

2020

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Recommended Citation

Mische, Patricia M. (2020) "Two Books on Peace Education and Advocacy from the Philippines," *The Journal of Social Encounters*: Vol. 4: Iss. 2, 110-112.

Available at: https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/social_encounters/vol4/iss2/12

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Two Books on Peace Education and Advocacy from the Philippines

Patricia M. Mische*

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- *Three decades of peace education in the Philippines: Stories of hope and challenges.* Toh Swee-Hin (S.H. Toh), Virginia Cawagas, & Jasmin Nario Galace (eds). Quezon City, Philippines: Center for Peace Education, Miriam College & World Council for Curriculum and Instruction, Philippines Chapter, 2017. 266 pp. Paperback, ISBN: 978-971-0177-12-7.
- *Peace education: A pathway to a culture of peace.* Loreta Navarro-Castro & Jasmin Nario-Galace. Third edition. Quezon City, Philippines: Center for Peace Education, Miriam College, 2019. 191pp. Paperback. No ISBN.
(Free reproductions and free electronic downloads of both of these publications is permitted provided due acknowledgement is given to the Center for Peace Education. To read and download both of these publications go to <https://www.mc.edu.ph/cpe/resources> Address any inquiries regarding orders or electronic downloads to cpe@mc.edu.ph.)

The Center for Peace Education at Miriam College in Quezon City (Metro Manila) in the Philippines was founded in 1997. Its mission: “to promote a culture of peace which is a set of values, modes of behavior and ways of life that reflect respect for life and for human dignity, rejects violence in all its forms, prevents violent conflicts, and recognizes the importance of cooperation, tolerance, dialogue, and women’s participation.”

To that end the center’s activities focus on peace education and advocacy. It offers peace education courses at Miriam College and helps to infuse peace concepts and values in the college’s basic education units where students are trained in conflict resolution and peer mediation. The center also organizes events and activities that raise awareness of peace-related issues. Examples include climate change, interfaith understanding (largely Muslim-Christian), and curbing the arms trade and gun violence. And it offers workshops and training programs for teachers, families, media, and women peacekeepers in conflict areas such as Mindanao. The Center’s outreach extends far beyond the Philippines; Its staff have conducted teacher education programs in Myanmar and the University for Peace in Costa Rica, and have made presentations in Korea, Norway, the USA, the United Nations, and more. It also produces books and educational resources, among which are the two volumes being reviewed here.

The first of these books, *Three Decades of Peace Education in the Philippines*, is a collection of personal accounts by some of the Filipinos recently and currently engaged in educating for peace in formal and nonformal educational sectors. It does not purport to be a comprehensive catalog or history, nor is it a critical assessment, of peace education in the Philippines. If such a work were to be done, ample material and fascinating cases would be found predating the stories in this volume and expanding beyond them. The Philippines has a rich history in which diverse groups have struggled for democratic participation, social justice, peace and ecological sustainability; education, both formal and nonformal, has played a critical role in these struggles.

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This work starts where the 1986 People Power Revolt left off. In that nonviolent revolt hundreds of thousands of Filipinos poured into the streets to denounce election fraud, facing down soldiers, tanks and artillery, and persuading the military to join their cause, thereby toppling the authoritarian Ferdinand Marcos regime. This nonviolent outpouring was not a sudden, spontaneous transformation in Filipino public views or their courage to act. It had been preceded by widespread educational efforts in both formal and nonformal education sectors--from schools and universities, to churches, businesses, youth movements, and military retreats--that touched people in all walks of life. Its success inspired the further growth of peace education throughout the Philippines.

This book gathers some of the stories of these peace educators during the thirty-year period from 1986 to 2016. Some worked individually, offering courses or programs that lived as long their individual efforts continued, and then phased out. Others worked to institutionalize programs so that they would continue long after they retired. The locus of the education initiatives range from indigenous communities and Islamic schools and organizations in the southern island of Mindanao, to Christian and secular universities, faith-based communities and civil society networks throughout the archipelago. Collectively these stories offer an excellent overview of how peace education can be infused through existing structures and systems.

