

## *Bottom Up*

### CSR PROGRAMS THAT IMPACT COMMUNITIES

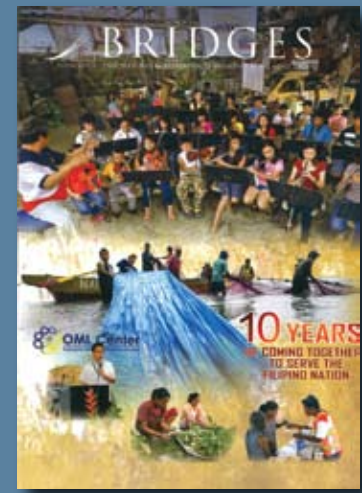
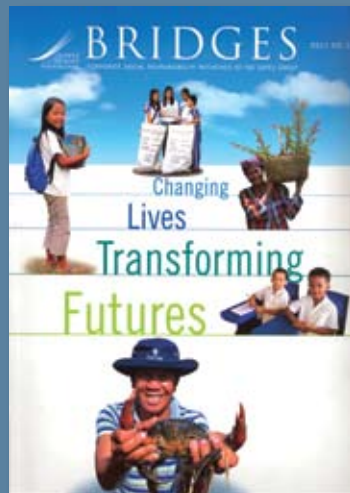
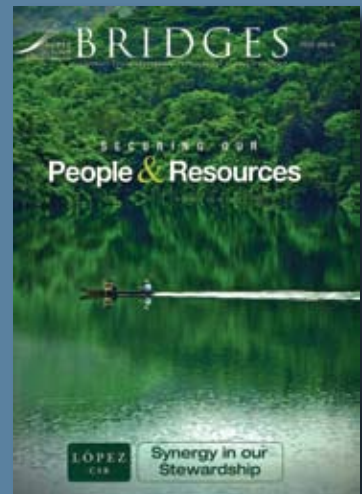


## BRIDGES MAGAZINE

Bridges Magazine is published by the Lopez Group Foundation, Inc. (LGFI), which coordinates the corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs and activities of the Lopez Group of Companies.

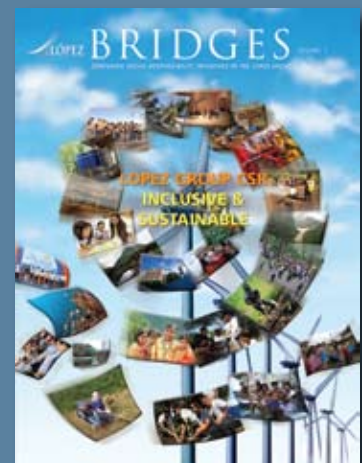
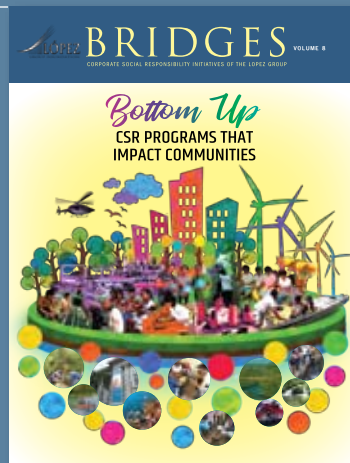
LGFI's main objective is to promote synergy among the Group's social and environmental responsibility initiatives by providing an overall view to internal and external stakeholders, thereby facilitating partnerships and sharing of knowledge and resources so as to maximize the programs' positive impact on beneficiaries.

Through the print and online editions of Bridges, LGFI hopes to inform Group employees, partner companies and communities, policy-makers, non-government organizations, volunteer groups, and other stakeholders about ongoing CSR programs of the Lopez Group, and inspire a spirit of nationalism and civic consciousness that will help improve lives and secure a brighter future for Filipino families.



## OUR COVER

An original artwork by Bridges' design artist, our cover depicts a community composed of various sectors, and inclusive of lower-income families, seemingly an island lifted upwards as the sectors interconnect with the larger vision and mainstream operations of the Lopez Group businesses and foundations. Sustainability principles put into practice by the Lopez Group, together with values-oriented CSR programs, ensure shared prosperity over the long term in the communities' ascent.





# BENPRES BUILDING GIVING WAY TO THE NEW

"Inaugurated in early 1971 and painted black and white, what was originally known as The Chronicle Building symbolized the influence of a newspaper, named for it in fact – The Manila Chronicle – at a time when newspapers and other print media were the preeminent sources of news and information. It is a historic building not because it hosted historic events but, rather, because it signifies the constancy of the Lopez family in its nationalism.

As I look back on its 47 years as home to the Lopez businesses, I see three distinct periods. The first spans the years immediately preceding and covering the dictatorship – 1970-1986. The second period extends to 2010, during which I headed the First Holdings Group, the parent company of the Lopez power and property businesses. Those were years darkened further by family tragedies: the passing of my father, Eugenio

Lopez Sr., in 1975, and of my brother Geny, in 1999. The third period, running up to the present, has seen the torch passed to the third generation.

Through the years Benpres Building has been the sort of center around which Ortigas Center blossomed and metamorphosed into a central business district, one that initially rivaled the growth of Makati and today shares that business-hosting role with Makati and Bonifacio Global City. Where once it stood visible all around as a monument to corporatist nationalism and pioneering, Benpres Building, now dwarfed and swamped by high-rise development, can hardly be seen from a couple of blocks away.

And so it's time. Benpres Building, witness for close to half a century to the ebb and flow of family fate and fortune, goes into its own fitting retirement. It is coming down, but only to rise again to meet the future."

