



# Talaandig mothers' engagement for sustainable peace

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## Abstract

The need for more contextualized literature for peace education courses in Central Visayas has become demanding for teachers seeking comprehensible peace concepts from indigenous perspectives. Concepts on peace introduced in universities' undergraduate and graduate programs are published documents from Western experiences underlined by resolutions from the United Nations conferences on peace. This study sought to draw out peace concepts from the perspectives of Indigenous women who are conflict-settling mothers of the Talaandig tribe in northern Mindanao, Philippines, to contribute to the literature gap in peace education courses. Ethnographic-grounded theory approaches in the qualitative methods applied Charmaz's (2006) coding and memo-writing steps. Three objectives were laid out to draw out definitions of peace from Indigenous women's perspectives, illustrate images of peace through a soil painting workshop, and contribute an educational framework for a culture of sustainable peace from Indigenous mothers' peacekeeping strategies, designed into three research phases. Twenty-one mothers who are active in peacekeeping activities have been chosen by the mother coordinator as participants. This study has resulted in a pool of Indigenous concepts of peace drawn out from narratives of mothers' engagements in conflict settling and peacekeeping, soil-painted images of peace illustrating values relevant to the needs of today's world, and a working framework for peace education from Indigenous women's perspectives. This joint work of mothers and academic communities opens possibilities for contextualized peace concepts and values responsive to today's world.

### Keywords

Talaandig mothers; conflict settling; indigenous peace concepts

## Abstrak

Kebutuhan akan literatur yang lebih kontekstual untuk mata kuliah *Peace Education* di Visayas Tengah semakin mendesak bagi para guru yang mencari konsep-konsep 'peace' (*perdamaian*) yang dapat dipahami dari perspektif masyarakat adat. Konsep perdamaian yang diperkenalkan dalam program sarjana dan pascasarjana di universitas-universitas adalah dokumen-dokumen yang diterbitkan dari pengalaman Barat yang ditekankan oleh resolusi-resolusi dari konferensi-konferensi Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa tentang perdamaian. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali konsep-konsep perdamaian dari perspektif perempuan adat yang merupakan ibu-ibu yang terlibat dalam proses penyelesaian konflik dari suku Talaandig di Mindanao utara, Filipina, untuk mengisi kekurangan literatur dalam mata kuliah *Peace Education*. Pendekatan teori yang berbasis etnografi dalam metode kualitatif menerapkan langkah-langkah pengkodean dan penulisan memo dari Charmaz (2006). Tiga tujuan ditetapkan untuk menggali definisi perdamaian dari perspektif perempuan adat, menggambarkan citra perdamaian melalui lokakarya lukisan tanah, dan memberikan kerangka pendidikan untuk budaya perdamaian yang berkelanjutan dari strategi pemeliharaan perdamaian ibu-ibu adat, yang dirancang dalam tiga fase penelitian. Dua puluh satu ibu yang aktif dalam kegiatan pemeliharaan perdamaian telah dipilih oleh koordinator ibu sebagai peserta. Penelitian ini menghasilkan kumpulan konsep-konsep perdamaian adat yang digali dari narasi keterlibatan ibu-ibu dalam penyelesaian konflik dan pemeliharaan perdamaian, gambar perdamaian yang dilukis di tanah yang menggambarkan nilai-nilai yang relevan dengan kebutuhan dunia saat ini, dan sebuah kerangka kerja pendidikan perdamaian dari perspektif perempuan adat. Karya bersama antara ibu-ibu dan komunitas akademik ini membuka kemungkinan

untuk konsep dan nilai perdamaian yang kontekstual yang responsif terhadap dunia saat ini.

**Kata Kunci**

Ibu-ibu Talaandig; penyelesaian konflik; konsep perdamaian adat

## I. Introduction

### 1.1. Peace Education

Literature on peace in Central Visayas reveals a dearth of researched and published perspectives, strategies, and theories on peace from the worldview of our country's indigenous communities. There are articles from conferences presenting Indigenous women's initiatives that mediate conflicts. However, these voices have not become part of government peace processes, nor do Indigenous values serve as the basis for peace processes. Publications on peace efforts in libraries are predominantly articles sourced from resolutions on peace from the United Nations Conferences (Resolution, 2013); (Document, 2011). Concepts on peace for courses in Peace and Global Education are sourced from the early childhood Maria Montessori education approaches and the non-violent communication book of a German author (Rosenberg, 2005). There is however, one book compilation on the efforts of IP women on peace edited by Madelene Santa Maria which describes the activities of Sama DiLaut women of Iligan in Mindanao and Tinguian Women of Abra (Nanaman, Marilou F. Siton, 2003). While the world continues to experience climate changes and conflicts, it is imperative to return to our roots to seek ways for on how Indigenous communities in our country to engage to achieve sustainable peace.