The stories are compiled in four sections. In the first section, "Visions Crystallized, Seeds Planted," authors Toh Swee Hin, Ofelia Durante and Loreta Castro recount efforts they undertook beginning in the 1980s. In the second section, "Growing Seeds in the Education System," 11 chapters describe initiatives in basic schools and institutions of higher education. The authors include Emily Lambio, Venus Budoy-Betita, Arlan Dela Cruz, Marco Gutang, Perla Arlene Ledesma, Babylyn Tubilla, Espiridion Atilano Jr., Soraya Sinsuat, Lorenzo Balili Jr., Helen Amante, Melinda Lamorena, Genevieve Kupang, and Sr. Marita Cedeno.

In the third section, "Nurturing Peace Education: Civil Society Cultivators," authors Josephine Perez, Chito Generoso, Maria Guingona-Africa, Fr. Sebastiano D'Ambra, Nina Lim-Yuson, Amabella Carumba, Rohanisa Sumndad-Usman, Beverly Orozco, Pax Christi-Miriam College, Lourdes Quisumbing, and Teresita Paed-Pedrajas share their efforts to educate for peace through civil society organizations. Their peace education work ranged from indigenous communities to governmental and intergovernmental commissions; from youth groups such as girl scouts to Pax Christi and interfaith dialogue initiatives, and even a museum. The fourth and concluding section features two stories that explore the theme "Moving Ahead, Widening the Circle," one by Jasmin Nario-Galace on measuring the impact of peace education, and the other by Virginia Cawagas on "Dreamers, Sowers, Teachers, and Healers."

This book was an outcome of a June 27-28, 2016 forum on "Sharing Stories of Hope and Challenges," held at the Center for Peace Education at Miriam College. The Forum Program and full list of participants is included in the Appendices.

Adaptations of two of the articles in this volume, by Loreta Navarro-Castro and Jasmin Nario-Galace, are included in this issue of the *Journal of Social Encounters*.

The second book, *Peace Education: A Pathway to a Culture of Peace, Third Edition*, a text designed primarily for teachers in formal school systems, but also useful in nonformal education, is an excellent introduction to the field of peace education. Developed with support from the Samuel Rubin Foundation, it begins with a Foreword by the foundation's director, Cora Weiss, and an Introduction by UN Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury, a leading figure in the UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

The book is organized in three parts: Part I, "Toward a Holistic Understanding of Peace and Peace Education," includes chapters on a holistic understanding of peace and peace education; peace education as transformative education; the comprehensive scope of peace education; and faith and spiritual traditions as resources for peace.

Part II, "Key Peace Education Themes," includes chapters on upholding human dignity; making women count for peace; challenging prejudice and building tolerance; promoting nonviolence; challenging the war system; dismantling the tools of war and violence; resolving and transforming conflict; sharing the Earth's resources; caring for the Earth; and cultivating inner peace.

Part III, "The Peaceable Classroom, Teacher and School," suggests practical classroom strategies and methodologies; discusses the attributes of a peace educator; and suggests a whole-school approach to educating for peace.

A Conclusion lays out a vision for the future with peace education playing an essential role in developing cultures of peace. Finally, there are several pages of helpful references.

All this in less than 200 pages and with practical suggestions that are useful not only for educators in the Philippines, but for educators and social-change advocates everywhere.

These two books are a valuable contribution to the fields of peace studies, peace education and peace advocacy, and to thinking about how these fields are related.

*Dr. Patricia Mische is co-founder and former president of Global Education Associates. She also is the author or co-author of several books, *Star Wars and the State of our Souls*; *Toward a Human World Order: Beyond the National Security Straitjacket*; *Toward a Global Civilization: The Contribution of Religions*; and numerous other works on peace and global education.