Oscar M. Lopez



# BRIDGES

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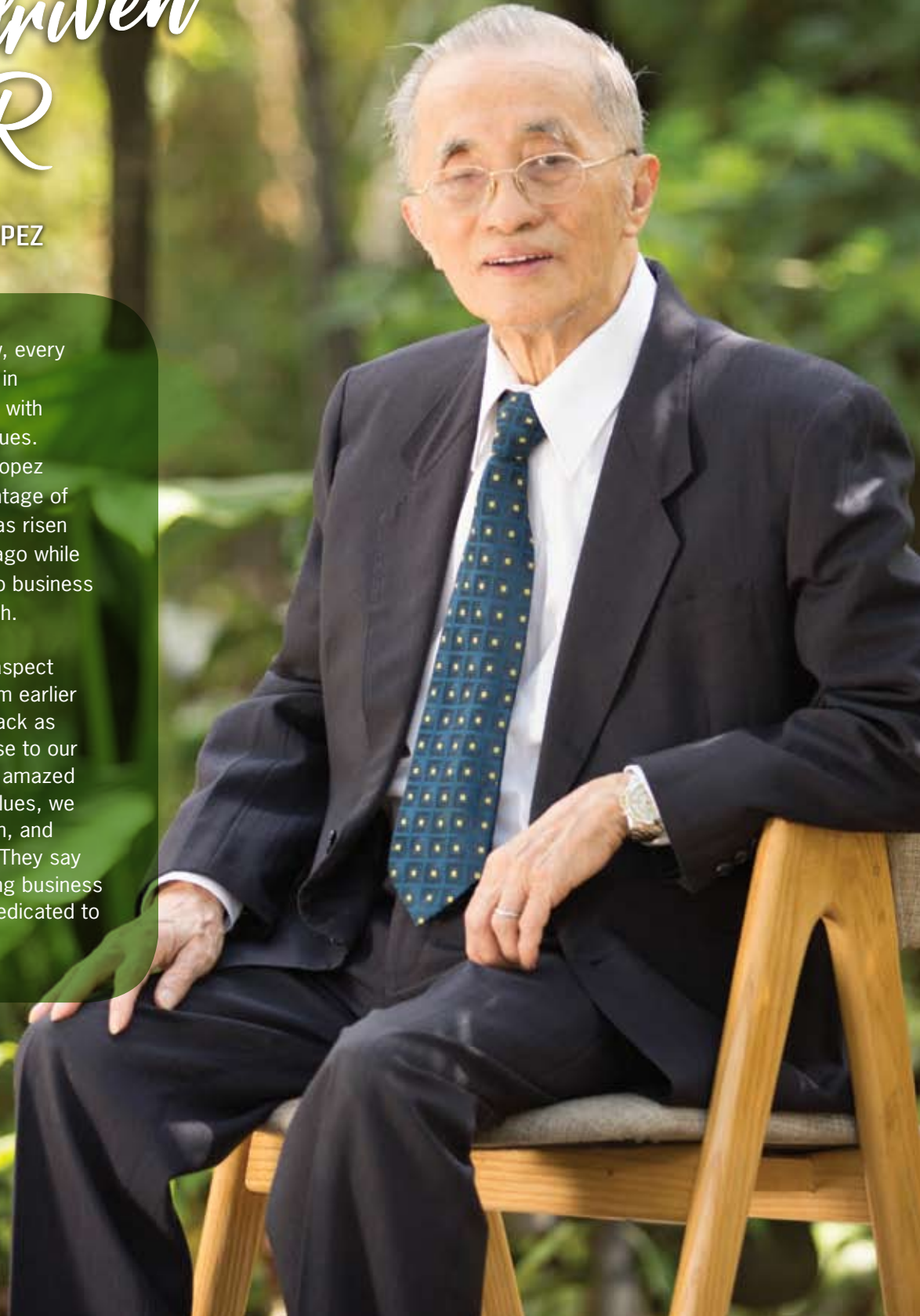
# THE CONTINUING RELEVANCE OF

## *Lopez values-driven CSR*

BY OSCAR M. LOPEZ

For more than five years now, every important event or meeting in the Lopez Group has begun with a recitation of our Credo and Values. At the judging of entries to the Lopez Achievement Awards, the percentage of total score assigned to values has risen to 40 percent from three years ago while exceptionality and contribution to business results are given 30 percent each.

This primacy of values in every aspect of our organization, a legacy from earlier generations of Lopezes as far back as the late 1800s, is often a surprise to our foreign visitors. They are doubly amazed to discover that among these values, we include social justice, nationalism, and employee welfare and wellness. They say these values are quite rare among business corporations which are openly dedicated to profit and expansion.



Thinking about these three values, I am inclined to think that they are the drivers of our Corporate Social Responsibility, the extent, consistency and influence of which have set standards for all corporations and even global development agencies operating in the Philippines. Ever since we began as a business organization in Iloilo and then in Manila at the cusp of the Spanish and American regimes, we have tried our best to take good care of our employees and their families as far as our resources would allow. With the help of many partners and countless volunteers, we have also shown genuine, and not self-serving, concern for the good of our country and made significant contributions to the well-being of Filipino families.

In the most adverse of conditions, whether from political oppression, economic downturns, or the impact of climate change, we have stood our ground and remained faithful to our values and, invariably, helped turned the tide into better times or at least a rekindling of hope for everyone.

