

Conflict Resolution Mechanisms of Tri-People Leaders in Maguindanao

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the conflict resolution mechanisms employed by tri-people leaders in Datu Odin Sinsuat, South Upi, and Upi municipalities in Maguindanao to understand how disputes among Indigenous Peoples, Muslims, and Christians were managed and how harmonious relationships were sustained. It investigated the mechanisms used, their implementation, challenges encountered, and community aspirations, and proposed a framework for effective conflict resolution.

A descriptive-qualitative design guided by phenomenology was employed to capture participants' lived experiences. Data were collected through focus group discussions, key informant interviews, interviews with conflict-involved individuals, and document analysis. Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling, including community leaders and affected members. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify key patterns and strategies.

Findings revealed that tri-people leaders adopted a holistic, culturally grounded approach emphasizing collaboration, inclusivity, neutrality, and restorative practices. Key mechanisms included dialogue, elder mediation, facilitation by local officials, hybrid councils, and referrals to higher authorities, which helped restore trust and maintain social cohesion. Challenges such as persistent rido, social mistrust, limited livelihoods, and gender disparities in leadership were identified.

The study proposed the Collaborative Conflict Resolution Mechanism Framework, which integrated traditional, exclusive, inclusive, and alternative systems across stages of diagnosis, implementation, and evaluation. The framework provides a culturally responsive and practical guide for promoting sustainable peace and inclusive leadership in tri-people communities.

Keywords: Conflict resolution, Peacebuilding, Social cohesion, Indigenous Peoples, Mediation, Restorative justice

INTRODUCTION

Mindanao, particularly Maguindanao, continues to experience persistent conflicts arising from historical grievances, contested land claims, and socio-political complexities. The presence of multiple armed groups, coupled with the pursuit of Bangsamoro autonomy by the Moro National Liberation Front and Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the assertion of ancestral domain rights by the Teduray, has resulted in overlapping claims and legal ambiguities (Biton, 2007). These conditions have contributed to entrenched mistrust, fear, and intergroup tensions, which often undermine formal peace initiatives and governance structures.

While existing literature emphasizing state-led peace processes, formal negotiations, and institutional frameworks (Mangunday, 2017; Abdul & Pandaliday, 2018; Trajano, 2019), there is limited attention to localized, community-driven mechanisms that address conflicts at the grassroots level. Tri-People communities—comprising Indigenous Peoples, Moro, and Christian settlers—have historically relied on culturally grounded practices, dialogue, and hybrid mechanisms that integrate traditional norms with formal governance (Mangunday, 2017; Trajano, 2019). Despite their critical role, these practices remain underexplored, particularly regarding how leaders implement them, navigate challenges, and promote social cohesion.

This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the conflict resolution mechanisms employed by Tri-People leaders in Datu Odin Sinsuat, South Upi and Upi municipalities. Specifically, it aims to understand the types of mechanisms practiced, the processes involved in implementing these mechanisms, the challenges faced by the communities, and the aspirations of residents to strengthen intergroup relationships. Ultimately, the study will develop a framework for community-based conflict resolution that is culturally sensitive, inclusive, and sustainable, providing practical insights for fostering peace and cohesion in multi-ethnic and conflict-affected communities.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-qualitative research design to examine the lived experiences of tri-people leaders in Maguindanao in resolving conflicts within their communities. The research aimed to capture the actual practices, strategies, and decision-making processes these leaders employ when addressing disputes among Indigenous Peoples, Muslims, and Christians. Descriptive phenomenology was used as the guiding framework to explore and describe participants lived experiences in depth (Christensen et al., 2017).

Data were collected through three focus group discussions, fourteen key informant interviews, six conflict-involved participants and document analysis. The document analysis specifically examined barangay and tribal council resolutions, narrative reports, and community records that provide evidence of the conflict resolution mechanisms applied by tri-people leaders.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Maguindanao, covering the municipalities of Datu Odin Sinsuat, South Upi, and Upi, purposively selected for their representation of Tri-People communities—Indigenous Peoples, Muslims, and Christians—who experience conflicts over leadership, land, and resources. Tri-People leaders were included for their direct experience, knowledge, and authority in managing disputes, while community members directly affected by conflicts were also selected to provide first-hand accounts.

Data were collected using multiple instruments to ensure triangulation, capturing individual experiences, collective perspectives, and expert insights. Collected data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed thematically to identify patterns, strategies, and conflict resolution mechanisms across the barangays of Kibukay, Kibleg, Mirab, Poblacion Upi, Rimpes, Romangaob, and Awang in the three municipalities.

Participants of the Study

The study involved barangay leaders, members of the council of elders, individuals who had experienced conflicts, and community members familiar with relational disputes in the three selected municipalities of Maguindanao. They were chosen as they hold leadership or decision-making roles, are directly involved in or affected by conflicts, possess practical knowledge of relational or intergroup disputes, and are willing to participate and share their experiences.

Sampling Size and Sampling Techniques

The study employed a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques to select participants who could provide rich and relevant information on conflict resolution mechanisms within the community. Purposive

sampling targeted key informants with recognized authority and experience, including members of the council of elders, barangay officials, and a former municipal official. Snowball sampling was used to identify individuals directly involved in relational conflicts, such as disputing parties and other community members with firsthand knowledge of dispute resolution. This approach also allowed the inclusion of additional participants who were deemed knowledgeable about local conflict resolution processes.

A total of twenty-four participants were included in the study. These comprised fourteen members of the council of elders, three barangay officials (including former officials), one former municipal official, and six individuals involved in conflict, drawn from Datu Odin Sinsuat, South Upi, and Upi.

Research Instrument

The study utilized three qualitative research instruments to gather comprehensive data on conflict resolution mechanisms among the tri-people communities in Maguindanao: an interview guide for conflict-involved participants (CIPs), a focus group discussion (FGD) guide, and a key informant interview (KII) guide. The interview guide for individuals directly involved in disputes explored the conflict resolution mechanisms practiced by tri-people leaders, how these mechanisms are implemented, the challenges encountered, and the participants' aspirations for strengthening good relationships within the community, as well as their insights on developing a conflict mechanism framework. The FGD guide facilitated group discussions to assess awareness and effectiveness of these mechanisms, understand how conflicts affect social, economic, and political relationships, and solicit recommendations for improving community cohesion. The KII guide targeted council of elders and local leaders to obtain detailed information about the creation and structure of councils, their processes in handling cases, the types of disputes typically filed, compliance issues, and post-resolution procedures.

Data Analysis

The study employed thematic analysis to explore the conflict resolution mechanisms, challenges, and aspirations of the Tri-people in Datu Odin Sinsuat, South Upi, and Upi, Maguindanao. This approach allowed for a systematic examination of patterns and meanings within qualitative data, providing a rich understanding of how conflicts are addressed and relationships maintained in multi-ethnic communities. Data were collected from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with council of elders, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with local leaders, and interviews with conflict-involved participants (CIPs) to capture diverse perspectives. The analysis involved multiple steps: first, significant statements reflecting participants' experiences and perceptions were identified; next, these statements were interpreted to formulate their underlying meanings; related meanings were then grouped into clusters of codes representing common ideas or processes; and finally, these clusters were synthesized into emergent themes that encapsulate the core patterns in the data.

Limitation of the Study

This study was conducted in the municipalities of Datu Odin Sinsuat, South Upi, and Upi in Maguindanao. Consequently, the findings may not be generalizable to other conflict-affected communities with different cultural, social, or political contexts. As a qualitative phenomenological study, the research emphasizes participants' lived experiences and interpretations of conflict resolution mechanisms rather than quantitatively evaluating their effectiveness. Although methodological triangulation was employed to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the results should be interpreted within the scope and context of the selected study sites and participants.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data for this study were gathered through a systematic process to ensure the collection of reliable and contextually rich information on conflict resolution mechanisms among the Tri-People communities in Maguindanao. Prior to data collection, the researcher sought permission from local authorities and explained the objectives, procedures, and confidentiality measures to all participants. Participation was voluntary, and

participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any point without consequence. Informed consent was obtained from each participant before the commencement of data collection.

Data were collected using key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and interviews with conflict-involved participants (CIPs) to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms in practice. KIIs were conducted with council elders, barangay officials, and former municipal officials to gather detailed accounts of strategies and processes used in dispute resolution. Interviews with conflict-involved participants provided firsthand perspectives on how disputes were experienced, addressed, and resolved at the community level. FGDs were organized to facilitate interactive dialogue among community members, allowing shared experiences, collective observations, and community approaches to emerge. Some participants engaged in both KIIs and FGDs to enhance data richness and support triangulation.

Due to pandemic-related restrictions, FGDs were conducted in smaller groups of 3–4 participants, promoting focused and meaningful discussions. All sessions were audio-recorded with consent and supplemented with detailed field notes. The collected data were then transcribed, coded, and analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns, strategies, challenges, and mechanisms employed in resolving conflicts within the Tri-People communities.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher places a high value on safeguarding the confidentiality and privacy of the respondent's personal information and data collected. This commitment includes obtaining informed consent before their involvement in the research, clearly communicating the study's objectives, and ensuring that identities are kept confidential unless explicit permission is granted. In addition, the researcher seeks consent before capturing any photos during the interview, demonstrating respect for the autonomy and privacy of the respondents throughout the research process.

RESULTS

1. What conflict resolution mechanisms are being practiced by the tri-people leaders in resolving conflicts?

Table 1 presented how Tri-People leaders employed collaborative and community-based mechanisms to resolve conflicts across South Upi, Upi, and Datu Odin Sinsuat. In South Upi, disputes were addressed through community meetings until mutual agreement was reached (FGD-001), with barangay officials documenting and ensuring compliance (FGD-002). Elders mediated using customary laws (FGD-003), and emphasis was placed on forgiveness and reconciliation rather than punishment (FGD-004).

