



**Joan Regina L. Castro, MD**

Executive Vice President, PATH Foundation Philippines Inc  
Manila, Philippines

Resilience and How to Build a Healthy Community

**Introduction**

experience of PATH Foundation Philippines (PFPI) and presents case studies that highlight issues that the project encountered in the coastal zone where it implemented an integrated approach to population and coastal resource management (IPOPCORM) for improved food security. The negotiations and the resolutions were facilitated by IPOPCORM's interdisciplinary approach which engaged a broad range of stakeholders from the public and private sectors and across the domains of health, environment and economic development in the pursuit of a common goal that required joint efforts and multiple interventions to adequately address food insecurity issues at the individual, structural and environmental levels.

Food security is the overarching theme of the IPOPCORM project which was implemented in thirty three (33) coastal municipalities that overlap priority marine corridors for biodiversity conservation and have high population growth rates, density and momentum. Local fisheries provide 80% of the dietary protein requirements of these rural coastal communities but their overfished state means less food for a growing number of people. Training of peer volunteers, local indigenous leaders and shopkeepers was one of the activities conducted to enable provision of information, education and conservation and family planning services in these far flung areas where fisher folk have large families and rely on fishing for sustenance and livelihood. More than 80% of the population in these areas are also Roman Catholics. In the country, there is a thin line between the church and state, and family planning and reproductive health are sensitive issues in these devout communities.

### **Positive and negative lessons in the field**

“Our problems are interconnected and the solutions need to be integrated”, noted a community resident in one of the coastal villages where PATH Foundation Philippines Inc. (PFPI) implemented the IPOPCORM approach. While issues of poverty and food insecurity may seem to be black tunnels, working together towards long-term, rather than immediate gains was a key element of the project's success. Listening to the people - men, women and youth – is necessary to close the divide

lives. Two case studies that have provided valuable insights in efforts to capacitate the community and build resilience for improved food security are highlighted below:

### **Case 1: Religion, politics and the community**

While the project was delivering a community-based training to fisher peer educators and shopkeeper owners as partner implementers to educate and motivate members of the community on how “To plan their families and manage their coastal resources”, the local chief executive - a staunch Catholic - stormed the session and demanded that the training be stopped claiming that the project promotes promiscuity<sup>1</sup> and allows free sex in the community. The project implementers were threatened that a local ordinance will be passed to force the project out of the locality.

## **Case study 2: Live fish trade and marginal fishers**



feed rich customers in the other parts of the country and in other parts of the world, the irony is that the communities lack enough fish to feed their families. In Cuyo, the local fishers wanted to protect

- 4) Champions and leaders can be found in indigenous leaders, local governments, private sector and other partners. They pave the way to peacekeeping, they are facilitators and catalysts to successful community-based processes.
- 5) Marginalized communities are often the victims of food insecurity and poverty. The linkages of these factors with politics and business interests require political will, social corporate responsibility and civil society groups working together for change.

### **Barriers need to be overcome and/or questions to be answered to make progress in environmental peacemaking**

Utilization of resources and resource distribution inequities, poverty and lack of information and education, lack of opportunities and services pose barriers in environmental peacekeeping. The goal to transform the populace from being vulnerable to situations such as food insecurity towards well being and self sufficiency will require breaking the traditional stovepipe responses to complex issues through dialogues for partnership between communities and across sectors; consistent and synergistic actions and efforts; monetary support; and leadership. These balancing acts lead to progress towards peace in communities.

To achieve a positive perception of the future in these communities which is central to environmental peacekeeping<sup>4</sup>, there is a need to scale-up small gains to larger scales that leads to wider reach and sustainability. Although this is widely acknowledged and understood by both policymakers and practitioners, the question remains of how to achieve this scale up across a geographic scale as well as across the difference between individual communities. Despite this, widespread and focused efforts can reach more people. More communities that are healthier, wealthier, informed and capacitated to cope and adaptable to changes will create bigger impact and sustainable gains.

### **Reflect on how linkage among different levels (individual, community, state, international, community and topics (environmental, developmental, conflict, peace) are made and sustained and the barriers for such linkage**

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<sup>4</sup> Friends of the Middle East . Environmental Peacebuilding Theory and Practice. 2008

Food security is a universal issue. While it is a cause of conflict, it can also provide a common ground for diverse interest in partnership towards food stability, environmental conservation and peace especially in poor rural communities. Case in point was the role of IPOPCORM in environmental peacebuilding in the Danajon Double Barrier Reor R2(uni)-2(t)-2(d [(r2.66 0g6( hni)-2B)7(ab2(

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