hon. Mangudadatu in Buluan, Maguindanao in 2015 and by Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) Chairman and now BARMM Chief Minister Ahod Ebrahim, Al Haj in Camp Darapanan in 2016.

History: 24th World Peace Tour

Mindanao was scarred by wars and conflicts. For this reason, people are hesitant to go to Mindanao. However, Chairman Lee, who is 93 years old, transcended the borders of nationality, race, and religion; he came and planted the seed of peace in the heart of the people of Mindanao.

By 2016, the 24th World Peace Tour of Chairman Lee took place in the Philippines where a number of milestones were achieved. On the same day that January 24th was proclaimed as a Day of Peace in MILF Camp Darapanan,

HWPL's second peace monument was unveiled. The peace monument symbolizes the hopes and efforts of Filipinos that worked past conflicts for the progress of peace in Mindanao. It was a significant step taken as part of the ongoing peace process between the government of the Philippines and MILF at that time, just seven months after the decommissioning and social reintegration of combatants by MILF. To date, it is regarded as a significant place by the locals who have long yearned for peace.

HWPL's peace education also pioneered in the country when the first college i.e. Cotabato City State Polytechnic College, now Cotabato State University, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with HWPL and was declared as the **1st HWPL Peace Academy**. Two years after, peace education made its way to be integrated on the national-scale through our partnership with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Through this partnership, a memorandum was issued to integrate Peace Education into the higher education curricula.

Voice of Peace

While gaining this great momentum for peace education, the pandemic strikes the whole world. Amidst this most difficult moment, instead of slowing down, HWPL doubled the efforts and utilized the online platform to organize nationwide-scale trainings to capacitate teachers and provide instructional materials for peace education. HWPL launched the Voice of Peace (VOP), a platform for volunteer teachers to be trained and exercise their profession, catering to the greatly affected students who were forced to stay home due to the pandemic. From July 30, 2020 to February 6, 2021, 19 volunteer teachers of the Voice of Peace produced 52 students empowered with 12 peace education lessons.

Continuous networking expanded our work reaching up through the DepEd. Transcending all the limitations set forth by the pandemic, HWPL developed the available 12 peace education materials to make supplementary instructional materials needed by the schools, including **lesson plan guides, PowerPoint slides, presentation scripts, course syllabus, class time proceedings and video lessons as training materials through the efforts of our experienced 19 volunteer teachers**. These are being provided in the Peace Education Capacity Building Program for school heads, superintendents, instructors and educators from all year levels. As a result to HWPL's relentless efforts, to date, a total of 16 peace education training programs were conducted which capacitated 2,579 teachers empowering them to become peace educators, with 36 schools now implementing peace education in their curriculum covering about 23,000 students.

These important achievements were made possible thanks to the dedicated efforts of volunteer teachers, utilizing a grassroots approach combined with the support of the officials of governing agencies of the education

system in the Philippines. As a result, this model and its materials are now being embraced by DepEd divisions and partner schools, to date, HWPL has signed 5 MOA and 88 MOU with educational institutions covering a total of 184 schools/universities.

History: Peace Museum/Exhibit

Moreover, to commemorate the mediation of the conflict, the city of Davao has established the 'HWPL Peace Museum', which is a special exhibition of HWPL's peace activities. On January 26, 2016, Davao City Museum (Museo Dabawenyo), prepared a space named 'HWPL Special Peace Exhibition'. The Davao City Library also added records of HWPL's peace work to their book list and hosted a continuous educational program open to the general public to promote peace.

This led to the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement with the National Library of the Philippines (NLP) on March 17, 2017 in Davao City. After 2 years, the first HWPL Peace Room was unveiled in February 2019 at the Parañaque City Public Library, marking an important milestone in HWPL's peace efforts. This dedicated space showcases the rich history of HWPL's work of peace and features a special corner where the public can easily access various peace-related materials. It serves as a powerful resource hub for anyone interested in promoting peace and understanding within the community.

Thanks to the fruitful collaboration with CHED and NLP, a remarkable initiative known as the peace corner project was born. HWPL firmly believes that one of the best ways to cease wars and conflicts is through education, and the libraries in the Philippines serve as gateways for every learner to knowledge and culture. Therefore, the establishment of peace corners in every library will create a nationwide impact in the lives of every learner by providing them access to peace-related materials, which will naturally inculcate the knowledge and culture of peace.