In Upi, cultural and religious practices were applied to reinforce agreements (FGD-005), while follow-up monitoring ensured proper implementation (FGD-006). Neutral elders from outside the barangay were involved to maintain fairness (FGD-007).

In Datu Odin Sinsuat, leaders provided guidance for sustaining peaceful relationships (FGD-008) and referred unresolved cases to municipal or court authorities (FGD-009). The use of external neutral mediators was also practiced (FGD-010).

Table 1. Conflict Resolution Mechanisms Practiced by the tri-people leaders

Participant Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning	Clustered Theme	Emergent Theme
FGD-001	<i>“Pinag-iipon namin ang mga pamilyang may alitan sa isang pulong (pagpupulong ng komunidad) hanggang magkaisa ang lahat sa desisyon.”</i>	Inclusive dialogue promotes mutual agreement	Collaborative Decision-Making	Resolution through Collaborative Efforts

	(We gather the disputing families in a community meeting until everyone agrees.)			
FGD-002	“ <i>Su mga opisyal na barangay bidtabang silan sa kanu kapedsulat sa kapasadan para mailay tidto a kabagayon nu duwa kambala.</i> ” (Barangay officials help document the agreement and ensure compliance by the parties involved.)	Barangay officials facilitate and formalize agreements	Role of Barangay Officials	Resolution through Collaborative Efforts
FGD-003	“<i>Bamakikinegin nami su duwa kambala na ipenggulalan nami su adat betad para maumbal nami a lalan sa kanu kaumbal nami sa atulan.</i>” (We listen to both sides and apply customary law in guiding the decisions.)	Elders mediate disputes using traditional norms	Mediation by Elders	Resolution through Collaborative Efforts
FGD-004	“<i>Nakatuon kami sa kapatawaran at pagkakasundo kaysa sa pagpaparusa sa sinuman upang mapanatili ang pagkakaisa.</i>” (We focus on forgiveness and reconciliation rather than punishing anyone to maintain harmony.)	Restorative approach prioritizes relationships over punishment	Consensus-Building and Restorative Practices	Resolution through Collaborative Efforts
FGD-005	“<i>Bagamungan nami bon sa pangeni ngeni endu mga kaped pan na adat para makasiguro sa benal su nambityalan.</i>” (We apply rituals and cultural practices to ensure that agreements are respected.)	Integration of cultural and religious norms into resolutions	Cultural and Religious Norms	Resolution through Collaborative Efforts
FGD-006	“<i>Matapos maresolba ang alitan, minomonitor namin ang mga partido upang masiguro na maipapatupad nang maayos ang solusyon.</i>” (After resolving the dispute, we monitor the parties to make sure the solution is implemented properly.)	Follow-up ensures compliance and prevents recurrence	Monitoring and Compliance	Resolution through Collaborative Efforts
FGD-007	“<i>Ibagamong nami bon su mga pegkilalan a mga gaunutan sya kanu kaped a barangay para masalilid su bantang.</i>” (We involve respected elders from other barangays to maintain neutrality.)	Use of neutral mediators to enhance fairness	Neutral Mediation	Resolution through Collaborative Efforts

FGD-008	<i>“Pinapayo namin sa mga pamilya kung paano mapanatili ang mapayapang relasyon sa hinaharap.”</i> (We advise the families on how to maintain peaceful relationships moving forward.)	Guidance provided for sustaining relationships	Post-Conflict Guidance	Resolution through Collaborative Efforts
FGD-009	<i>“Upama di munot su sabala a lumpukan, isangkad nami so kaso sa opisyal nu munisipyo or taw ka korte.”</i> (If the parties refuse to comply, we refer the case to the municipal council or court.)	Referral to higher authority when local mechanisms fail	Escalation to Higher Authorities	Resolution through Collaborative Efforts
FGD-010	<i>“Kasali namin ang mga respetadong elders mula sa labas ng barangay para manatiling neutral sa mediation.”</i> (We involve respected elders from outside the barangay to maintain neutrality in mediation.)	Use of neutral mediators for fairness	Neutral Mediation	Resolution through Collaborative Efforts

2. How do tri-people leaders practice conflict resolution mechanisms in addressing disputes within their communities?

Table 2 presented how Tri-People leaders in Maguindanao resolved conflicts using collaborative, culturally grounded, and structured mechanisms. Disputes were addressed through dialogue and consensus in community meetings, councils such as the Walay Na Atulan, and multi-ethnic bodies like the Bleye Kukom and Mayor’s Council, which integrated representatives from Indigenous, Moro, and Christian groups to ensure fairness and shared responsibility (FGD-004; KI-001; KI-007; FGD-006; FGD-008). Traditional rituals and post-settlement practices, such as Kanduli, reinforced reconciliation, restored trust, and strengthened social bonds among disputing parties (FGD-003; FGD-007). Neutral elders, including those from outside the barangay, were involved to maintain impartiality, while procedural safeguards like barangay endorsements, sworn statements, site verification, and tribal leader participation ensured inclusive and legitimate resolutions (FGD-010; KI-003; KI-004). These approaches reflected a multi-layered, community-driven, and culturally sensitive system of conflict resolution among Tri-People communities.

Table 2. Conflict Resolution Mechanisms Practiced by Tri-People Leaders in Addressing Community Disputes

Participant Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning	Clustered Theme	Emergent Theme
FGD-004	<i>“Ang pag-aayos ng mga kaso ay dinadaan sa Kolaboratibong disisyon at tradisyonal na pamamaraan. Dahil ang mga kaso na madalas dindala sa council of elder’s para maayos. Kaya ginagamit naming ang ibat-ibang paraan at mekanismo na nakabasi sa uri ng mga tribo, at kaso, at kung sinu ang mga kasangkot sa kaso.”</i> (Settlements were carried out through a collaborative decision-making process rooted	Settlements are carried out collaboratively and through traditional methods, tailored to the tribe, nature of case, and involved parties.	Collaborative Decision-Making	Resolution through Collaborative Efforts

	in tradition, as all types of disputes were brought before the council of elders for resolution. So, we use different methods and mechanisms depending on the kind of tribes, the nature of cases, and who was involved in the case.)			
KI-007	<i>“Dito sa amin sa munisipyo ng Timanan South Upi, ang mga municipal opisyal ay ginagamit ang Bleye Kukom upang doon dadalhin ang alitan at ireresolba. Ang Bleye Kukom ay salitang Teduray na ang ibig sabihin ay “House of Justice.” Ito ay nagpapakita rin sa klase ng kumunidad kung papaano ina ayos ang mga away sa pamamagitan ng pakikipagdayalogo, pantay, at patas na pananagutan. Ang Bleye Kukom ay binubuo ng pitong meyembro: ang Chairman, dalawang meyembro galing sa Indigenous People (IP), dalawa galing sa Christian Settlers, at ang dalawa ay galing sa Moro.”</i> (Here in the Municipality of Timanan, South Upi, the municipal officials used to resolve conflicts of their constituents by bringing the disputants to the Bleye Kukom. Bleye Kukom is a Teduray term that translates to “House of Justice.” It reflects the community’s approach to resolving conflicts through dialogue, fairness, and shared responsibility. The House of Justice comprises seven members: the Chairman, two members from the Indigenous People (IP), two from the Christian Settlers, and two from the Moro.)	Conflicts are brought to the Bleye Kukom, a multi-ethnic council representing IP, Christian, and Moro groups, reflecting dialogue, fairness, and shared responsibility.	Multi-Ethnic Council Participation	Hybrid Conflict Mediation
FGD-003	<i>“Karamihan sa mga nasesettled naming mga kaso ay kaagad naman nagkaroon ng magandang relasyon ang magkabilang party. At lalong nagkakaroon ng malapit na relasyon sa bawat isa. Katunayan kapag natapos na ang settlement ay doon nagkakaroon ng selebrasyon na “Kanduli” at doon din silang salu-salong kumakain pati na rin kaming mga meyembro ng council ay nakikisalo na rin. Ang layunin ng Kanduli ay para ibalik ang dating pagtitiwala at limutin ang alitan. Mayroon din mga Ustadz na iniimbitado para sila ang magbasa ng “Dua” sa harap para hindi na maulit pa ang alitan at maibalik ang tiwala as bawat isa.”</i> (Most of the settled cases were immediately turned into a good relationship between the parties. The parties were becoming close to	Resolved cases include post-settlement rituals like Kaduli to restore trust and strengthen social bonds.	Restorative Practices	Relationship Reintegration

	one another. In fact, after the settlement, both parties celebrated their positive outcome by holding a Kaduli and eating together. Even we, as members of the council, joined in the feast. The objectives of the Kaduli are to restore trust and to foster the forgetting of past grievances. In that celebration, we also invited Ustadz to lead the invocational in front.)			
FGD-008	<i>“Sa munisipyo ng Datu Odin Sinsuat, ang sigalot o away ay madalas nareresolba sa Walay Na Atulan. Ang Walayn Na Atulan ay salitang Maguindanaon na ang ibig sabihin ay Bahay Pagkakasunduan. Ang mga meyembro ng Walay Na Atulan ay nagsissilbing tagapamagitan/tagapamagitan upang mapadali ang pag-uusap sa pagitan ng Tri-people isa ring daan ito para sa pagresulba ng alitan at maibalik ang pagkakaisa sa loob ng buong komunidad. Ang Walay Na Atulan ay nalikha noong 2008 sa ilalim ng inisyatibong ginawa ni Honorable Mayor Datu Lester S. Sinsuat. Ang Walay Na Atulan ay binubuo ng labin dalawang meyembro mula sa Tri-people ng munisipyo ng Datu Odin Sinsuat. Ang pag-aayus ng alitan sa Walay Na Atulan ay nakabasi sa tradtional na kaugalian at ginagawa sa pamamagitan ng kulaboratebong pagdidisisyon.”</i> (In the municipality of Datu Odin Sinsuat, conflicts among residents are often resolved in the Walay Na Atulan—a Maguindanaon term meaning “House of Settlement.” This space serves as a local venue where disputes are addressed through dialogue, mutual understanding, and community-based resolution. The members of the Walay na Atulan act as mediators in facilitating dialogue and negotiation between the Tri-people and a venue for resolving disputes and restoring harmony within the community. The Walay na Atulan was established in 2008 under the initiative of the Honorable Municipal Mayor, Datu Lester S. Sinsuat. The Walay na Atulan were composed of twelve members among the Tri-people of Datu Odin Sinsuat Municipality. Settlement is a traditional process that will be conducted through collaborative decision-making.)	Conflicts are resolved in Walay Na Atulan, combining traditional customs and collaborative decision-making.	Traditional Authority in Mediation	Neutral Facilitation