Corporate social responsibility has had its doubting Thomases from the start – mostly from economic thinkers who opined that the business of business is business, and that companies are doing enough CSR by providing jobs, offering quality goods at reasonable prices, and paying taxes to the

government. Later on, CSR was flaunted by misguided public relations outfits as a way to enhance corporate brands and shore up corporate image and reputation.

In the last 15 years or so, CSR has met with other challenges to its relevance and validity. A succession of concepts, entirely new or refurbished, was proposed by prestigious academics and researchers as more useful to corporations in a fiercely competitive global market and geopolitical volatility. The concept of “shared values” comes to mind, as well as “inclusive business,” “economic and environmental performance standards” and “sustainability.”

All of these concepts and theories are certainly valid and informative in their own spheres, and they enrich thought leadership in both commerce and governance, or the private and public sectors. However, to my mind, each of them supplements the practice of CSR but none of them can supplant it. This is not to say that CSR cannot be adaptive or develop further in a brave new world marked by technology-driven acceleration, because CSR certainly has to.

So long as the Lopez values remain as dependable beacons in our search for convergence of our profitability and responsibility objectives, then the Lopez CSR shall remain at the prow of our ship taking us to the millennial future.



OML and family at the summit of Mt. Kinabalu

# HOW WE CONTRIBUTE

*To Economic  
and Social  
Development*

BY MANUEL M. LOPEZ

**T**he current crop of charismatic and articulate Presidents and Heads of State in Southeast Asia, as was clearly evident in the 50th ASEAN meeting held in Manila in November 2017, may create the impression that prosperity and development depend largely on the public sector or government. The truth is that the private or business sector, as well as civil society, more commonly known as non-government organizations, have been increasingly influential in shaping public policy and in monitoring programs that are publicly funded and, therefore, meant to benefit the public in palpable or demonstrable ways.

At the same time, social media has enlarged the clout of traditional media, giving nearly universal access to information and a louder microphone to the public. Although subject to abuse, ill-informed opinion, and malicious manipulation, social media keeps government on its toes and forces its quick response to issues of local or national importance.





In the case of the business sector, this new phenomenon of having a ceaseless dialogue with not only consumers but also very young influentials has heightened awareness of a company's role or contribution to social and economic advancement. As governance has become a 24/7 conversation, the time seems ripe to reexamine the role of business in the country's development.

We would hasten to point out that the topic is so large and complicated it might be better to focus on how business may contribute best to improving the lives of communities. The issue of why business should contribute is no longer debatable since it has been

often said a company could not be an island of prosperity in an ocean of poverty.

The private sector can provide financial and technical skills for long-term visioning, stability and accountability to social programs, especially for emerging economies caught in a revolving-door visitation of elective officials. Actually, the private sector may not be entirely altruistic but would be highly motivated to put sound economic and social programs in place because companies' profits, credit ratings and stock prices depend on a robust economy the fruits of which are more equitably spread.



The private sector's most visible contributions to public welfare come in the form of corporate social responsibility projects. Time was when CSR meant a PR gimmick or a feel-good initiative of management that was ultimately seen to cut into business revenues and brought donor fatigue. Today, in the more enlightened companies, and we hope the Lopez Group is ranked among them, CSR has been mainstreamed or imbedded into corporate planning and operations. CSR is seen as a way of helping to make communities productive and peaceful, and the economy vigorous and agile amid volatile and disruptive currents.

In general, private companies have given rise to a corps of CSR practitioners, many of whom work long hours, sometimes at great peril to themselves, in distant and unfamiliar terrain among constituents in need, as we have seen in Lopez member companies and foundations in projects like the La Mesa Dam Reforestation, Bantay Bata 163, Tulong Kapamilya

volunteerism, education, livelihood, watershed conservation and biodiversity programs.

In particular, the Lopez Group's commitment to business excellence has enriched the practice of CSR within our business units as well as with external partner organizations. It is business excellence that encourages best practices in all our CSR programs, demands the engagement of all employees and communities, encourages innovation and prudent cost-management and risk-taking in project implementation, and demands credible impact measurement to show how we improved the lives of partner communities.

For their untold sacrifices in advancing our country's development, our fellow employees practicing CSR in the Lopez Group give us so much reason to be proud of their work in advancing the well-being of our fellow Filipinos, including in the field of Philippine culture and heritage, and ultimately the economy.

# Bottom Up

## IS THE WAY TOWARD POSITIVE SOCIAL IMPACT

BY MERCEDES L. VARGAS

The 2016 edition of Bridges, with its theme “Lopez CSR: Inclusive and Sustainable” sought to demonstrate the complementary nature of Inclusiveness and Sustainability as they constitute a holistic strategy to achieve business profitability and social development. As with previous editions, the point we tried to illustrate was that the Lopez Group consistently promoted the social and environmental well-being of its stakeholder communities while working for continuous growth and at least a reasonable return of investments.

The principles and best practices of Sustainability have been adopted as a principal driver of EDC’s business strategy, and there seems to be a growing interest for its possible adoption, given the appropriate modifications to fit specific markets and business environments, by the entire Group.

Inclusiveness is the other side of the coin, and “Bottom Up” has been chosen as the themeline for this edition. We thought from the start that Bridges should try to connect people, places and ideas so that the connectivity of our internal and external stakeholders would spawn innovation, replication and synergy that should benefit all sectors. We believed from day one that the connectivity and integration must spring from the Lopez Group values as otherwise the benefits could be misused.