### 1.2. Peace and Women's Engagement

Women around the world have always engaged in actions for peace. It may be in situations of helping families trapped in war, negotiating with armed groups, supplying food and clothing to victims of armed conflict, or giving alternative ways for teenagers involved in jihad. Indigenous women in clan-based societies use kinship ties, cultural traditions, and rituals to communicate their message of peace or resistance (Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, *Recognizing Women Peacebuilders: Critical Actors in Effective Peacemaking*, 2020); (Muigua, 2021). K.C. and Whetstone (2022) have documented Indigenous women who have actively involved themselves as combatants during the civil war in Nepal and have committed themselves to fighting against domestic violence in the neighborhood and supporting each other in the post-war period (Luna K.C., Crystal Whetstone, 2020).

The United Nations Assembly's Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace, and Security (S/RES/1325) on October 31, 2000, reaffirms the "important role of women in peacekeeping, resolution, and prevention of conflicts, peacebuilding, peace negotiation, humanitarian response, and post-conflict reconstruction. It calls for women's equal participation and full involvement in the promotion of peace and security. Despite the UN resolution, however, Luna and Whetstone's (2022) study reveals that Indigenous women peacebuilders are not even aware of such a resolution. Indigenous women act and work for peace because they see this as a responsibility to the community as women (Anderlini, 2020).

Regardless of Inclusion in peace tables, grassroots women exercise their creativity to create grassroots women networks to examine government commitments. In a report from the International Peace Institute, IPI (2015) documents the high level of women's participation and inclusion in peace tables and processes in the Philippines specifically practiced in the 2014 Bangsamoro Comprehensive Agreement, which proposes to reimagine or consider looking into traditional approaches to peacemaking to attain sustainable peace (Marie O'Reilly, Andrea O' Suilleabhain, & Thania Paffenholz, 2015). However, the recommendations in the 2014 Agreement still remain to be implemented.

### 1.3. *Community Engagements for Peace*

“The achievement of peace and its sustainability is a community responsibility and the responsibility of each individual in the community,” according to Datu Victorino Migketay Saway, chief administrator of the Talaandig community of Sungko Lantapan Bukidnon, Philippines. The Datu calls communities for respect and relationship with the planet engaged in community rituals addressing soil, air, water, plants, and all of creation as fellow living beings. In the same strain, a social scientist and historian, Prasenjit Duara (2023), sees the diminishment of intuitive ideals, values, and beliefs in society acquired from religion and the surge of competitive models of leadership and political power, which has led to environmental crisis (Duara, 2023). Both academe and practitioners call for a shift from the individualistic anthropocentric paradigm of development to an ecocentric one, a shift of paradigm that requires a turn from the linear utilitarian perspective to one that is inclusive, relational, and sustainable.

Calls for peace engagements among communities of youth and professionals at local and international levels raise awareness among individuals and communities to lead as messengers of peace. Scouts for SDGs (2024) offer opportunities for young people to bridge barriers through dialogue and leadership (Peace and Community Engagement, 2024). Youth leaders in Northern Mindanao's indigenous communities join peace efforts through a peace caravan, teaching youth participants in communities to illustrate images of peace through soil painting (Saway A. L., Talaandig Youth Peace Caravan, 2010).

The United Nations Department of Peace Operations/Division for Policy Operation and Training (DPO/DPET) underlines the importance of community engagement in peacekeeping operations. Community engagements for peace are translated through Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs), Community Alert Networks (CANs), Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), Risk education and victim assistance, and Community-Level Justice (UN, 2020). United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres underlines each one's duty today: “In today's troubled world, building peace is a conscious, bold and even radical act. It is humanity's greatest responsibility.” (Guterres, 2024).

### 1.4. *Indigenous Research Methods*

The Indigenous Research Methods introduced by Virgilio Enriquez in 1992 with practitioners of Filipino Psychology sought appropriate research approaches that would relate to the culture and communication of the Filipino communities. This method is found to be most appropriate for achieving the objectives of the study, given its five guiding principles. The first level is for the researcher to enter into a level of mutual trust and rapport “at the minimum” to gather good-quality data. The second level considers research participants as equal to the researcher and not as objects or subjects to be studied. As equals, participants can ask the researcher questions and prescribe suggestions for time management, structure of the questions, and interpretation without being aware of these processes. The third level prefers the participants' welfare over the data. In Indigenous research methods, it is the researcher's first ethical responsibility to address the community's welfare and not the institution or funding agency for which the researcher works. The fourth level underlines a researcher's sensitivity to non-verbal signs or hints during interactions with groups or individuals.