KI-001	<i>“Mana kwana bon Sir, mana kabamagadaya sa ukit a kabpabayon kanu dwa a dii bagayon. (collaborative conflict resolution) mana, kagina nya ko babedtalö lon na sya sa Walay Na Atulan a nya na langon a mga kaso a taw ka ukag na sya bon ba gaayos sa opisina na Walay Na Atulan a nya. Niya nin maana na gadtatabangan din o panon e uki a kaayos kano mga guliwan nu kamagingidi.”</i> <i>Sa palagay ko Sir ay pagtutulungan sa pagbibigay ng disisyon (Collaborative Conflict Resolution) nasabi ko ito kasi ang lahat ng mga kaso o alitan ay dito rin naaayos sa Walay Na Atulan. Kaya ibig sabihin ay pinagtutulungan ang kaso kung papaano maayos ang mga alitan ng mga tao sa komunidad.”</i> (I think, Sir, collaborative efforts like mediation and dialogue. I say that because most of the cases and conflicts were settled and brought to the Walay Na Atulan. I mean, conflicts and disputes in the community were collaboratively settled somehow through the Walay Na Atulan.)	Collaborative mediation ensures fair and collective dispute resolution.	Collaborative Decision-Making	Resolution through Collaborative Efforts
FGD-010	<i>“Kasama namin ang mga respetadong elders mula sa labas ng barangay para manatiling neutral sa mediation.”</i> (We involve respected elders from outside the barangay to maintain neutrality in mediation.)	External elders are involved to ensure neutrality and fairness in dispute resolution.	Neutral Mediation	Leadership Credibility
FGD-006	<i>“Sa loob ng pamumuno ni Municipal Mayor Ramon Piang Sr., pinatayo nya itong Mayor’ Council na naging tulay para sa pagsasayos ng sigalot ng mga taong naninirahan sa Upi, gaya ng Teduray, Muslim, at Kristiyano. Sa mga ganitong pagsasayos ng sigalot sa pagitan ng iba’t abang tribo ay mahirap at paminsan ay nauwi sa patayan. Ang Mayor’s Council ay binubuo ng anim na membro, dalawa sa Teduray dalawa sa Moro, at dalawa rin sa Christian. Ang mga meyembro ng Council ay binibigyan ng kapangyarihang makapagdesisyon sa kanilang sarili at kapag ang kaso ay kinasasangkutan ng Moro, ang mga meyembro ng Moro din ang magpreside nito. Pero sa pagitan ng dalawang tribo, ang mga meyembro ng Council ay uupo (sits en banc) upang pag-isipan kung sino ang agrabyadong panig. Ang dating kaugaliaan at ritwal ay binibigyan din ng halaga sa pagsasayos ng mga kasunduan. Ang mga kasong naisampa sa kapulisan ay</i>	Mayor’s Council resolves inter-tribe conflicts using authority, traditional rituals, and structured decision-making.	Hybrid Mediation	Structured Governance

	<i>nababawasan pagkatapos maitayo ang Mayor's Council. Ang nailunsad na programang ito ay higit na nakakatulong sa mga residente upang makaiwas sa mataas at mahirap na patakaran ng mga Kurteng Sibil (civil court) at makasegurado na ang iba't ibang tribo sa lugar ay mabigyan ng pagkakataon na maitaguyod at igalang ang kanilang kultura."</i> (During the reign of Municipal Mayor Ramon Piang Sr., he created the Mayor's Council as a venue for settling the disputes among the three main inhabitants of Upi – the Tedurays, Muslims, and Christians. In these cross-tribe conflicts, settlement becomes difficult and sometimes ends up in bloodshed. The council is composed of six elders, two members from the Tedurays, two from the Moro, and two from the Christian settlers. The members of the council take turns presiding over the council, such that if the case involves a Moro, a Moro council member will preside. In cases of cross-tribe disputes, the councils convene as a whole to deliberate and determine which party has been wronged. Traditional rituals and customs are carefully observed when agreements are made. Since the initiative began, few cases have been brought to the police. The program has helped residents avoid the financial burden and complexity of formal court proceedings, while also safeguarding and honoring the diverse cultures within the community.)			
FGD-007	<i>"Mayron isang pagkakataon na nagkaroon kami ng klayante na bumalik sa council pagkaraan ng ilang araw. Nalalaman ko yon sa isang kaibigan na nagsabi sa akin na ipafile daw sana ang kasong yong sa regular court pagkatapos nilang isampa sa aming opisina. Seguro naisip nila na mahal ang magsampa ng kaso sa regular court. Bumalik sila sa amin at inischedule naming ang hearing at bawat party ay sumang-ayon naman sa aming pasya at kalaunan ay naayos na rin. At ang dalawang pagkatunggali ay kaagad nakaroon ng Kanduli bilang simbolo ng kanilang matatag na pagkakaibigan muli."</i> (There was a time when we had a client who returned to the council after a few days. I know it because one of my friends told me	Returned disputants were reintegrated and reconciliation celebrated through Kaduli.	Restorative Practices	Relationship Reintegration

	that they will file the case in the regular court after lodging the case at our office. Perhaps they realize that filing a case in a regular court is costly. They returned, we held the hearing, and both sides entrusted us with their case. Ultimately, they reached a peaceful resolution. That very day, they celebrated the success of their settlement—and once again, Kaduli stood as a living emblem of their restored bond.)			
KI-004	<i>“Ang barangay official ay magsusumite ng endorsement letter dito sa opisina namin (Bleye Kukom) kung ang alitan ay hindi nasesettle sa barangay level. Pagkatapos nyon, ang mga meyembro ng council ay pag-aralan ang kaso lalo na kung ang alitan ay tungkol sa lupa. Ngayon, ang mga meyembro ng council ay magkaconduct ng inisyal na inbistigasyon sa kaso at pinupuntahan mismo ang lupa na pinag-aagawan ng magkabilang panig para makita ng actual saka iseset ang schedule ng hearing. Ngayon, ang dalawang magkatunggali ay nirerequire na magsumite ng sworn statement at anu pang bagay na magpapatunay na ang lupang kanilang inaangkin ay talagang sa kanya. At nirerequire pa rin ang magkabilang panig na magdala ng Timuay/Datu ng kanilang pamilya sa opisina sa araw ng hearing.”</i> (The barangay officials submit an endorsement letter to our office if disputes are not settled at the barangay level. The council members now study the case, especially if it concerns land disputes. The council members conduct initial investigations and schedule the hearings. Both parties are required to submit a sworn statement and any documents to prove that the land they are claiming is their own. Both party is also required to bring along their tribal leaders during the hearing.)	Formal procedure ensures inclusive participation, investigation, and tribal representation.	Inclusive Investigation	Procedural Fairness
KI-003	<i>“Ang legal na proseso ay bago madala ang kaso sa council para sa hearing ay mag endorso ang barangay chairperson kapag hindi na-ayos ang kaso sa barangay level.”</i> (The legal procedure before the case was brought to the councils for hearing was done through the endorsement of the barangay chairperson if the case was not settled at the barangay level.)	Endorsement process ensures disputes not resolved at the barangay level reach council hearings.	Endorsement Process	Authority Verification

3. What are the challenges being encountered by the Tri-people?

Table 3 presented how conflict in Tri-People communities of Maguindanao generated profound social, economic, and political consequences. Persistent fear and distrust disrupted daily life, weakened social cohesion, and increased vulnerability to violence, while social isolation undermined education, youth development, and cultural connections (FGD-009; I-009; KI-007; KI-005; I-011). Economically, conflict restricted mobility, access to land, markets, and employment, perpetuating poverty and stalling community development (KI-008; KI-004; FGD-010; KI-001). Politically, mistrust and territorial limitations diminished influence, eroded public confidence, and fueled election-related tensions, especially when traditional peace mechanisms were neglected (KI-006; FGD-008; FGD-009; I-012; KI-004).

