

**NIALL O'BRIEN CENTER  
for Active Nonviolence, Reconciliation and  
Community Futures**



**PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT  
EDUCATORS PROGRAM**

**PDEP**

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## 1. Introduction

Negros Island is famous for its sugar plantation, being a home for the melodic speaking population, and having a “City of Smiles” as its capital where the annual Masskara festival can be experienced.

“Masskara” – the smiling masks where Negrenses hide the bitterness of life in this island of sugar. An ironic reality that was justified as resiliency of the people to the existing conflicts: cultural (identity), economical (development), and political (ideologies).

Hiding proved not to be helping much and addressing the conflicts needs the people to “dance” with it. With a vision of creating a pool of peace educators and facilitators from all social and professional backgrounds to be multipliers in the field, the Niall O’Brien Center developed the *Peace and Development Educators Program* (PDEP).

## 2. Course Contents

Peace building is more *art* than science; therefore our creativity is the key for achieving a just peace. Through experience-based education, we promote the power of nonviolence and conflict transformation, and encourage people into *creative* action and participation.

PDEP is composed of six courses, which apply reflective participatory learning approaches that include interactive presentations, discussions, hands-on exercises, case-analyses, workshops, and fieldwork.



### 2.1 Introduction to Creative Conflict Transformation

The first two courses deal with the dynamics of conflict and violence. After creating common ground on the understanding of terms, the participants are introduced to the basics of conflict analysis and to the idea of creative conflict transformation. In the second part they climb the “escalation ladder” of violence and war and return back to reconciliation ground.

### 2.2 Empowerment Courses

In three empowerment courses, the participants face the major existing conflicts in Negros: Cultural (identity), Economical (poverty), and Political (ideology). Empowerment needs critical and compassionate consciousness and vital exchange. Therefore the participants leave the “comfort zones” of their daily lives and learn from and with people in their conflict environment.

Understanding conflict – its causes and effects, is the entry point for empowerment. Through active listening, participants have the opportunity for getting authentic information and reconsidering assumptions and prejudices. Furthermore, the Niall O'Brien Center conducts trainings for the visited communities, institutions and organizations to provide common training experiences and achieve mutual learning effects. The trainings usually contain useful contents and tools for personal and community development of our hosts.

### 2.3 Training of Trainers

Finally, a training of trainers course prepares participants for being trainer or facilitator in their own environment (community, profession, family). It focuses on skills related to training needs assessment, action planning, training design and managing a training course.



### 3. Alumni Program

After graduation from the program, trainers from the Niall O'Brien Center assist their new colleagues in developing individual facilitation styles and starting and evaluating their own training projects. In addition, alumni of the PDEP are invited for further education to become mediators or attend the training course on political participation. In regular conventions, alumni have the opportunity to meet their former classmates to share and discuss their experiences in practice.

### 4. Participants

The PDEP is conceptualized as grassroots training. Everyone, regardless of professional, educational or social background is invited and welcome to attend the program. An important factor for a successful and vital exchange of perspectives among the participants is the mix and variety of contributions and experiences. Ideally, half of the course participants should be women.

Professional and social backgrounds of previous participants:

*Author :: Banker :: Businessman/woman :: Caregiver :: Cook :: Development Worker :: Driver :: Editor :: Environmentalist :: Farmer :: Fisherman :: Housekeeper :: Journalist :: Lawyer :: Politician :: Project Manager :: Medical Doctor :: Mountain Guide :: Nanny :: Nurse :: Physiotherapist :: Priest :: Rebel :: Security Guard :: Soldier :: Student :: Sugar Cane Worker :: Taxi Driver :: Teacher :: Trainer :: Tricycle Driver :: University Professor*

::: to be continued :::

To assure mutual understanding of participants, the course language will mainly be Hiligaynon. Due to international sponsors there are no course fees. The PDEP usually starts in June and finishes in October. The maximum turnout is 25 participants. Slots will be provided on a first come-first served base. The participants are expected to attend all six weekend-courses. Please note that the visit of conflict areas as part of the empowerment courses might require an overnight stay in the communities.