This applies specifically to Filipino and Asian communities, who are used to expressing thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and emotions in non-verbal ways. This research method is generally characterized by groping and a searching attitude where the researcher carries no theory or framework but uses approaches appropriate to the participants. The fifth level gives importance to the use of the participants' language since it is in the mother tongue language where feelings, emotions, and perspectives are revealed. When language becomes a barrier between research and participants, a research assistant-translator should be sought (Reogelia Pe-Pua, Elizabeth Protacio-Marcelino, 2000).

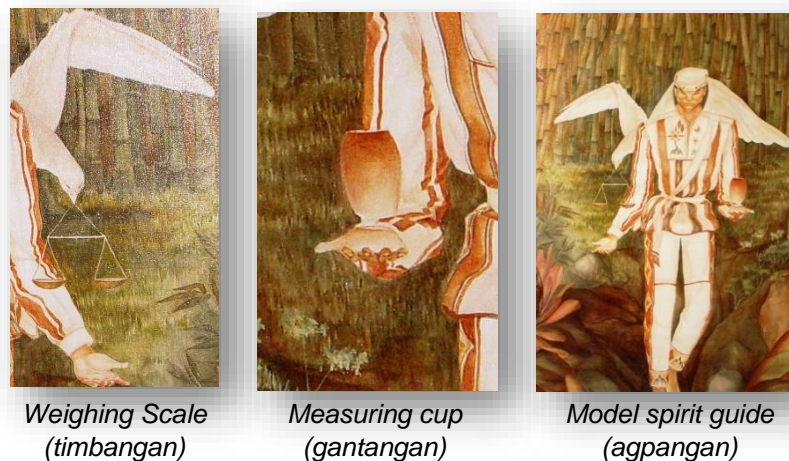
### 1.5. *Soil Painting*

Soil painting in the Talaandig community started with a youth musician and clay artisan, Rodelio Waway Linsahay Saway, who, with peer Talaandig musicians, discovered the ability

of soil as an alternative material to expensive commercial paints. From clay craft, the Talaandig youth shifted their creative expressions to soil painting through a mixture of powdered soil, water, and glue using the varied colors of Bukidnon soil. This medium has become the Talaandig youth's expression of the tribe's identity, tradition, and spirituality, illustrating images of Mother Earth, air, water, trees, and living creatures as a unified body breathing as one. Soil painting has become the youth's channel and tool for advocating for peace through the organization of soil painting peace caravans with neighboring communities, tribes, and foreign guests of the community. The role of soil painting and the youth artists has been one of the significant instruments in peace images in this study.

### 1.6. Talaandig Doctrine of Justice and Peace

The Talaandig community hold a deep respect to three symbolic images that signify peace and justice. These three symbols are painted in artworks, narrated in stories among young and old, and modeled in the lives of mothers and leaders in the community. The doctrine of peace and justice is imaged in the weighing scale, a measuring cup, and the model spirit guide for each one of us. The weighing scale or *timbangan*, according to Bai Liza L. Saway (2009), is a symbol of balance. It is a reminder for each Talaandig that balance is important in life as individuals, as a community, and as a society. Community balance is a measure of space provided to man and woman, space for the elderly and the young whose capacities and skills complement each other. Lack of balance in life creates confusion and chaos. The measuring cup or *gantangan* is an indigenous tool used to measure when cooking rice. When cooking rice, a mother only puts into the measuring cup that which is enough. Extra grains are descaled from the cup, which signifies a life of moderation. Talaandig mothers explain that whatever extra we have in life should be given out to those in need in the community. The spirit model, or *agpangan* carries the weighing scale behind each individual and each leader. The spirit guides and shows direction in decision-making to one who knows the nuances of listening. A listening attitude is important to achieve peace of mind, clarity of mind, and sincerity of heart (Talaandig, Symbols of the Doctrine of Peace and Justice, 2009).