Bottom Up is our layman’s term for inclusiveness as it stands for the bottom-of-the-pyramid (BOP) segment whose participation in a company’s value chain would unlock the huge market and resources that reside in this segment, and benefit both the company and the BOP community itself.





- ABS-CBN's series "FPJ's Ang Probinsyano" broke audience ratings and revenue records in the history of Philippine TV with an average rating of 40% and actual gross profit for 2016 alone of Php 2 billion. But more than that, the TV series and the lead stars themselves advocate values relevant to the Filipino family and teach people to stay safe in a world filled with dangerous elements.

On the part of the BOP members, their inclusion in the value chain of companies gives them access to quality goods and services, more affordable choices, and livelihood and training opportunities that would improve their lives. This leads us to social impact, which is the emerging focus of the Lopez Group in both CSR or business operations.

Everything we do should show measurable and significant positive impact on communities we interact with

Let me cite some examples of Lopez Group programs that are creating long-term social impact on their communities or stakeholders:

- ALKFI's La Mesa Dam Watershed Project has worked with the MWSS for more than 17 years and raised donations of around Php 332 million in rehabilitating 2,659 hectares of watershed which is the primary source of drinking water for Metro Manila's 12 million people and its last remaining forest. In the last seven years alone, a total of 4,148,535 visitors have enjoyed the 33-hectare nature park (ECOPARK) which serves as an inexpensive family picnic grove and live classroom on biodiversity. A UN body has hailed it as the gold standard for watershed rehabilitation in Asia.
- EDC's BINHI program has been working with farmers' groups to restore within 10 years some 10,000 hectares of forest and upland communities in all its sites (e.g. Nueva Ecija, Leyte, and Southern Negros) as deputized under the government's National Greening Program. Studies done by UP Los Baños Foundation scientists and by a researcher from the World Agroforestry Center proved the BINHI projects' "positive impact on organizational capacity and initiative" of the farmers' groups and improved income and well-being of families involved.
- First Gen has been training and supporting since 2010 the small fishermen's associations in Lobo, Batangas and other towns to protect the Verde Island Passage, called the "Center of the Center of Marine Biodiversity" from dynamite and other forms of illegal fishing, and to promote eco-tourism in the pristine beaches and diving spots in the area.
- Bantay Bata 163 is celebrating some 20 years of rescuing, treating for physical and psychological harm, giving temporary shelter and if possible reuniting with their reformed families thousands of children exposed to abuse, violence and other forms of danger.
- INAEC employees have proven their aviation and logistical prowess, volunteerism and readiness to help SAGIP Kapamilya, EDC and other public-private initiatives to rescue and rehabilitate areas struck by super typhoons like Yolanda and other natural and man-made disasters.



- FPIP, the biggest private employer in Tanauan, Sto. Tomas and adjoining towns in Batangas, has an array of projects in sports, math, musical training, and values orientation for the youth of its host communities, and programs to instill self-reliance and discipline to help each individual to improve his life station.

The list goes on and on of Lopez companies and foundations, working with countless, faceless volunteers and donors, which are helping ensure that communities in need can be assisted immediately and that the positive impact on their lives can be sustained until they can stand on their own or the partnership has relevance for all parties involved.

Bridges submits that most of the programs the Lopez Group has done or supported in the past may all be categorized as either bottom up programs or

Lopez companies and foundations work to ensure that communities are given the capacity to improve their current situation, and that the social impact is sustained until people can stand on their own or the partnership has continuing relevance for all



aligned with inclusiveness. We would proudly cite many fellow employees, partners and volunteers featured in this magazine now and in previous issues who showed genuine engagement and collaboration with communities devastated by climate change, environmental abuse, armed conflict, corruption and wrongdoing, homelessness, ignorance, and various social ills that impact most heavily the poor. As we uphold Lopez values in performing our daily work and strive to create opportunities for our partner communities to improve their lives, we are lifted by the thought that even the littlest things we do, as the simplest words of encouragement we give, can inspire hope in others. A tiny candle of hope we light can help brighten the way for countless others.

# LOPEZ GROUP INVESTMENT IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

BY FAITH I. BACON

*“Imagine a world where there is no extreme poverty, no inequality, no waste as a result of sustainable consumption, where cities are sustainable and communities are resilient, where ecosystems are fully rehabilitated. Imagine a world where accountability and transparency is practiced by every government and citizens are engaged and conscientious steward of everything around them.”*

As the era of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) drew to a close in 2015, discussions began at the United Nations for a continuing global development agenda for 2030. Intensive evaluations of the MDG showed that many of the goals and target were yet to be met and therefore were incorporated in the new agenda called the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**.