To date, HWPL has distributed peace corner kits to **103 libraries nationwide and 32 of which have successfully installed the Peace Corners**. The following are some of the pictures of the signed MOUs and established peace corners.

The most recent was the MOU signing and turn-over of the Peace Corner kit at Batangas State University. Let us watch the interview with the Head of Library Services of Batangas State University.

Activities in the Peace Libraries

The peace corner serves a dual purpose - it is not just for showcasing, but also for the creation of Peace Libraries and community engagement. It acts as a vibrant hub where various activities can take place, fostering a sense of connection and unity among individuals. Some of the activities HWPL conducted in the libraries are the Peace Letter Writing, IPYG Dance for Peace Turn-over Ceremony, gathering of DPCW Signature support, and coloring books. By creating awareness among students and community members, HWPL actively engages them in the important task of peacebuilding. This not only educates them about the significance of promoting peace but also encourages them to actively participate in this noble endeavor.

Peace Museum/Exhibit

Since the 24th World Peace Tour, The HWPL Peace Exhibition made its mark in spreading a culture of peace, even beyond traditional venues like museums. One such exhibition was held at the BARMM Museum from June 29 to July 5, 2022. This event showcased the significance of peace and provided visitors with a unique opportunity to learn and be inspired by its message. The Mindanao Peace Story Exhibit has been a prominent feature in various HWPL onsite events. Its presence has added a meaningful and engaging element to these gatherings, capturing the attention of attendees and showcasing the inspiring stories of peace in Mindanao. It was displayed during the screening of 'Great Legacy', a documentary about HWPL's peace work in Mindanao, held in Metro Manila and Davao City, and during the IPYG Dance for a Cause held at the Philippine Veterans Museum.

Peace Monument: Goal -> Transforming the community

In observance with the peace agreement made, the first HWPL peace monument was unveiled in Buluan, Maguindanao in 2015. After a year, the 2nd peace monument was erected in MILF Camp Darapanan in Sultan Kudarat. It took five years before the third was established and was unveiled in 2021 at Brgy. Bagua Mother, Cotabato City, a diverse community of Christians, Muslims and Indigenous Peoples who were once living in conflict. Former MILF and MNLF combatants participated in the transition to peace and donated their weapons for the construction of the peace monument. The weapons that once took the lives of many on the battlefield now become monuments of peace and light the hope of peace within the hearts of people. Abdul Karim Mangilay, former MILF combatant, said, "I'm so happy to see the peace monument at [Camp] Darapanan. Now I am donating this gun of mine for the sake of peace in this place. We are very happy in our organization because we are seeing a peaceful landmark here in our area."

In the far north, the 4th HWPL Peace Monument, the first in Luzon, was erected in Brgy. Foz, Dingras, Ilocos Norte through the "bayanihan" of the barangay residents as they helped in their own ways: men cutting bamboo

shoots to build the peace playground beside the monument, women and children recycling bottles and plates to create decorations surrounding the monument, residents giving food and water to the construction volunteers.

One of HWPL's volunteer teachers taught peace education to the children in their barangay amidst the pandemic. The parents were pleased with the positive changes they observed in their children. They began actively participating in HWPL's initiatives, including the "Planting the Trees of Peace Campaign" symbolizing the seed of peace being planted in the hearts of the residents. It also served as a promise to establish a peace monument in their area. It was fulfilled in a land that used to be an area of dispute among legal heirs. Co-heirs who are parents of some peace education students did not hesitate to donate the disputed land to establish a symbol of peace.

This story became the inspiration behind the establishment of the succeeding HWPL Peace Monuments in schools and universities. The first is in Siniloan Integrated National High School (Laguna). Inspired by this milestone CHED Commissioner Adamat declared during its unveiling ceremony that he will also establish peace monuments among the state universities and colleges (SUCs). To date, there are 16 HWPL peace monuments all over the country, 10 of which are within campuses.

The establishment of the HWPL peace monuments in various regions of the Philippines serves as a powerful symbol of the transformative power of peace. These monuments stand as testaments to the resolve and commitment of individuals and communities to break free from the chains of conflict and division.