**Figure 1.** Talaandig symbols of the Doctrine of Peace and Justice  
source: soil painting by Salima Signucan Saway (2008)

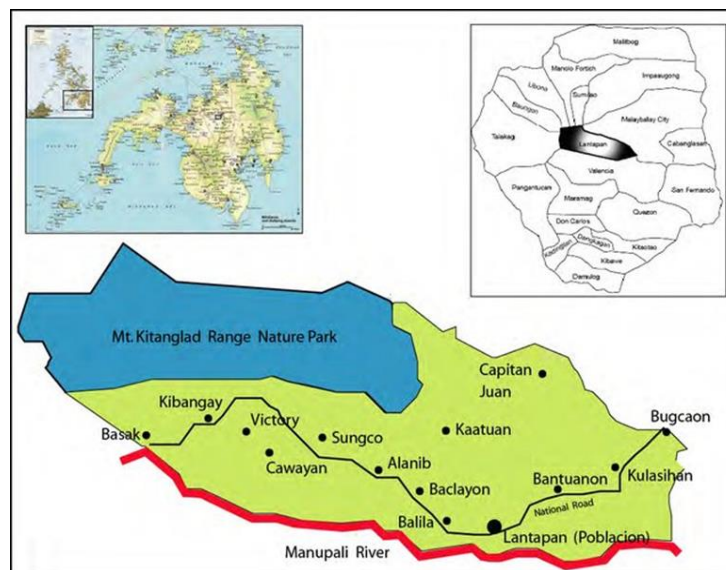
Figure 1 represents three symbolic images central to the Talaandig community's understanding of peace and justice. The weighing scale (*Timbangan*) symbolizes balance, reminding the community of the importance of harmony in life, both individually and collectively. The measuring cup (*Gantangan*), used in cooking rice, signifies moderation and teaches that excess should be shared with those in need. The spirit model (*Agpangan*) represents a guiding force in decision-making, emphasizing the importance of listening, clarity of mind, and sincerity of heart for peaceful leadership. These symbols are depicted in art, stories, and the everyday lives of Talaandig mothers and leaders, illustrating their deep respect for peace and justice.

The lack of indigenous resources on peace for education students as well as the silent voices of indigenous women in literature have propelled this study to contribute to published research on indigenous peace concepts and images from Talaandig mothers' sustainable peace strategies with the following objectives: a) Define peace from Talaandig mothers' perspectives, b) Illustrate images of peace from Talaandig mothers and children, c) contribute an educational framework for a culture of sustainable peace from Indigenous mothers' peacekeeping strategies.

## 2. Methods

This study is divided into four phases spread within a period of three years from June 2008 to 2011. The first phase in 2008 was devoted to establishing a relationship of trust through casual conversations on the word peace or *Kalinandang* in the Talaandig Inukit dialect. The second phase in 2009 involved a more formal focus group sharing with chosen mothers on peace definition, source, and strategies in conflict settling. The third phase took place in 2010 and was intended to triangulate the mothers' concepts of peace through a soil painting workshop within the community's Center of Culture, joined by volunteer members of the Talaandig community. The year 2011 was devoted to the validation of the generated peace theory that serves as the Talaandig community's contribution to studies on peace education at the university.

To address the objectives of this research, an ethnographic, grounded theory approach using a qualitative method was utilized to understand the Talaandig conflict-settling mothers' peace perspectives, paint symbolic images of peace, and draw out narratives on Indigenous strategies in community peacekeeping. The research environment took place in the School of Living Traditions in Sungco Lantapan Bukidnon, North of Mindanao, where the Talaandig Center of Culture is situated. Sungco is one of the 14 barangays or barrio in the District of Lantapan settled along the foot of Mount Kitanglad mountain ranges (Lantapan Bukidnon, 2023).



**Figure 2.** Barangay Lantapan Bukidnon Philippines  
source: Miriam Ramirez Nguyen (2006)

Figure 2 locates barangay Songco as one of the 14 barangays in Lantapan, which is located in Malaybalay Bukidnon, northern part of Mindanao.

The ritual of permission for this study, focus group discussion sessions, and dance and instrumental performances took place in the School of Living Traditions, a two-story building made of bamboo. The second floor served as a place for class and meeting sessions, with a fireplace appropriately fixed in one corner of the room where ritual food offerings and children's snacks were prepared.



**Figure 3.** First ritual of permission to the spirit keepers of peace  
source: Geraldine Villaluz (2008)



**Figure 4.** Talaandig Mothers discussing their definition of peace  
source: Geraldine Villaluz (2008)

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the first level of the Indigenous Research method, which is to enter into a level of trust and rapport with the research participants. To achieve this level, this researcher participated in the ritual called *Pamulin-ulin*, seeking permission from the ancestors and keepers of the community's peace tradition. In the Talaandig community, the act of partaking in the ritual offerings signifies a mutual welcome acceptance by both the community and the researcher.