Table 3. Challenges Encountered by the Tri-people communities

Participant Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning	Clustered Theme	Emergent Theme
FGD-009	<i>“Ang epekto ng takot at araw-araw na away ay magbubunga ng pag-alala sa mga posibling pag-atake ng kalaban. Sa ganitong pagkakataon ay magresulta ng kahirapan.”</i> (The impact of fear and conflict on daily life creates an anxious feeling of the possible attack by their enemy. This situation will result in a miserable condition. The participants revealed the following. People have always been worried that their enemy might attack them at any time.)	Persistent fear from ongoing conflicts causes anxiety, insecurity, and worsens living conditions.	Impact of Fear and Insecurity	Disrupted Social Interaction and Sense of Community Safety
I-009	<i>“Kapag ang tiwala ang at relasyon ay nasira, ay tuluyan ng mawala ang pagkakaisa, sapagkat mayroon ng namamagitan sa pagitan ng mga grupo at maging mahirap ng abutin ang pagkakasundo sa mapayapang paraan. At ang pinakamalubha pa na mangyayari ay masisira ang magandang relasyon at tiwala sa isat isa.”</i> (When trust and relationships break down, social cohesion begins to unravel, deepening divisions between groups and making efforts toward reconciliation and peacebuilding far more difficult. And the worst things that happen will destroy the good relationship and trust among ourselves.)	Breakdown of trust and relationships leads to loss of unity, deepened divisions, and difficulty in achieving reconciliation.	Erosion of Social Cohesion	Deterioration of Community Trust
KI-007	<i>“Kapag nawala ang tiwala, nagkakaroon ng karahasan sa pagitan ng mga tribo, na nagdudulot ng ganting atake sa isa’t isa, at aabutin ng mahabang panahon bago maibalik ito.”</i>	Loss of trust triggers retaliatory violence, undermines fragile peace processes,	Consequences of Distrust	Strained Intergroup Relations and Recurring Social Tensions

	<i>Ang marupok na proseso ng kapayapaan ay maaaring bumagsak kung hindi mapananatili ang tiwala, at maaari ring muling buksan ang mga lumang alitan.”</i> (When trust is lost, people experience tribal violence, which triggers retaliatory attacks between the tribe, and it will take a long time to regain. The fragile peace processes may collapse if trust is not maintained, and even reignite old conflicts.)	and rekindles past conflicts.		
I-013	<i>“Makakaramdam ng panganip kapag walang kapit bahay, at palaging pagkatakot sa maaring pagsalakay ng kaaway sa anu mang oras.”</i> (Living without neighbors feels unsafe, as there is a constant fear of being vulnerable to enemy attacks at any moment.)	Absence of social support or protection heightens fear and vulnerability among community members.	Impact of Fear and Insecurity	Weakening of Social Support and Community Interdependence
KI-008	<i>“Hindi maging maunlad ang pamayanan dahil palaging nangangamba ang mga tao sa maaring pagsiklab ng labanan.”</i> (The community will not prosper because people are always worried about the possible eruption of conflict.)	Fear of conflict hinders community development and economic growth.	Socioeconomic Effects	Disruption of Development and Livelihood
KI-007	<i>“Para sa akin ay lumiliit ang territory dahil hindi ka makakapunta sa lugar ng kalaban mo.”</i> (For me, shrinking your territory because you cannot go to the area of your enemy.)	Conflicts restrict mobility and access to resources, limiting territorial and economic opportunities.	Socioeconomic Effects	Disruption of Development and Livelihood
I-014	<i>“Kapag nawawala na ang tiwala, ang mga tao ay makakaranas na ng tribal violence na magdudulot ng paghihiganti o pag-aataki sa pagitan ng mga tribo at matagal na rin ito maibalik sa dati. Ang dating mahinang proseso ng paghanap ng kapayapaan ay tuluyan ng mawala kapag hindi mapapanatili at maaring sumiklab muli ang dating hindi pagkasundo. Matagal maibalik ang dating tiwala kapag ito ay nawala.”</i> (When trust is lost, people experience tribal violence, which triggers retaliatory attacks between the tribe, and it will take a long time to regain. The fragile peace processes may	Loss of trust leads to cycles of retaliation, breakdown of peace processes, and long-term difficulties in restoring trust.	Consequences of Distrust	Strained Intergroup Relations and Recurring Social Tensions

	collapse if trust is not maintained, and even reignite old conflicts. It takes a considerable amount of time to regain trust once it has been lost.)			
KI-005	<i>“Ang pagkahiwalay sa isang pamayanan na sanhi ng kaguluhan ay nagpapalubha ng matinding suliranin sa kinakaharap at pangmatagalan. Kapag ang pamayanan ay magulo na, ang mga tao ay maaring makakaramdam ng pagkakahiwalay sa kultura, tradisyon, at suporta mula sa iba. Naging sanhi rin ito ng depresyon at pagkabahala.”</i> (Social isolation caused by conflict can trigger a cascade of serious problems—both immediate and long-term. When communities are fractured, people may feel disconnected from their cultural roots, traditions, and support systems. These can lead to depression and anxiety.)	Social isolation resulting from conflict leads to emotional distress, disconnection from culture, and long-term community problems.	Social Fragmentation	Social Disconnection and Loss of Community Belonging
I-011	<i>“Ang pagkakahiwalay sa isang pamayanan ay pumatid sa pag-aaral at pag-unlad ng mga kabataan. Ang mga Kabataan ay nawawalaan ng koneksyon sa pag-aaral, sa mga guro at sa ligtas na lugar nalilimit na rin ang kanilang pagkakataon. Ang pagkahiwalay sa isang pamayanan ay isa rin sa pumipigil sa pagpunta ng palengke, sa gawain, at tinururuan tayo para malubog sa kahirapan.”</i> (Social isolation disrupts education and youth development. Children and young adults lose access to schools, mentors, and safe spaces—limiting their prospects. Social isolation also cuts off access to markets, jobs, and training, deepening poverty.)	Social isolation impedes education, youth development, economic opportunities, and perpetuates poverty.	Social Fragmentation	Social Disconnection and Loss of Community Belonging
FGD-005	<i>“Kapag ang tiwala at relasyon ay nasira na sa pagitan ng Tri-people ay nagbibigay daan ito sa malawak na suliranin na di pagkakaunawaan, katulad ng malalimang pagdududa sa pagitan ng ibat-ibang tribo na nagbunga ng diskriminasyon o pagtatangi sa kapakanan ng ibang tribo.”</i> (When trust and relationships deteriorate among the Tri-People, it can	Breakdown of trust among Tri-People leads to intergroup mistrust, discrimination, and long-term social instability.	Erosion of Social Cohesion	Deterioration of Community Trust

	lead to a range of deeply rooted and destabilizing problems, like deep mistrust between ethnic groups, which breed stereotypes and discrimination.)			
I-012	<i>“Ang mga tao sa lugar na may kaguluhan ay mawawalaan ng trabaho dahil hindi na sila makakapunta sa kanilang pinagtatrabahuhan na magiging sanhi ng pagkabahala at suliraning pinansya at mas lalong malulubog sa utang dahil hindi na sila makakapunta sa kanilang sakahan.” (I-012)</i> (People in the torn conflict places will lose their employment because they cannot go to their workplace, leading to both psychological and financial distress. Individuals fall deeper into debt because they are unable to access their farms. They will fall further into debt due to losing their job and being unable to access their farm.)	Conflict causes unemployment, financial distress, and indebtedness due to restricted access to workplaces and farms.	Loss of Livelihood	Economic Insecurity and Poverty
FGD-006	<i>“Ang lugar na winawasak ng kaguluhan ay walang asenso hindi dahil sa mga tao ay walang alam, kundi dahil sa pang araw-araw nilang ginagawa ay umiikot lang sa kanilang kaligtasan at sa pamamagitan ng pagdadala ng arman, lumiliit ang lugar para sa trabaho o paghahanap buhay. Ang lugar ay hindi maging progresibo; o hindi uunlad.”</i> (The areas torn by conflict, development stalls—not because people lack potential, but because their daily lives revolve around survival and carrying weapons, leaving little room for business or growth. The place is not progressive; it remains stagnant.)	Survival concerns dominate daily life, leaving no room for economic progress or growth.	Stalled Development	Economic Insecurity and Poverty
I-011	<i>“Maipabenta mo ang iyong ari-arian kagaya ng lupa lalo pa kung ang kinaruruonan ng lupa moy malapit sa iyong kaaway.”</i> (You can sell your properties, like land, especially if the location of your land is near your enemy.)	Access to property and land is restricted due to insecurity and proximity to enemies.	Limited Economic Opportunities	Restricted Access to Resources
KI-004	<i>“Kapag isang tao ay nakikilahok sa labanan ay maputol ang kanyang pang araw-araw na gawain.. Sa halip</i>	Participation in conflict interrupts daily economic	Interrupted Economic Activities	Economic Insecurity and Poverty

	<i>na hawakan niya ayy araro ay mapipilitang maghawak ng armas.”</i>	activities, reducing productivity.		
I-011	“Mahirap makipagkalakalan kasi limitado lang ang mapupuntahan mong lugar. Hindi ka rin pwedeng magkumpanyans.” (It’s hard to trade when you don’t have many places to go—and even harder when trust doesn’t come easy.)	Limited mobility and mistrust impede trade and access to markets.	Restricted Access to Markets	Restricted Access to Resources
FGD-008	“Makaranas ng kahirapan dahil mawalaan ng hanap buhay. At ang lugar ay maaring tirahan lang ng mga malalakas na angkan o armadong grupo.” (There will be a crisis because you will lose your livelihood, and the community may turn to clan-based or armed justice mechanisms.)	Conflict leads to poverty, limited livelihood, and dependence on clan or armed structures.	Loss of Livelihood	Economic Insecurity and Poverty
FGD-010	“Ang kaguluhan ay nagpapanatili ng kahirapan, lalo na sa mga taong walang pirmanenting trabaho at umaasa lang sa pagsasa. Ikaw ay mananatiling mahirap lalo na kung wala ka ring permanenting trabaho at uma-asa lang sa pagsasaka.” (Conflict perpetuates poverty, particularly among individuals without stable employment who rely only on subsistence farming. You will remain in poverty, especially if you do not have a permanent job and rely solely on farming.)	Conflict perpetuates poverty, especially for those without permanent employment or stable income.	Poverty Perpetuation	Economic Insecurity and Poverty
KI-001	“Sa palagay ko sa larangan ng ekonomeya, sa gitna ng kaguluhon ay pinapanatili ang kahirapan at maunlad na galaw. Ang pag unlad ng ekonomeya ang pangunahing tinututukan ng matatag na pamayanan, samantala ang mga lugar na apektado ng kaguluhan ay nanatiling mahirap at napag-iwanan. Para naman sa kaligtasan, sa harap ng kaguluhan ay hindi nakikita ang mga epekto nito sa nag-aaway na kumunidad. Ang karaingan at labanan sa yamanang kalikasan ay naghuhudyok ng karahasan sa lugar at kawalaan ng tiwal sa bawat tribo.” (I believe that economic concerns, in conflict situations, perpetuate poverty	Competition over natural resources worsens poverty, mistrust, and inequality.	Resource Conflict	Restricted Access to Resources