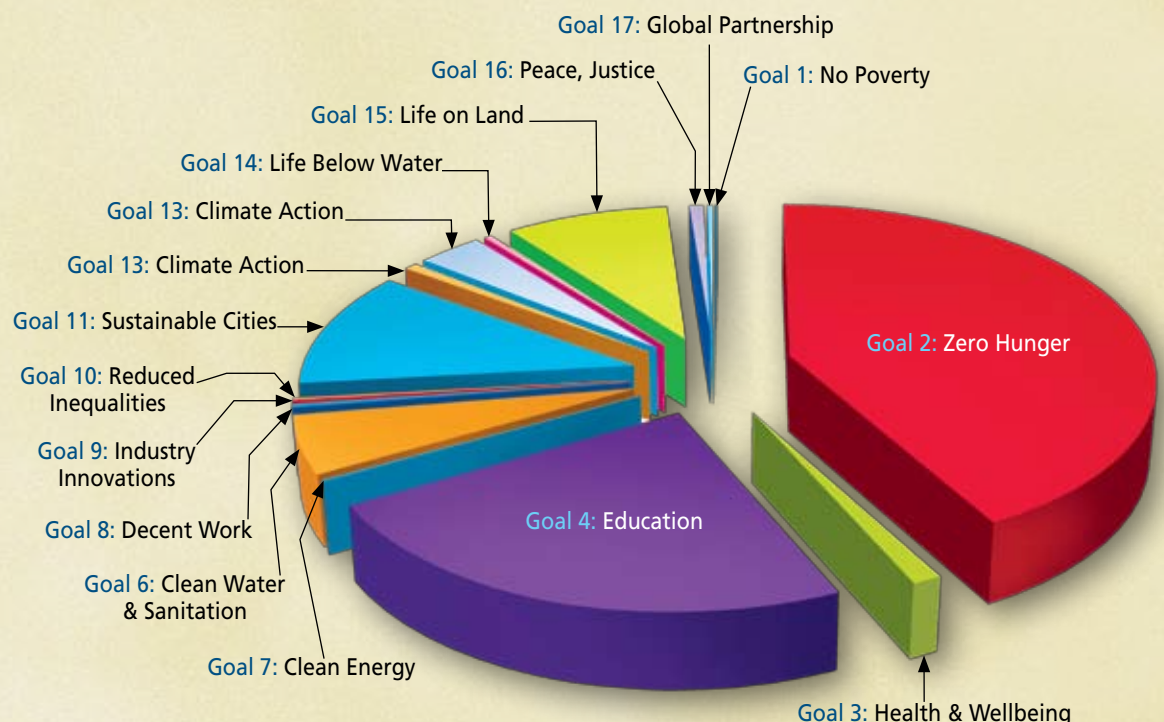
Signed in 2016, the SDG is considered the UN’s blueprint of future development until 2030. Consisting of 17 Goals, 169 targets and 232

indicators, the SDG hopes to go beyond what the MDGs was conceptualized to achieve so that the new development framework will not only focus on the elimination of poverty but will also address the drivers of poverty such as economic growth, creating jobs, reducing inequality and encouraging innovations that will make better and judicious use of the earth’s natural resources. In the new SDGs, the private sector is identified as having a pivotal role, not simply as source of development financing but as a key player in long-term sustainability, growth and development both as inclusive businesses and through their developmental corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

In the Philippines, CSR spending vis-à-vis total financial resources of business is a mere 0.006% in 2001 and 0.05% in 2005 where only 20,000 of the 700,000 companies have CSR programs and of these 20,000 companies, only 0.05% (100 firms) are considered inclusive businesses (Devex).

Figure 1

## LOPEZ GROUP SDG CSR INVESTMENT



In line with the government's call for aligning all development efforts with the Philippine Development Plan's Ambisyon 2014 and the SDG, the Lopez Group Foundation Inc. decided to align its 2016 (CSR) investment reporting to the SDG.

For 2016, 12 Lopez corporations and eight foundations submitted their CSR investment reports. Collectively they were able to mobilize investment for various programs and projects. Of these, the top five biggest investments were geared towards minimizing hunger, supporting food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture (42%); promoting inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities (23%); helping make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (12%); protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable forest management and addressing land degradation and biodiversity loss (9%); and supporting availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (6%). (Figure 1)

Lopez Group CSR programs and projects can be clustered into four categories. These are programs directed at **PEOPLE, PLANET, PROSPERITY** and **PEACE**. This categorization shows that the Lopez Group puts premium into people development and in addressing the drivers of this development such as ending hunger and poverty, ensuring every Filipino gets equal opportunity through education and addressing health equity.

Lopez Group CSR investments are largely done in cash (95%) although premium is also placed at volunteerism and materials support including time and effort by its workforce (5%); 75% are investments from the various corporations of the Lopez Group while 25% are generated from external donors most of which are geared towards humanitarian assistance work of ALKFI.

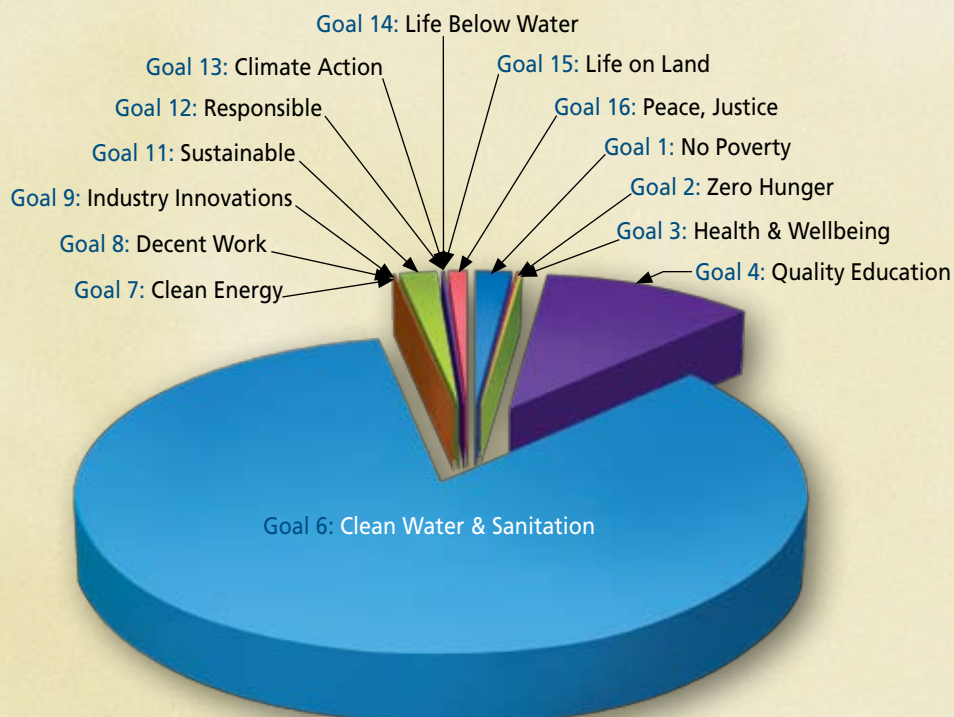
A total of 66% of spending for community development are implemented by the Lopez companies through their CSR programs and projects while 44% are mobilized and contributed by and through the various Lopez foundations.