The Talaandig tribe is one of the seven tribes of Bukidnon in the Northern part of Mindanao, Philippines, along with the Manobo, Higaonon, Umayamnon, Matigsalog, Tigwahanon, and Bukidnon tribes. At the time of this research, Datu estimated the Talaandig population to be 3000 families spread around the foot of Mt. Kitanglad mountain range, a national heritage park. However, through intermarriages with Christians and other tribes, the Talaandig is currently estimated to have grown to more than 100,000 people (Ethnic Groups Philippines, 2020). Farming is the community's primary way of life; however, technology and scholarships have currently produced Talaandig lawyers, teachers, accountants, midwives, museum curators, and a medical technician. The language used within the community is Binukid or Inukit. However, a trade language, Cebuano or Visaya, is used for market transactions during harvest season. The Talaandig people farm vegetables for the City of Malaybalay Bukidnon and neighboring provinces.

The study participants were chosen by Bai Liza Saway, the head and coordinator of the Talaandig Mothers. Twenty-one (21) mothers aged 50 to 70 years old and active community peacekeepers were chosen participants in focus group discussions. Alongside their role as community peacekeepers, these mothers also held significant roles as culture experts in rituals, embroidery, winemaking, teaching, and acting as adviser consultants to the Datu, Chief Administrator. These positions in the community constitute the Community of Elders called *pasagi*. On many occasions, these mothers were sought by the Barangay, the village administrative subdivision, to settle conflicts within and outside the community. In the

Talaandig community, the Mothers working for peace are locally called *Inay* (mother) and *Malinandang* (peacekeepers).

Prompted by the need for literature on peace from the indigenous perspective, this researcher sought guidance of performing indigenous musicians in Central Visayas. Driven by the wind of good fortune, some Talaandig youth musicians who were favorably staging a performance at a mall happily provided the researcher with contact information of the community's chief administrator in Bukidnon. A scheduled meeting with the Datu, Victorino Migketay Saway, and their wife, Bai Liza L. Saway, laid out guidelines for informed consent from the Talaandig community Community of elders with the intention of sharing the objectives and the benefits the community will gain from the research. Ritual preparations included two chickens; one for the spirit-protector of the researcher and one for the playful spirit of the environment; a betel chew, a piece of red and white cloth, a glass of water, and coins as offerings to the spirit keepers of peace. The ritual of permission called in Inukit language as *Pangumpaya Hu Mulin-ulin* was celebrated in 2008 to seek permission from the spirit keepers of the community's faith life, peacekeeping strategies, and values of the Talaandig mothers. The ritual ceremony was attended by the Datu, the Chief Administrator, the active mothers working for peace, the Community of Elders, the Talaandig culture practitioners, youth, and children. Two Ulaging chanters sang excerpts of the Talaandig epic, recalling the history of the Talaandig community. At the end of the four-hour ceremony, the researcher presented the study's objectives and the benefits the study will provide the community as well as students in the university. Through the participant-observation approach, this ethnographic study provided the space and time to gather symbolic images of the Talaandig community, narratives on peacekeeping and mediation, and perspectives on peace through focus group discussion, interviews specifically utilizing the Indigenous Research Method of Virgilio Enriquez (1992). All five principles of the Indigenous research method were applied through home visits, participation in the Talaandig Week celebration each month of October, casual conversations, community soil painting workshop, participation in dance and storytelling sessions.

Treatment of Data in the first, second, and third phases utilized the ethnographic steps from Charmaz (2006) using codes, written memos, and sample theories. One of the dominant tools in this ethnographic study on peace is food, besides the researcher's journal, camcorder, voice recorder, and laptop. The food offered during focus group discussions and casual conversations brought down barriers and provided an environment of engagement and bonding. Food as an instrument in ethnographic research in the Filipino culture forged relationships and a spirit of welcome. Partaking of the food offerings from the ritual table signified the community's welcome and acceptance of the research goals.

Validation of data gathered at each phase was treated with an exhaustive zigzag movement of continued consultation from the researcher to the participants and back to the researcher, in addition to triangulations of data with youth artists, the community elders, and the tribe's Datu, chief administrator. This back-and-forth consultative movement in grounded theory required constant trips from Cebu to Bukidnon as well as frequent communication using video calls, email, and text messaging tools.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Phase 1

Conversations in the first phase of the study centered around the words *Inay* and *Malinandang*. In the Talaandig Inukit language, *Inay* is mother, and *landang* is peace. *Inay Malinandang* is the Talaandig translation for Mothers working for peace, mothers as peacekeepers, or Mothers as conflict settlers. At this stage of the study, participants in the focus group discussion extensively shared their thoughts and definitions of mother and womanhood in the context of the Talaandig tradition and culture. Participation in the discussion recalled the faith life of participants' mothers and grandmothers. For the purpose of this publication, original transcripts are provided with an English translation by the researcher.