	and limit upward mobility. Economic development is primarily focused on stable communities, while areas affected by conflict remain underserved and marginalized. For safety concerns, the presence of conflict disproportionately affects the disputing communities. Grievances and competition over land and resources can lead to localized violence and mistrust among the tri-people.)			
KI-008	<i>“Magkaroon ng paghihirap dahil hindi ka makakapuntang mag-isa sa sarili mong farm at hindi mo ring basta maibenta ang sarili mong produkto sa palengke.”</i> (There will be a crisis because you cannot go to your farm, and you cannot easily sell your products in the market.)	Restricted mobility prevents individuals from working or selling products, leading to economic hardship.	Restricted Access to Markets	Restricted Access to Resources
FGD-003	<i>“Hindi maganda ang pamumuhay ng isang lugar na may sigalot dahil hindi mo alam kung kailan magkaroon ng barilan. Hindi mo alam kung kailan muli sisiklab ang gulo.”</i> (The economic condition is not good in the place where there is a conflict because you do not know when the disputants will engage in fighting. You cannot predict when disputants might resume hostilities.)	Uncertainty from conflict disrupts livelihoods and economic stability.	Unstable Livelihoods	Restricted Access to Resources
KI-007	<i>“Sa panahon ng labanan, ang simpleng ginawaga sa paglalakbay o paghahanap buhay ay naging pang araw-araw paghihirap tanda ng pagkatakot at walang katiyakang buhay. Mahirap maghanap ng trabaho dahil nalilimit lang ang mapupuntahan mong lugar.”</i> (In times of conflict, the simple act of traveling or seeking a livelihood becomes a daily struggle marked by fear and uncertainty. Difficult to find a job because it limits the places you want to go to.)	Conflict creates daily struggles for survival and restricts employment opportunities.	Unstable Livelihoods	Economic Insecurity and Poverty
I-014	<i>“Ang mga tao ay makaranas ng kahirapan at makakalipat ng ibang lugar dahil sa takot sa kanilang mga kalaban. Hindi mo mabisita ang mga ari-arian mo dahil sa takot na maari kang mapatay ng kalaban mo.”</i>	Fear of enemies causes displacement and limits access to properties and income.	Displacement and Economic Hardship	Restricted Access to Resources

	(People suffered from economic crises and displacement due to security threats from nearby enemies. You cannot visit your properties because of the fear that your enemy might kill you.)			
I-013	<i>“Ang gulo ay nagbibigay limitasyon sa mga tao sa kanilang gustong pumunta at magbibigay rin ng hirap para makahanap ng sapat na kabuhayan dahil sa parati kang takot na makita ka ng iyong kalaban.”</i> (Conflict restricts individuals from going where they want and makes it difficult for them to find a decent livelihood because they are always scared of being seen by their enemy. You cannot find a decent livelihood because you are always afraid of being seen by your enemy.)	Conflict limits freedom of movement and access to decent livelihoods.	Restricted Access to Markets	Restricted Access to Resources
KI-006	<i>“Ang mga politician ay maaring liliit ang kanilang impluensya sa isang lugar, sa mga nasasakupan niyang bahuwarte ay hindi na sya makapagdaos ng kampanya sa mga lugar na kontrolado ng kanyang mga kalaban.”</i> (Electoral aspirants are likely to face diminished influence in certain areas, as jurisdictional boundaries prevent them from conducting campaigns in the places controlled by their opponents.)	Political influence is diminished because candidates cannot campaign in enemy-controlled areas.	Limited Political Influence	Reduced Political Participation and Governance
KI-007	<i>“Takot at pagka walang tiwala sa mga grupo ang lumalala lalo na sa usaping politika at nadadagdagan pa ito sa mga karahasang pinapakita sa social media. Samanta, ang rido o away ng tribo ay patuloy na sumiklab, at madalas nangyayari ito mga hindi naresolbang labanan na nag-ugat sa away sa politika lang.”</i> (Tensions and mistrust among groups tend to grow, especially when political agendas or media portrayals reinforce harmful stereotypes. Meanwhile, rido or clan conflicts continue to escalate, often sparked by unresolved disputes or politically driven rivalries.)	Mistrust and fear escalate political tensions and intergroup rivalry.	Erosion of Political Trust	Reduced Political Participation and Governance

FGD-008	<i>“Lumiliit ang lawig ng iyong kapangyarihan kasi hindi mo na maaring sakupin ang lugar ng iyong kaaway.”</i> (The extent of your power diminishes because you can no longer occupy your enemy's territory.)	Political power and territorial control are reduced due to conflict.	Limited Political Influence	Reduced Political Participation and Governance
FGD-009	<i>“Mawawala ka sa pagiging politician dahil hindi ka na bobotuhin ng mga tao kung malaman nila na may kaaway ka. Mararanasan mo ring lumiliit ang iyong nasasakupan, magkakaroon ka ng limitasyong mangangampanya sa lugar ng iyong kaaway.”</i> (You will lose your status as a politician because people will no longer need you if they find out that you have an enemy. You also experience a contraction of your political strongholds, given the restrictions on campaigning within rival territories.)	Conflict constrains political campaigns, weakening status and electoral reach.	Erosion of Political Trust	Reduced Political Participation and Governance
FGD-010	<i>“Ang mga tao sa ibang lugar ay mawawalan ng tiwala o kumpyansa sa lugar na may nag-aaway.”</i> (People from other places will lose their trust and confidence in a place where the conflict is ongoing.)	Ongoing conflict erodes public trust and confidence in local governance.	Erosion of Political Trust	Reduced Political Participation and Governance
I-011	<i>“Laganap ang away at alitan at minsan ay nauuwi ito sa patayan lalo na kung panahon ng election.”</i> (Rampant conflict and quarrels sometimes result in killing, especially during elections.)	Political conflicts and election-related violence threaten community safety and governance.	Electoral Violence and Tensions	Reduced Political Participation and Governance
I-012	<i>“Kapag ang tradisyonal na pamamaraan sa pangangasiwa ng kapayapaan ay hindi nabibigyan ng pansin o kinalimutan, ay mas lalong lumalalim ang kawalaan ng tiwala sa bawat hanay. Ang away ay madali na lang sisiklab magiging away man ito sa lupa, politika, o mga away na matagal na-ayos.”</i> (When traditional ways of making peace are ignored or forgotten, distrust between groups tends to deepen. Conflicts can easily erupt—whether over land, politics, or lingering unresolved personal grievances.)	Ignoring traditional peace mechanisms deepens distrust, worsening political instability.	Neglect of Traditional Peace Mechanisms	Reduced Political Participation and Governance

KI-004	<i>“Ang kawalaan ng tiwala sa pagitan ng mga grupo ay maaring maglala lalung-lalo na kung ang isang grupo ay nakaramdam ng ini-iba at pagka abanduna. Ang paglipat ng mga pamilya sa isang lugar magbunga ng pagkawala ng tahanan, edukasyon sa mga bata, at hindi pag-asenso ng kultura. Ang pagkakaroon ng takot sa mga tao maging sa loob man o sa labas ng isang lugar ay sanhi ng pagsiklab ng labanan.”</i> (Tensions and mistrust among groups tend to grow, especially when political agendas or media portrayals reinforce harmful stereotypes. Meanwhile, rido or clan conflicts continue to escalate, often sparked by unresolved disputes or politically driven rivalries.)	Mistrust between groups exacerbates conflicts, limits governance, and disrupts political order.	Erosion of Political Trust	Reduced Political Participation and Governance
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4. What are the aspirations of the participants to strengthen good relationships of the tri-people in the community?

Table 4 presented dialogue as an aspiration identified by participants because it served as a means to understand the beliefs, culture, and traditions of different tribes, including promoting interfaith understanding. Participants noted that dialogue should be initiated by leaders or officials to encourage broad community participation. It was described as a way to strengthen trust, build relationships, and sustain cooperation beyond merely resolving disputes. Dialogue was also associated with educational and leadership opportunities, such as guiding youth and future leaders, and facilitating shared learning about historical roots, which participants believed could prevent misunderstandings and future conflicts. Additionally, cultural healing and reconciliation processes, including honoring traditions and creating spaces for shared memories, were considered important for rebuilding trust and fostering long-term peaceful coexistence (FGD-006; I-011).