Just as the seed of peace was planted in the hearts of the residents in what used to be conflict areas of Mindanao, these monuments inspire hope and optimism for a future where peace transcends barriers of distance, religion, and ethnicity. They symbolize the unity and cooperation necessary for lasting peace to flourish and bear fruit.

In order to achieve sustainable peace, it is crucial to involve citizens and adopt such bottom-up approach.

Peace Concert

During the 32nd World Peace Tour, on January 26, 2023, the We Are One Music Peace Festival was held at Cotabato State University (CSU), in conjunction with the celebration of the Bangsamoro Foundation Day. Around 3,000 students from different schools and youth organizations attended and through music, expressed their call for the cessation of wars around the world including Ukraine and Russia. Guest performers from the Philippines and Korea were invited.

Dance for Peace

HWPL's youth wing, the International Peace Youth Group (IPYG), organized a Virtual Dance Competition for Peace in 2022 to encourage Filipino youth dance groups of all genres to participate and support peace through their dance performances. High school dance team, Indayaw Dance Company, from Signal Village National High School in Taguig City won as the Grand Champion. Their performance was inspired by recent global issues such as the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, carrying the call to stop wars and unite the people for the sake of the future generations. They performed an interpretative dance, spoken poetry, and recited the 10 articles of the DPCW.

The dance group signed a partnership through MOU during the Turnover Ceremony held at the HWPL Peace Room. After this, the Youth Empowerment for Peace Workshop was conducted in their school. Using their talents and passion for dance, they regularly perform on IPYG and HWPL's events. Recently, they held the Dance for a Cause at the Philippine Veterans Museum, and proceeds will be used for the establishment of the Peace Monument in their school.

Challenges

Community spaces like libraries and museums hold great promise and potential for promoting a culture of peace. However, there are certain challenges that need to be addressed. One such challenge is the cost and logistics involved in producing materials, as well as ensuring their timely delivery and installation. The reporting and documentation mechanism, as well as the conduct of peace-related activities, are crucial aspects that require our attention. However, HWPL firmly believes that by uniting together and working collaboratively, we can overcome these challenges successfully. With one goal, we can join forces and make this endeavor a resounding success.

In the face of these limitations, citizen engagement becomes imperative and a grassroots methodology for policy-making is essential. It is crucial to prioritize efforts that resonate with and deeply impact citizens' memories and reflections, rather than just carrying out many activities for peace. Therefore, I advocate for a strategic policy approach to publishing the historical narrative surrounding our journey towards peace.

Future Plans

Furthermore, we believe in the important role of collaboration between private organizations and the government in advancing noble causes, such as advocating for peace, because achieving peace requires the collective effort of multiple stakeholders, and no single entity can accomplish this task alone. By working

together, we can make significant progress towards a more peaceful and harmonious society. As a result, institutionalization will take place, with peace education being a prime example. Through our collaboration with the CHED, the establishment of Peace Corners in libraries has been mandated in higher education institutions, and we will work to achieve the same among 43,090 elementary schools and 17,339 high schools through DepEd. This initiative aims to create a nurturing and tranquil environment where students can engage in peaceful discussions and gain access to resources that promote understanding, empathy, and conflict resolution. By implementing these Peace Corners, we can foster an atmosphere of harmony and tolerance within academic settings.

Today, we have successfully engaged the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) as well as the National Book Development Board, two government agencies that can play an integral role in spreading the culture of peace through libraries and museums.

HWPL has some amazing projects in mind that will captivate audiences and promote peace. One idea is to curate peace-themed exhibits in museums and peace-related journals, with a particular focus on the Mindanao peace process. This will help educate visitors about the importance of fostering harmony in the region. Another impactful project would involve screening the thought-provoking documentary "Great Legacy" along with other documentaries that delve into peace-building or war stories. These films will spark important discussions and shed light on the significance of actively working towards a peaceful society. By implementing these projects, we can create powerful experiences that bring people together and inspire them to contribute towards a more harmonious world.

I am confident that with some brainstorming, we can come up with even more innovative ideas to enhance our library programs and utilize the peace corners/Peace Libraries to increase readership and interactive engagements among school children, youth, and the community.

End climax is Culture

In sincere appreciation, esteemed participants, I extend my gratitude for joining us on this journey of peace. The enduring legacy of HWPL's endeavors resonates within the Philippines and it has been a great honor to represent the contribution of my fellow countrymen to peace.

Thank you for listening.