*“When I make rice wine I seek spiritual guidance; a ritual offering is important. Clean hands and a clean heart is necessary. Without these, the wine I make turn sour.”* (Bai Nangunladay /rice wine maker)

*“Our women ancestors were conflict settlers. They can calm an emotionally angry person with a gentle motherly advice, and I desire to pursue that role with my family and in community.”* (Bai Balagnau 2/ storyteller)

*“The Datu’s chant inspired me to an awareness of my role as a mother, as a woman in our community; I have reflected on what I can do for my community as a woman.”* (Bai Panlibay/ Teacher)

Initial codes gathered in this first phase from fourteen participants are presented in Table 1 below. The codes in Table 1, which are identified as spiritual guidance, women’s ancestors, womanhood, and obligation, point to a woman’s traditional role to uphold peace and settle conflicts in the community. The codes recorded in this table are the initial codes that will lead to the answers to the first objective of this study.

**Table 1.** sample Initial codes Gathered from Phase 1

<b>Cebuano</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Spiritual guidance, limpyo ang kamot ug hunahuna</i>	Spiritual guidance, clean hands and clean heart
<i>Babaye sa katigulangan mga balaghusay</i>	Women ancestors are conflict settlers
<i>“Babaye ko; obligasyon sa mga anak, ug komunidad”</i>	Role as mother to my children, as woman in community

Source: Villaluz (2008)

### 3.2. Phase 2 Peace Definition

The second phase that transpired is a continuation of the mothers’ definition of peace, which revealed the highly respected tradition of women’s role as peacekeepers in the community. It is a tradition that constantly reminds women and mothers of their responsibility to themselves, family, and community. This role is achieved only with the aid of ritual, deep prayer, and cleansing mind and heart before a conflict-settling activity.

This phase of the research generated narratives of strategies practiced in the community and in settling conflicts among families and other tribes. The focus group discussion that transpired after the ritual rendered narratives of traditional practices in the culture of Talaandig peace work in a more reflective disposition.



*“Peace (kalinaw, landang) is balance. It is abiding by our Talaandig doctrine of peace and justice outlined in the symbols of the weighing scale, the measuring cup and the spirit model in each one of us.”* Bai Nanapnay (2009)

**Figure 5.** Mothers Talaandig’ Coordinator (2009)





Figure 6. Bai Balagnau (2009)

*“Mothers in the Talaandig community believe that peace is sustainable when we live out our tradition; our culture. Peace is passing on our songs, dances, stories, language and history to young Talaandig. As a peacekeeper and conflict settler I serve the community as teacher in the School of Living Traditions”* Bai Balagnau (2009)



Figure 7. Teacher School of Living Traditions (2009)

*“Peace is awareness of my role as woman and mother. When we mediated a family conflict near our barangay, our initial conversations were to recall memories of their history as a family, always careful in the use of words that do not trigger negative emotions”* Bai Panlibay (2009)



Figure 8. Rice Wine Maker Bai Nangunladay (2009)

*“Peace (Kalinaw) is broad, but for me, peace is security of food for my children, medicine when someone is sick, education for children. When there is no security there is no peace. As a mother and conflict settler I seek spirit guidance from Magbabaya (The Provider) all the time. I am supported by prayer.”* Bai Nangunladay, (2009)

Figures 5, 6, 7, and 8 are the mothers' definition of peace, which responds to the study's second objective. The four mothers are the most active in the community and are most often involved in conflict-settling and mediation processes in the barangays around Sungco Lantapan. Bai Nanapnay Liza Saway (Figure 5) is the leader and coordinator of the mothers working for peace or the *Inay Malinandang* of the community. She specifically chose the three mothers Bai Balagnau (Figure 6), Bai Panlibay (Figure 7), and Bai Nangunladay (Figure 8), who successfully mediated in a clan war (*rido*) for a period of three years.

### 3.3. Peace Strategies

Far from the concepts of peace in communities situated in war zones, which define peace as cease-fires, amnesty, truce, and conflicts, Talaandig mothers reveal concepts of peace and Indigenous ways that are inclusive and sustainable. Table 2 below lists only 7 out of the 17 traditional tools documented in the peace tradition of the Talaandig Mothers' strategies for sustainable peace.