The types of projects being done by the Lopez Group range from simple tree planting to water shed management; from feeding to scholarship to ensuring the safety, peace and security of children through Bantay Bata; from providing potable water to a community to building an entire water system, rehabilitating a major river and protecting a biodiversity Center-of-Center at Verde Island passage.

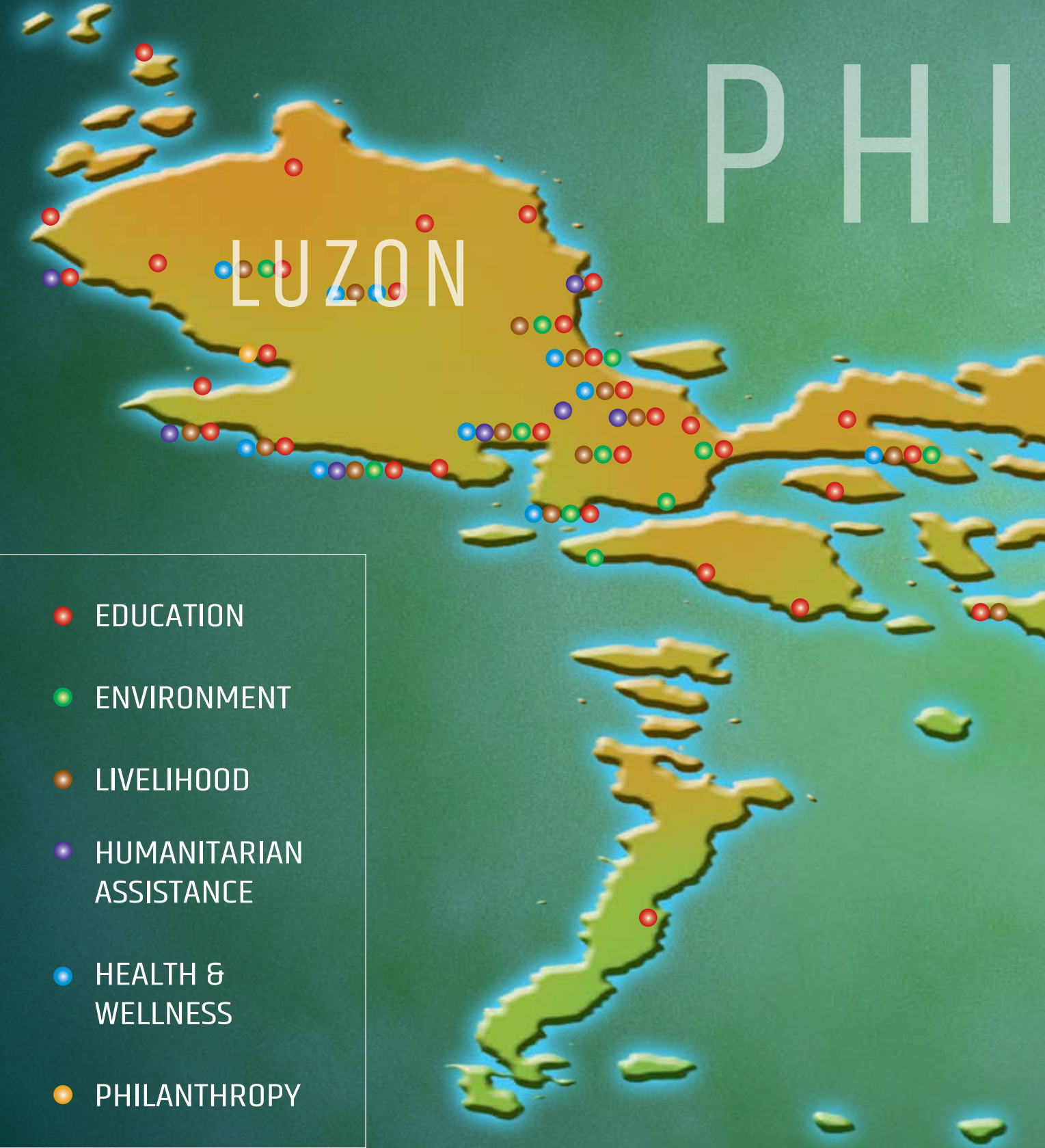
In 2016, the Lopez Group CSR SDG initiatives complemented efforts by various sectors in addressing the needs of over 29 million individuals. Data from the reports showed that the projects that provided clean water and sanitation facilities have the largest number of beneficiaries followed by projects that help provide quality education, developing sustainable cities and reducing poverty. (Figure 2).