Table 4. Aspirations to strengthen good relationships of the tri-people

Participant Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning	Clustered Theme	Emergent Theme
FGD-004	<i>“Ang dialogue ang pinakamagandang daan para maunawaan ang bawat isa, lalo na sa kaso ng tri-people. At kapag ang mga municipal official ang nagpasimuno ng dialogue ay maasahang marami ang dadalo. Ang mga lider ay magfocus sa pagpapanatili at pagpapatuloy ng magandang relasyon na hindi lang umiikot sa pagresolba ng alitan. Pansinin din ang mapayapang karanasan sa pamumuhay, na nag-uugat sa pang araw-araw na gawain.”</i> (Dialogue is the best way to understand one another, especially in the case of the tri-people. When a municipal official	Dialogue facilitates mutual understanding, encourages participation, and sustains relationships beyond conflict resolution.	Dialogue as a Tool for Mutual Understanding	Strengthening Intercultural Dialogue and Understanding

	initiates the dialogue, they will take the lead in facilitating it, and broad community participation is anticipated. Leaders should focus on nurturing and sustaining relationships, not just resolving disputes. It highlights peace as a lived experience, rooted in everyday interactions.)			
KI-007	<i>“Ang dayalogo ay maging daan sa pag-uunawa sa paniniwala at kultura ng ibat-ibang tribo dito sa Timanan. At magkaroon na rin ng interfaith dialogue para maunawaan din natin ang mga paniniwala ng ibat-ubang tao dito sa Timanan. Magkakaroon ng dayalogo sa pagitan ng tatlong tribo para maiwasan ang hindi pagkakaunawaan sa ibang tribo at maiwasan din ang pagkakaroon ng away.”</i> (Dialogue will lead to understanding the beliefs and culture of different tribes in Timanan. An interfaith dialogue will also be facilitated to explore and appreciate the diverse belief systems of the indigenous tribes in Timanan. Dialogue should be conducted among the three parties to avoid misunderstandings and prevent conflicts.)	Intercultural and interfaith dialogue fosters understanding and prevents misunderstandings.	Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue	Strengthening Intercultural Dialogue
KI-006	<i>“Ang pagkakaroon ng dayalogo ay nagpapaunlad ng malalimang pag-unawa o tiwala sa bawat tribo. Ang kabataan at edukasyon ay malakas na tulay sa paraang nagbibigay gabay sa pag-unlad ng mga susunod na lider na nag-ugat sa mapayapang kultura sa kaalaman, at uri ng tunay na lider sa magpabago ng kumunidad.”</i> (Dialogue will promote deep understanding and trust among the different tribes. Young people and education as powerful bridges—ways to guide and grow future leaders who are rooted in peace, cultural awareness, and the kind of leadership that truly transforms communities.)	Dialogue strengthens trust and supports leadership development rooted in peace and culture.	Trust-Building through Dialogue	Strengthening Intercultural Dialogue
KI-008	<i>“Kailangan na ipakita ang kahalagaan ng pagkakaroon ng symposium sa tatlong tribo at balikan ang kasaysayan ng tri-people kagaya ng kasaysayan nina Tabunaway at Mamaro para</i>	Learning shared history strengthens cultural awareness and identity.	Cultural Awareness through History	Revitalization of Shared History

	<i>magkaroon ng malalimang pag-uuna sa kanilang pinagmulaan.”</i> (There is a need to highlight the importance of organizing a symposium centered on the three tribes, with a focus on revisiting the shared history of the tri-people, such as the story of Tabunaway and Mamalo, to foster a deeper understanding of their ancestral roots and connections.)			
FGD-003	<i>“Kailangan na ipakita ang kahalagaan ng pagkakaroon ng symposium sa tatlong tribo at balikan ang kasaysayan ng tri-people kagaya ng kasaysayan nina Tabunaway at Mamalo para magkaroon ng malalimang pag-uuna sa kanilang pinagmulaan.”</i> (There is a need to highlight the importance of organizing a symposium centered on the three tribes, with a focus on revisiting the shared history of the tri-people, such as the story of Tabunaway and Mamalo, to foster a deeper understanding of their ancestral roots and connections.)	Promoting shared history improves intergroup understanding.	Cultural Education	Revitalization of Shared History
I-013	<i>“Pangalagaan ang relasyon, gawin ito ng magandang intensyon. Dahil lilikha ito ng matibay na pagsisikap, pagbabahagi ng tradisyon, pinagsamang proyekto, at palitan ng magandang openyon at paniniwala sa pagitan ng mga kumunidad.”</i> (Nurturing relationships takes more than good intentions. It calls for steady effort, shared traditions, joint projects, and open-hearted exchanges between different communities and beliefs.)	Active relationship-building through shared practices strengthens unity.	Relationship Building Practices	Strengthening Social Cohesion
FGD-001	<i>“Kinakailangang magkaroon ng matibay na relasyon at kasama ang pakikinig sa salaysay ng iba, at palitan kuru-kuro ng masakit na kabanata ng buhay.”</i> (There should be a need to strengthen relationships that involve deep listening, storytelling, and mutual recognition of pain and resilience.)	Deep listening and storytelling foster empathy and stronger connections.	Empathy and Mutual Understanding	Strengthening Social Cohesion
KI-001	<i>“Kinakailangang magkakaroon ng interfaith dialogue at pantay tiwala sa bawat kultura at pag-uunawa sa pagitan ng tatlong tribo. Ang pakipag</i>	Dialogue across faiths strengthens trust and promotes peace.	Interfaith Peacebuilding	Strengthening Intercultural Dialogue

	<i>ugnayang ito ay makakatulong sa pagkakaroon ng tiwala at tulay sa pagkamit ng mapayapang buhay.”</i> (There is a growing need for open dialogue and mutual understanding among tribes—especially across different faiths. These conversations can help build trust, bridge divides, and lay the foundation for peaceful coexistence.)			
FGD-008	<i>“Ang mga local na lider at barangay opisyal ay mag-organisa ng symposium na nakatutok sa kasaysayan nina Tabunaway at Mamalo sa layong malaman ang pinagmulan ng Moro at ang Ips.”</i> (The local leaders and barangay officials would organize a symposium focused on the history of Tabunaway and Mamalo, aiming to enrich people's knowledge of the roots and heritage of both the Moro and Indigenous Peoples.)	Leadership supports cultural awareness through organized learning activities.	Leadership in Cultural Promotion	Revitalization of Shared History
FGD-010	<i>“Palakasin ang pagkakaisa at kalimutan ang nakaraang alitan na nagpapahiwalay sa tri-people at pagtulangang harapin ang hamon sa kinabukasan ng pamayanan ng Indigenous, Moro, and Christian settler.”</i> (To strengthen interethnic solidarity is to transcend historical divisions and build shared futures among Indigenous, Moro, and settler communities.)	Letting go of past conflicts strengthens unity among tri-people.	Unity beyond Conflict	Promoting Unity
I-010	<i>“Hikayatin ang pagkakaroon ng intermarriage sa tatlong tribo.”</i> (Intermarriage should be encouraged among the three tribes.)	Intermarriage promotes integration and stronger social bonds.	Intermarriage for Integration	Promoting Unity
I-009	<i>“Bilang isang meyembro ng kumunidad, ay hindi lang tayo walang kibo tanggapin ang kapayapaan, kailangan din nating maging aktibo at magtutulongan sa paggawa ng malakas at payapang pakikipag ugnayan.”</i> (As members of a community, we should not simply receive peace passively—we must actively imagine it and work together to build stronger,	Active participation is necessary for sustaining peace.	Active Community Participation	Collaborative Peacebuilding

	more harmonious relationships across groups.)			
FGD-009	<i>“Itaguyod ang pangkalahatang pagpapaunlad at pantay na representasyon sa lahat ng tri-people para maipakita ang mapayapang relasyon sa loob ng pamayanan ng tri-people.”</i> (Promoting inclusive governance and equal representation among all tribes that fosters peaceful relationships among the tri-people.)	Inclusive governance strengthens trust and harmony.	Inclusive Governance	Collaborative Peacebuilding
KI-005	<i>“Ang mga meyembro ng tri-people ay kailangang magkaroon ng malalimang pag-unawa o tiwala sa bawat tribo at bukas na komunikasyon upang maging daan para magkaroon ng malakas na samahan at tiwala sa loon komunidad.”</i> (The members of the tri-people should consistently engage in intercultural understanding and open communication as a way to build stronger bonds and mutual trust within the community.)	Continuous communication strengthens trust and community bonds.	Open Communication	Strengthening Social Cohesion
KI-004	<i>“Magkaroon ng malakas na kuniksyon at relasyon ang mga tri-people para susi sa pagkakaisa. Palakasin din ang malalim na pakikisalamuha at pagkakaunawaan mara makatulong sa pagkakaisa ng mamamayan.”</i> (Building stronger connections and relationships among the Tri-people is key to fostering social integration. Encouraging deeper interaction and mutual understanding could help unify the community.)	Social interaction fosters integration and unity.	Social Interaction	Strengthening Social Cohesion
I-012	<i>“Magkaroon ng intermarriage ang tatlong grupo katulad ng IPs Moro, at Kristiyano, hikayatin o sangayunan ito sa lahat ng aspeto katulad ng sosyal, kultura at ekonomiya. Makakabenepisyo ito sa pagpapalakas ng matibay na ugnayan at matagal na kapayapaan. Kailangan sa bawat meyembro sa kumunidad ng tri-people ay paigtingin ang pagkakaunawaan sa pamamagitan ng pag-alam sa kasaysayan ng bawat isa, mga kahalagaan, at mga karanasan sa buhay”</i>	Cultural understanding and intermarriage support long-term peace.	Cultural Integration	Promoting Unity

	(Intermarriage among the tri-people, typically referring to Indigenous Peoples (IPs), Moros, and Christian settlers, should be encouraged, as it can offer profound social, cultural, and economic benefits that strengthen community bonds and foster long-term peace. There is a need for every member of the tri-people community to cultivate understanding by learning each other's histories, values, and lived experiences.)			
FGD-006	<i>"Magkakaroon ng pangkulturang paghulunas at pagkakasundo, lalong-lalo na yong nagdadala ng sugat sa nakaraan. Kasama sa prosesong ito ang bagbabalik tiwala, paggalang sa mga dating kaugalian, at pagbuo ng pangkalahatang puwang kung saang magbahagi ng alaala na magbigay lunas sa mga nakaraan."</i> (To have cultural healing and reconciliation, especially for those carrying deep historical wounds. This process might involve rebuilding trust, honoring long-held traditions, and creating inclusive spaces where shared memories and healing can take root.)	Healing processes rebuild trust and promote reconciliation.	Cultural Healing	Cultural Healing and Reconciliation
I-011	<i>"Ang mga magkakapit bahay ay palagiing magpahayag ng kanilang pananabik sa kapwa, pagbibigay galang para sa pangkalahatang pag-unlad."</i> (Every neighbor often expresses a longing for coexistence, mutual respect, and inclusive development.)	Mutual respect strengthens coexistence and community progress.	Mutual Respect	Strengthening Social Cohesion