**Table 2.** Sample Tools and Strategies in Conflict Settling

No	Sample Tools and Strategies
1	History of relationship - a recall of relationships in the tribe's history of traditional peace pacts is a significant tool;
2	Mother's milk - when one is emotionally distressed or angry, a woman or mother can wash his/her face with a mother's milk. This can help calm an angry person;
3	Elderly woman's gentle advice - effects a calm disposition;
4	<i>Pamalabag</i> Ritual - from the Talaandig point of view, conflict is caused by playful and negative spirits in the environment. A ritual of appeasement to the spirits is celebrated;
5	Talaandig Kinship Covenant which specifies care in communication that does not cause bad feelings of another;
6	Water - water relieves tension and offers a cool and calm feeling. Pouring water around an angry person can cause a calm change;
7	Language – the use of language in settling conflict specifically in tribal conflicts is considered one of the most significant tools. It is in language that feelings, emotions, thoughts are deeply revealed and expressed.

Source: (Saway L. , 2005)

The tools for mediation, conflict settling, and sustaining peace in Table 2 are the sample traditional approaches that the 2014 Bangsamoro Comprehensive Agreement proposes. The indigenous concepts to reach sustainable peace must come from the experiences of communities rather than concepts of peace introduced to communities. This table articulates the importance of a community history and relationship, which gives meaning to persons involved in conflicting situations. The definition of peace and the way peace is achieved are concepts rooted deep in the consciousness of every Talaandig and practiced from one generation to the next. The tools above identified as most useful in practice are history, mother's milk, gentle advice from an elderly woman or mother, *pamalabag* ritual or ritual for settling a conflict, the Talaandig Kinship Covenant, water, and the use of language.

Peace, from the mothers' perspective, is achieved through reflection and prayer, bearing a listening attitude for dialogue. It is rooted in the knowledge of one's culture in a capacity to use this knowledge in the realities of one's life. The use of language and symbols from the doctrine of peace and justice, the use of water and milk to calm angry minds, and the awareness of the role of women in the Talaandig historical peace pacts are values held sacred among members of the community. The concepts of peace and the ways of achieving peace explored in the first and second phases of this study offer an Indigenous women's perspective of peace that is oriented toward the Other, towards family, and towards the community. It is not linear and individualistic. It is a perspective that calls for awareness of the One who is greater than us creatures on this earth. This is the mindset that social scientists Prasenjit Duara (2023), Teihard de Chardin (1955), and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterrez (2024) prescribe for a sustainable kind of development nurturing a healthy planet. One that is inclusive of the person outside oneself, community-oriented, and responsible. All these ask for an attitude of constant listening, dialogue, and discernment.

### 3.4. Phase 3. Community Images of Peace

In May to June of 2010, a third ritual of permission was celebrated with the objective of seeking permission from the spirit keepers of soil for a planned soil painting workshop. This workshop is intended to triangulate the concepts of peace gathered from mothers' narratives with some chosen members of the community. It is believed within the Talaandig cultural tradition that there are seven spirit protectors within each one of us. Everything in the environment around us and within us is protected by the spirit of air, the spirit of water, soil, fire, plants, animals and the spirit of the natural world (Mothers, 2010).



Figure 9. Community Soil Painting Workshop source: Villaluz (2010)



Figure 10. Youth artists facilitate the soil painting workshop on images of peace source: Villaluz (2010)

Figures 9 and 10 illustrate the processes of soil painting from soil preparation using a mixture of powdered soil, water, and white glue as pigments to frame construction through the assistance of volunteer youth artists in the community, who were themselves sons of the mothers.

The research environment took place on the grounds of the Talaandig Center of Culture and in the homes of community members. The researcher sought the assistance of volunteer youth artists in the community who willingly introduced the process of producing soil pigments for painting using a mixture of powdered soil, water, and white glue. The youth artists shared their extra canvas and built frames for it. In an unexpected turn of events, the soil painting activity inspired the youth and children and Datu himself, who happily volunteered to illustrate their own images of peace. The soil painting workshop on peace turned out to be a community event and created an environment of joy from sharing ideas of peace with one another toward the end of the workshop. This third phase of the study presents soil-painted images of peace from thirty participants, including youth, mothers, and children. Translations from the original transcript is provided by the researcher in the Cebuano language.