Figure 2

## BENEFICIARIES SERVED



# LOPEZ GROUP CSR INVESTMENTS





# PHILIPPINES



VISAYAS

MINDANAO



# LUNA

## WORKS REUNITED



Detail, *La Muerte de Cleopatra* by Juan Luna 1881. Collection of Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Spain

Contributing one of the largest loans from a single collection, the Lopez Museum and Library successfully brought over ten paintings by Juan Luna to be part of the National Gallery of Singapore's (NGS) exhibition, *Between Worlds: Raden Saleh and Juan Luna*. The Luna component of the exhibition curated by Lisa Chikiamco, features works of the Filipino painter loaned from various private and public collections both in the Philippines and abroad, in addition to those in the NGS' permanent collection. Unveiled last November 16, the exhibition is a must-see for both the Filipino and global audience alike, with rarely seen paintings from Luna's Roman period to his other monumental works now on view for the public to enjoy.

LML's collections management department and conservation center worked in close collaboration with representatives from the NGS for the preparation of the artworks. Each step of the process was meticulously monitored and executed, from the creation of the crates that would hold the canvases in transit, to overseeing the unpacking of the artworks, until their installation onto the walls of the galleries. Utilizing best practices in collections management, the LML worked to ensure the security of these national treasures. This endeavor became an opportunity for the museum staff to refresh and improve their skills in collections management and for the museum to engage with colleagues in the field — what is hoped to be an initial foray into possible collaborative projects in the future.



Lopez Museum's Espana y Filipinas featured on the façade of the National Gallery of Singapore



La Muerte de Cleopatra by Juan Luna 1881. Collection of Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, Spain



Galleries of Between Worlds:  
Juan Luna and Raden Saleh



Cedie Vargas with España y Filipinas  
by Juan Luna collection (left) of  
National Gallery of Singapore and  
(right) collection of Lopez Museum

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*Between Worlds is part of the showcase Century of Light, which features two exciting exhibitions on art from the 19th century, a post-Enlightenment era of innovation and change. Together with Colours of Impressionism: Masterpieces from the Musée d'Orsay, the show demonstrates the range of painting styles and art movements that emerged in Europe during this formative period, which has been and continues to be influential to the development of art in Southeast Asia and around the world.*

The Lopez Museum and Library's España y Filipinas (c. 1888-1893) is now on display alongside the iteration of the work from the National Gallery of Singapore Collection. Flora is scattered along the steps, and billowing fabrics are strewn across the two women; the differences display the artistic process of the Filipino painter and his attention to detail. LML commends the extensive research carried out by the NGS curatorial team, filling in gaps and giving richer context not only to the reunited pair, but also to the exhibition as a whole.

The ten Luna paintings from the Lopez Museum and Library collection was on display at the National Gallery of Singapore until the 11th of March 2018. For more information about Between Worlds, visit <https://www.nationalgallery.sg/>.



Lopez Museum and Library's Rod Enano and Romeo Jalandoni working on crates to hold the Luna works in transit





# OML CLIMATE CHANGE CENTER HONORS PARTNERS AND 2017 GRANT RECIPIENTS

The Oscar M. Lopez Center for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management Foundation, Inc. (OML Center) on its fifth anniversary hosted a conference and cocktails in honor of partners as well as recipients of its grants for 2017.

The Lopez Group, through First Philippine Holdings Corp. (FPH) and its subsidiaries, helped establish the OML Center in 2012 to help reduce the risks and manage the impacts of climate-related hazards in disaster prone areas in the country.

The OML Center was named after Oscar M. Lopez (center, in photo), FPH chair emeritus, in recognition of his lifelong support of environmental causes. The foundation aims to achieve its goals by generating science-based solutions in the area of climate change adaptation and disaster risk management.



Recipients of the OML Center Resilience Grants for 2017 (L-R): Wilfredo Licuanan, PhD - Founding Director of the DLSU Br. Alfred Shields Ocean Research (SHORE) Center, and project lead for the 2017 grant awarded to DLSU, Jorge Emmanuel, PhD - Adjunct professor at Silliman University's Institute of Environmental and Marine Sciences, and the project lead for the 2017 grant awarded to Silliman University, Enrique Oracion, PhD - Dean of Graduate Programs at Silliman University and co-proponent of the 2017 grant awarded to Silliman University

The OML Center's conference provided a venue for scientists from different fields to exchange ideas with undergraduate and post-graduate students on the health and environmental impact of climate change.

The OML Center likewise formally awarded the 2017 "Resilience Grants", amounting to P4.8 million, to De La Salle University (DLSU) and Silliman University projects.

The DLSU project, headed by Dr. Wilfredo Roehl Licuanan, PhD, proposes to provide a baseline evaluation of two reef systems in the iconic strait separating Mindoro from Luzon, known as Verde Island Passage, to develop a set of tools and a "report card" that will enable local communities

and industries to monitor the progress of climate change.

The Silliman project, headed by Dr. Jorge Emmanuel, PhD, proposes an interdisciplinary approach to develop tools to understand resiliency and vulnerability of riverside communities.

Also present during the event were Jonathan Russell and Arturo Valdez, OML Center board members; Dr. Rodel Lasco, PhD, OML Center scientific director; Dr. Enrique Oracion, PhD, Silliman University dean of Graduate Programs; Marianne Quebral, OML Center executive director; and Richard Tantoco, president of the OML Center board.