5. What conflict resolution mechanism framework can be developed from the study?

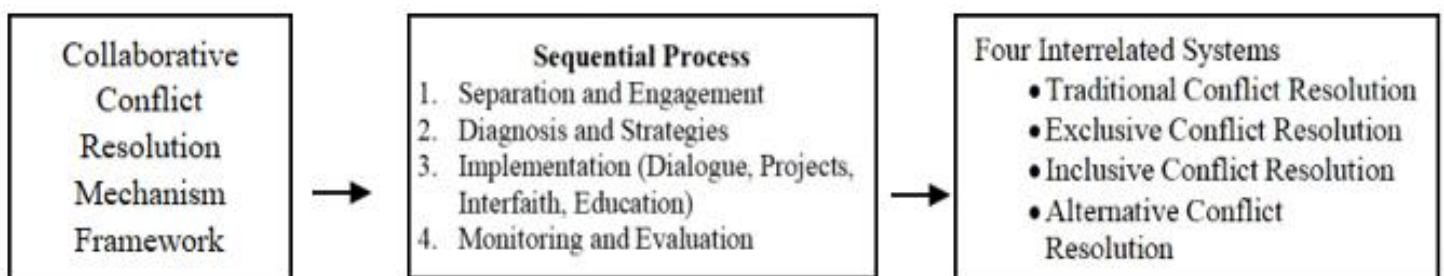


Figure 3. Collaborative Conflict Resolution Mechanism Framework

Figure 3 presents the conceptual framework of the study, anchored in existing literature on conflict resolution in Muslim Mindanao. It illustrates that peacebuilding is pluralistic, process-oriented, and collaborative. The first component identifies four interrelated systems of conflict resolution: traditional, exclusive, inclusive, and

alternative. This is supported by Pigkaulan et al. (2013) and Adam et al. (2014), who highlighted the coexistence of formal and informal mechanisms in local dispute settlement. These studies show that communities use multiple systems depending on context and accessibility. The categorization used in this study is an analytical construct based on these findings.

The second component presents conflict resolution as a sequential process: separation and engagement, diagnosis and strategies, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. This is supported by Mangunday (2017) and Lataza and Lataza (2023), who described conflict resolution as a series of stages involving dialogue, mediation, and sustained engagement.

The final component emphasizes a collaborative conflict resolution mechanism. This is supported by Mendoza and Mangulamas (2015) and aligned with Conflict Transformation Theory, which highlights inclusive and community-based approaches to achieving sustainable peace. Additional support is provided by the Galing Pook Foundation (2004) and Abellana (2024), which documented participatory practices that promote social cohesion.

The framework is guided by three key principles: pluralism, process-orientation, and collaboration, and aims to develop a culturally grounded conflict resolution mechanism that promotes unity and sustainable peace among Tri-People communities. It is derived from the integration of existing literature and provides a context-based model for analyzing conflict resolution in Muslim Mindanao.

DISCUSSION

This section analyzed and interpreted the study's key findings in relation to the research objectives and the existing literature.

Table 1 presented the conflict resolution mechanisms practiced by Tri-People leaders, reflecting strategies employed by Indigenous, Moro, and Christian communities in Muslim Mindanao. The table showed that leaders relied on collaborative and culturally anchored approaches to manage disputes. One prominent mechanism was inclusive dialogue, where conflicting families were gathered in community meetings until mutual agreement was reached (FGD-001). This practice aligned with the findings of Mangunday (2017), who emphasized that dialogue and consultation were central to Tri-People conflict management, ensuring that all perspectives were heard and considered.

The role of barangay officials in facilitating, documenting, and formalizing agreements (FGD-002) demonstrated the integration of local governance structures with traditional dispute resolution processes. Similarly, elders served as mediators, applying customary laws to guide resolutions (FGD-003), reflecting culturally grounded practices highlighted by Pigkaulan et al. (2013), where Maguindanaon *datus* and Indigenous elders exercised social authority and knowledge of local customs. Leaders prioritized restorative approaches, focusing on forgiveness and reconciliation rather than punitive measures (FGD-004), emphasizing relationship maintenance and social harmony. This practice was consistent with culturally informed conflict resolution frameworks, where sustaining community cohesion took precedence over retributive justice (Lederach, 1997; Sharoni & Abu Nimer, 2013). Integration of cultural and religious norms into dispute settlement, such as rituals and adherence to *adat*, further strengthened compliance and social legitimacy (FGD-005), supported by studies on hybrid systems that combined traditional and formal mechanisms to enhance effectiveness (Adam, Verbrugge, & Van Den Boer, 2014; Lataza & Lataza, 2023).

Monitoring and compliance after dispute resolution ensured that agreements were implemented properly and helped prevent recurrence (FGD-006), while the involvement of neutral mediators, including respected elders from outside the barangay, enhanced fairness and impartiality in mediation processes (FGD-007; FGD-010). This mirrored Mangunday's (2017) observations that external elders often served as impartial facilitators to maintain community trust. Leaders also provided post-conflict guidance (FGD-008), advising families on sustaining peaceful relationships, and when local mechanisms failed, cases were referred to higher authorities, including municipal councils or courts (FGD-009), demonstrating the pluralistic approach described by Pigkaulan et al. (2013), where communities navigated among traditional, religious, and formal legal systems depending on accessibility and cultural appropriateness.

Collectively, these mechanisms illustrated that conflict resolution among Tri-People leaders was collaborative, culturally grounded, and community-centered. These findings directly supported the emergent theme identified in Table 1, “Resolution through Collaborative Efforts,” highlighting the centrality of dialogue, elder mediation, restorative practices, and hybrid formal-traditional processes in sustaining social cohesion and restoring relationships. The literature corroborated that such approaches were effective in accommodating the diverse needs of Muslim, Indigenous, and Christian communities in Mindanao (Mangunday, 2017; Adam, Verbrugge, & Van Den Boer, 2014; Pigkaulan et al., 2013; Lederach, 1997).

The findings in Table 2 revealed that conflict resolution among Tri-People leaders in Muslim Mindanao followed a structured yet culturally grounded process that integrated traditional practices with formal governance mechanisms. The process typically began at the barangay level, where disputes were first addressed, and when unresolved, were formally endorsed to councils such as the Walay Na Atulan, Bleye Kukom, and Mayor’s Council. Upon referral, council members conducted initial assessments, including case reviews, site investigations—especially in land disputes—and the collection of sworn statements and supporting evidence from both parties, with the required presence of tribal leaders to ensure cultural representation. This was followed by mediation sessions, where disputes were resolved through dialogue and collaborative decision-making, allowing all parties to express their perspectives while elders and council members facilitated negotiation based on customary laws and community norms (Pigkaulan et al., 2013; Mangunday, 2017). These mechanisms were inherently hybrid, combining traditional authority with structured procedures such as hearings and deliberations, ensuring both cultural relevance and procedural fairness (Lataza & Lataza, 2023; Adam, Verbrugge, & Van Den Boer, 2014). Decisions were reached through consensus, often with the involvement of neutral or external elders to strengthen impartiality and credibility (Sharoni & Abu-Nimer, 2013). After a resolution was achieved, the process culminated in restorative practices such as Kanduli, which served to rebuild trust, restore relationships, and reintegrate disputants into the community, aligning with Lederach’s (1997) conflict transformation framework. These community-based mechanisms were preferred over formal courts due to their accessibility, affordability, and cultural alignment, making them effective in addressing disputes while sustaining social cohesion (Abdul & Pandaliday, 2018; Mendoza & Mangulamas, 2015).

The findings in Table 3 revealed that the challenges encountered by Tri-People communities in the three municipalities were evident across social, economic, and political dimensions, as directly experienced and articulated by participants. Socially, participants consistently highlighted the erosion of trust and social cohesion as a major issue. For instance, participants such as FGD-009 and I-013 described how persistent fear of attacks created anxiety and insecurity, disrupted daily interactions, and weakened the sense of community safety. Similarly, I-009 and FGD-005 emphasized that once trust and relationships were broken, divisions deepened, leading to discrimination and making reconciliation difficult. KI-007 and I-014 further noted that loss of trust often resulted in retaliatory violence and the re-emergence of past conflicts, reflecting recurring tensions within and between groups. These lived experiences supported Mangunday (2017), who identified mistrust and historical grievances as key barriers to peacebuilding, and aligned with Lederach’s (1997) argument that damaged relationships undermine social cohesion and sustainable peace.

Economically, participants described how conflict directly resulted in loss of livelihood, poverty, and restricted access to resources. KI-008, I-012, and FGD-008 explained that fear and insecurity prevented individuals from going to their farms or workplaces, leading to unemployment, financial distress, and deepening poverty. KI-007 and I-011 further highlighted that limited mobility restricted access to markets and trade, making it difficult to sustain income. Some participants, such as I-011 and I-014, even reported being forced to sell or abandon their land due to proximity to conflict areas. These accounts demonstrated how daily economic activities were disrupted, forcing communities into survival mode rather than development. Such findings were consistent with Abdul and Pandaliday (2018), who explained that land conflicts and insecurity restricted access to resources and perpetuated poverty, as well as Salipada, Abdula, and Kanakan (2022), who noted that unstable peace conditions hindered economic development.