Figure 11. 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Highschool (2010)

“My painting on peace is a tree, a flower and the sun. when we lose the trees and the sun there is no peace. When there is no flower around us there is no life.” Joan Islao (2010)

“Peace is the Mother for Peace because they maintain the peace in our community.”  
(Diane Saway Kinuyog, 2010)



**Figure 12.** Grade 5 Student (2010)



**Figure 13.** 3<sup>rd</sup> Year High School Students (2010)

“My painting is about a hawk who is about to swoop on a mother hen’s chicks. Peace is the role of this mother hen. She protects her chicks from danger.” Guia Grace Saway (2010)

“Peace is brought about whenever a lady, any woman or man carries out the culture and tradition of the tribe even at a young age, there is peace. It is our role as mothers and women in the Talaandig community to sustain peace through our songs, dances, stories, rituals and language taught in the School of Living Traditions.” Bai Balagnau (2010)



**Figure 14.** Mother Participant (2010)

The third phase of the study presents soil-painted images of peace from thirty participants, including youth, mothers, and children. Translations from the original transcript is provided by the researcher in the Cebuano language. Figures 11 and 12 are sample definitions of peace from the perspective of Talaandig children’ participants in the soil painting workshop, which responds to objective 2 of the study. The images generated from the soil painting workshop in figures 11, 12, 13, and 14 clarified concepts and perspectives of peace engaged by indigenous mothers. These images illustrate spaces in the environment that give life to the community, such as rivers, mountains, trees, flowers, and abaca plants.

Figure 14 illustrates a mother participant, Bai Balagnau, a teacher in the School of Living Tradition, who is painting a woman. In her painting, she defines peace “as a woman who carries with her the culture and traditions of her community and therefore maintains the life of peace in the community. Some mothers painted woven baskets and mats, embroidered clothes that portray the history of the community. Images from daily life that assure food, economic, health and education security. Other illustrations portrayed chanters of history (*Datu*

*Balag Gugud*) and a conflict settler (*Datu Balag Husay*) as messengers of peace, expressions of cultural integrity and identity.

The *Inay Malinandang* or the Talaandig Conflict-Settling Mothers' engagement for a sustainable peace offer three relevant points for today's world in crisis and these are 1) Relationship, 2) Discernment, and 3) Faith. Table 3 below is a matrix presentation of the indigenous values and processes practiced by mothers from conflict settling experiences.

**Table 3.** Values and Processes to achieve Peace

Values	With	Action	Outcome
Relationship	Oneself Family Community Environment/ mother earth Spirit guide Creator	Be a listener Reflect Pray Trust	Self-awareness Community & society consciousness Open to risk oneself
A Discerning Heart or Weighing one's Decisions	Oneself family With community With others	Open to advise Compassionate to others' needs Communicates information	Directed decision making
Faith	The Creator the Great Provider	Prayer Trust Patience Risk	Responsible citizen love

Table 3 underlines the Talaandig mothers' sustainable engagement for peace, which is relevant to our own personal and communal lives as well. The values here contribute to the third objective of the study, which is to contribute a framework for peace education sourced from the indigenous perspectives of Talaandig mothers. Their sustainable engagement for peace work called for a conscious living out of values of relationship, prayer-guided decision making, and faith in *Magbabaya*, the Talaandig word for the Great Provider; faith in each other's conflict settling capacity and faith in oneself. As peacekeepers, the mothers value a relationship that does not only include the immediate family members but also a relationship that brings one to an awareness of oneself, one's family, community, and society. It is characterized by one's ability to respond to a need. This concept of relationship is sourced from the Talaandig kinship covenant that can only be lived out through the processes of constant listening, weighing of decisions or discernment, and faith in prayer.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study was initially driven by the need for resources in peace education from the indigenous perspective in our country. The three-year period given to the study has uncovered treasures of Indigenous peace concepts and values that can be part of a contextualized syllabus in Peace and Global Education courses. The ethnographic grounded theory approach used in this study has generated a theory for peace education culled from Indigenous knowledge and practices of mothers Talaandig. This theory offers values most relevant to today's world in crisis of relationships, decision-making, and faith. The theory is illustrated in a framework, figure 15 below, in soil painting by a Talaandig mother-artist, Salima Signucan Saway (2008).



**Figure 15.** Peace Framework source: Soil painting by Salima Signucan Saway (2008)

Peace is the spirit of wholeness, a spirit of the unity of mind, heart, and body born out of one's relationship with oneself, family, community, and society through the processes of committed and conscious listening, discernment, and prayer. This spirit of unity is inclusive and opens oneself to communication and dialogue, bearing sustainable security in food, economy, health, and education. The center image of the framework signifies freedom from the linear utilitarian perspective to one that is relational, inclusive, and open to dialogue. It recognizes the legal and political discourses of the Western traditions symbolized by the chromatic blue colors on its outside circle. The Sustainability of peace is imaged in the engagements one is willing to risk and commit for the service of society, values most needed in today's world system.

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