Politically, participants also revealed challenges related to reduced political participation and weakened governance. KI-006 and FGD-009 described how political leaders lost influence because they could not campaign in areas controlled by rival groups, while FGD-010 noted that ongoing conflict eroded public trust in leadership. Participants such as I-011 further emphasized that election periods often intensified violence,

sometimes resulting in killings, which discouraged participation in political processes. Additionally, I-012 pointed out that neglecting traditional peace mechanisms contributed to deeper mistrust and instability, allowing conflicts to resurface easily. These findings aligned with Mendoza and Mangulamas (2015), who argued that while the Tri-People framework promoted inclusive governance, persistent mistrust and political rivalries undermined its effectiveness, and with Adam, Verbrugge, and Van Den Boer (2014), who highlighted the importance of integrating traditional and formal systems to strengthen governance and conflict management. These findings reinforced Lederach's (1997) view that sustainable peace required addressing not only immediate conflicts but also the underlying social and structural conditions that perpetuated them.

The findings in Table 4 revealed that the aspirations of Tri-People communities to strengthen good relationships were deeply rooted in dialogue, cultural understanding, active participation, and inclusive social practices, as clearly articulated by the participants. A central aspiration was the promotion of dialogue as a primary tool for mutual understanding and peacebuilding. Participants such as FGD-004 and KI-007 emphasized that dialogue—especially when facilitated by local leaders—encouraged participation and helped communities understand each other's beliefs, cultures, and perspectives, thereby preventing misunderstandings and conflict. Similarly, KI-006 and KI-001 highlighted that continuous and interfaith dialogue strengthened trust and developed future leaders grounded in peace and cultural awareness. These insights affirmed the argument of Mangunday (2017) that dialogue and consultation were essential processes in Tri-People conflict resolution, as they provided spaces for inclusive participation and mutual recognition, while also aligning with Lederach's (1997) view that sustainable peace was built through relationship-centered approaches.

Another key aspiration identified by participants was the revitalization of shared history and cultural awareness as a foundation for unity. Participants such as KI-008, FGD-003, and FGD-008 stressed the importance of organizing symposiums and revisiting shared narratives, particularly the story of Tabunaway and Mamalo, to deepen understanding of common origins and strengthen intergroup connections. This emphasis on shared history reflected the importance of culturally grounded peacebuilding, where collective memory and identity were used to bridge divisions. Such findings supported the perspective of Madale (2010) and Samia (2018), which highlighted the role of adat (customary practices) and historical consciousness in fostering cohesion among diverse groups, as well as Lederach's (1997) concept of culturally rooted conflict transformation.

Participants also emphasized the need for active relationship-building and social cohesion through everyday practices. For instance, I-013 and KI-005 pointed out that strong relationships were built through shared traditions, joint activities, and open communication, while FGD-001 highlighted the role of deep listening and storytelling in fostering empathy and understanding. KI-004 and I-011 further noted that regular social interaction and mutual respect among neighbors strengthened unity and promoted peaceful coexistence. These aspirations aligned with Mendoza and Mangulamas (2015), who argued that the Tri-People ideology was grounded in mutual recognition, shared experiences, and participatory engagement, all of which were essential for sustaining harmonious intergroup relations.

In addition, the data stressed aspirations toward unity and integration beyond past conflicts, including innovative social practices such as intermarriage. Participants like FGD-010, I-010, and I-012 emphasized the importance of moving beyond historical divisions and fostering stronger bonds through intermarriage and cultural integration, which could enhance social, cultural, and even economic relationships among groups. This reflected a forward-looking approach to peacebuilding that prioritized long-term unity over historical grievances. Such perspectives were consistent with Abellana (2024), who underscored the role of shared values and intergroup collaboration in strengthening community relationships and promoting sustainable peace.

Furthermore, participants stressed the importance of collaborative peacebuilding and inclusive governance. I-009 and FGD-009 emphasized that peace should not be passively accepted but actively built through cooperation, participation, and equal representation among all Tri-People groups. This reflected the need for shared responsibility in maintaining harmony and ensuring that all sectors felt included in decision-making processes. These findings supported Lataza and Lataza (2023), who emphasized that inclusive and participatory approaches in hybrid conflict resolution systems fostered trust and cooperation among diverse communities.

Finally, the aspiration for cultural healing and reconciliation emerged as a crucial element in strengthening

relationships. FGD-006 emphasized the need to address historical wounds through cultural healing processes that involved rebuilding trust, honoring traditions, and creating safe spaces for sharing experiences. This aligned with Lederach's (1997) conflict transformation framework, which emphasized healing, reconciliation, and the restoration of relationships as essential components of sustainable peace.

Figure 3 presented in the chapter III-Results the proposed conceptual framework, which was anchored in existing literature on conflict resolution in Muslim Mindanao, demonstrating that peacebuilding processes were pluralistic, process-oriented, and collaborative. The first component of the framework, which identified four interrelated systems of conflict resolution, was supported by the findings of Pigkaulan et al. (2013), who documented the coexistence of traditional, religious, and formal legal mechanisms in dispute settlement. Their study highlighted the roles of *datus*, Shari'ah institutions, and formal courts, indicating that communities utilized multiple mechanisms depending on cultural appropriateness and accessibility. This observation was consistent with the argument of Adam et al. (2014), who emphasized that hybrid systems integrating formal and informal approaches enhanced the effectiveness of local conflict management. These studies supported the view that conflict resolution operated across multiple, interconnected systems. However, it was noted that the categorization into "traditional, exclusive, inclusive, and alternative" systems was an analytical construct of the present study.

The second component of the framework conceptualized conflict resolution as a sequential process. This was supported by Mangunday (2017), who described practices such as dialogue, mediation, power-sharing, and elder involvement in addressing disputes. These practices implied stages of engagement, problem identification, and resolution. Similarly, Lataza and Lataza (2023) documented structured mediation mechanisms, including community-based programs that involved consultation, intervention, and sustained engagement. While these studies did not explicitly prescribe a fixed sequence, they collectively suggested that conflict resolution unfolded through identifiable phases. Thus, the stages presented in this framework—separation and engagement, diagnosis and strategies, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation—were derived from the synthesis of these observed practices.

The final component of the framework, which emphasized a collaborative conflict resolution mechanism, was supported by literature emphasizing inclusivity and culturally grounded peacebuilding. Mendoza and Mangulamas (2015) argued that the Tri-People ideology promoted shared decision-making, mutual recognition, and inclusive participation among Moro, Lumad, and Christian communities. This aligned with the theoretical perspective of Lederach (1997), who posited that sustainable peace was achieved through culturally congruent and community-based approaches. Empirical support was further provided by the Galing Pook Foundation (2004) and Abellana (2024), which documented participatory mechanisms such as councils of elders and interfaith collaboration that fostered social cohesion and collective problem-solving. These studies substantiated the framework's emphasis on collaboration as a key outcome of effective conflict resolution.

In addition, the proposed framework did not replicate a single existing model but was derived from the integration of concepts found across the literature. It synthesized the pluralistic systems identified in prior studies, the process-oriented nature of conflict resolution practices, and the collaborative and culturally embedded approaches emphasized in peacebuilding literature. As such, the framework provided a contextually grounded and theoretically informed model for analyzing conflict resolution mechanisms among Tri-People communities in Muslim Mindanao.

CONCLUSION

The study affirmed that Tri-People leaders in Datu Odin Sinsuat, South Upi, and Upi, Maguindanao employed a holistic, culturally grounded approach to conflict resolution, emphasizing collaboration, inclusivity, neutrality, and restorative practices. Leaders integrated formal governance structures with traditional mechanisms through hybrid councils such as the Bleye Kukom and used restorative rituals like Kanduli (communal feast) to rebuild relationships and reinforce trust. The study further affirmed that rido (family feud) and ongoing conflicts created interconnected social, economic, and political challenges, yet dialogue, shared history, everyday interaction, active participation, and cultural reconciliation were key to sustaining unity and harmonious relationships. Building on these findings, the study developed a structured, evidence-based framework organizing conflict

resolution into four systems, Traditional, Exclusive, Inclusive, and Alternative, operationalized through context-specific mechanisms across separation, diagnosis, strategy, execution, and monitoring phases, providing a practical roadmap for peace and social cohesion among Tri-People communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proposed:

Based on the findings, regular capacity-building programs should be conducted for Indigenous, Moro, and Christian leaders in Datu Odin Sinsuat, South Upi, and Upi to strengthen their competencies in mediation, restorative justice, intercultural dialogue, and peacebuilding. Collaborative decision-making mechanisms involving councils of elders, barangay officials, and hybrid institutions such as the Bleye Kukom and the Mayor's Council of Upi should be sustained and further institutionalized to ensure inclusive, culturally responsive, and community-supported conflict resolution. Likewise, culturally grounded reconciliation practices, including Kanduli (communal feasts) and other traditional peacebuilding rituals, should continue to be promoted and formally integrated into local conflict management initiatives.

Local government units, in partnership with the Ministry of Public Order and Safety (MPOS), the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs (MIPA), the Ministry of the Interior and Local Government (MILG), the Ministry of Trade, Investments and Tourism (MTIT), the Ministry of Social Services and Development (MSSD), traditional leaders, and local civil society organizations, should strengthen dialogue programs, intercultural activities, monitoring and evaluation systems, and community-based livelihood and governance initiatives to reinforce social cohesion, improve implementation of conflict resolution agreements, and address the underlying socio-economic conditions that contribute to conflict.

Future research should evaluate the proposed Community-Based Collaborative Conflict Transformation Framework through implementation studies in different multicultural and conflict-affected communities to determine its effectiveness, adaptability, and broader applicability. Comparative studies across other culturally diverse regions are also encouraged to assess the transferability of the framework. In addition, researchers should consider employing mixed-methods approaches that integrate qualitative insights with quantitative measures of peacebuilding outcomes, trust, community cohesion, and conflict reduction to provide stronger empirical support for the framework.

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