# OUR CHILDREN, OUR FUTURE

BY MARCO ANTONIO M. AMURAO



The concept of 'start 'em young' has always been a tried-and-tested formula for many things, especially when integrating good habits that are meant to be carried forward throughout life. With this in mind, First Philippine Industrial Park (FPIP) has created a wide array of projects and programs for the benefit of the young residents of its host barangays, FPIP's partners in progress.

Consistent with its parent company's vision of uplifting lives, FPIP's Corporate Social Responsibility platform is meant to ensure improved and dignified living conditions of the residents of the communities it serves. FPIP, the largest employment hub in the thriving townships of Tanauan and Sto. Tomas, provides vast employment and livelihood opportunities, and goes further by recognizing the importance of the need to instill self-reliance and discipline among the residents to maximize each individual's chances of success. This will ensure sustainable business for FPIP as well as unhampered productivity of its locators.

With this in mind, FPIP has put together a variety of effective programs targeting younger generations to ingrain, shape and hone the needed skill sets and values to achieve the desired collective outcome.

Among these are:

**Palarong Pinoy** re-introduces traditional Filipino Sports to integrate traditional Filipino Values in a fun and engaging manner. In this modern age of computers and gadgets, younger generations have shown little interest to 'cooperate, coordinate and communicate' with peers despite many opportunities to do so. FPIP brings back "patintero", "kadang-kadang", "sundot-hipon", "sipa", "luksong-tinik" and other "Larong Pinoy" to elementary pupils from its host public elementary schools to allow children to learn these soft skills. The *Palarong Pinoy* is a flagship event which enables participants to enjoy games as an alternative wellness activity without having to spend money.

**Spelling & Math Challenge** is a complementary initiative aimed at improving the quality of education for Grade 2 and 3 students. This program is designed primarily for students with a 78% and below average grade in English and Math. Teachers are encouraged to spend more time with these students through engaging review sessions with the end in view of increasing overall knowledge. A contest is then held where everyone is declared a winner, allowing these students to experience the fulfillment





of being lauded and identified as top performers in their class, which has always been a great motivator.

**Orkestrang Kabataang Batangan**, in partnership with Ang Misyon, gives training to less-privileged youth to enhance artistic skills and uplift their lives via classical music. Providing access to musical instruments and music lessons otherwise not within reach of these students, participation in the orchestra allows children to discover and hone their musical talent to the fullest extent. Regular training sessions are held at the Oasis covered courts of FPIP every Saturday.

**Values Orientation and Leadership Training (VOLT)** is a two-day, two-night activity that aims to improve moral standards and ethics of the younger generation. A number of sessions are available with various areas of focus: self-awareness, decision-making, social ethics and etiquette, to name a few. Participants of this program eventually become volunteers in various community projects of FPIP and its locators.

**Project SAVE (Students Assistance via employee Volunteerism)** exemplifies and encourages employee volunteerism where the generosity of

FPIP and locator employees are seen in full force. This enables employees to 'adopt' students from marginalized families by paying their school legal fees as prescribed by public high schools in order to pursue their education. Employees also continue to share their resources by purchasing school supplies needed during the school year and as well as presents for the students during Christmas.

**SEEDS (Scholastic Excellence through Empowerment and Developmental Support)** is a collegiate scholarship program aimed at providing financial assistance to less-fortunate but deserving students who dream of finishing courses that make them ultimately employable in FPIP. There are currently 31 scholars, including a number of top performers in classes in their chosen field. These students are all enrolled in nearby accredited and recognized state colleges and universities.

All these initiatives are well-planned sustainable programs, and are conceptualized, implemented and monitored by the most passionate stakeholders driven to ensure each program's success and maximize the positive, long-term impact on its beneficiaries.



# HIKERS... AND BIKERS AT THE

# Walk the Talk

BY GERBS R. DE CASTRO



**M**ore than 400 Lopez Group employees, composed of family members and friends, attended the recently concluded "HR Council-Lopez Lifelong Wellness Walk The Talk", which was held last January 27, 2018 at the La Mesa Nature Reserve, located in Quezon City.

Sponsored by ABS-CBN and SKY, the event went underway with Jean Panopio from SKY delivering the invocation portion, and SKY's Dimpy Jazmines, performing the emceeing chores.

ABS-CBN's Carms Dumdumaya and TJ Isla led the recitation of the Lopez Credo and Values, and delivered the welcome remarks, respectively.

Starting this year, each Walk the Talk (WTT) will also be highlighting a Lopez Value. The Lopez Value that was featured during this first Walk the Talk of the year was Business Excellence – and this was felt by all the participants as Joe Pascual of ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation, Inc. briefly shared with everyone the successful initiatives undertaken by the La Mesa Nature Reserve, which earned it an Operations Management Award during last year's 2017 Lopez Achievement Awards.

Following an Inspirational Talk courtesy of Paul Abastillas of ABS-CBN, the traditional Stretching and Exercise portion went underway as Aira Demdam from Gold's Gym spearheaded the entire crowd in warming up.

Taking advantage that La Mesa Nature Reserve has great biking trails, this specific Walk The Talk event also added a bike option aside from the usual walk routine. Lopez bikers were invited to bike, and two trails were created to cater to these two groups of participants – a 3-km one for the walkers and a longer 10-km trail for the bikers.

A safety briefing ensued courtesy of August Villalon from EDC's Preparedness & Disaster Response Unit and Alfred Go from SKY's Emergency Response Team before the walk and bike event proper began. Looking after the participants as some light rains fell during the WTT, these safety officers from both companies gave additional reminders, and made adjustments to the course and activities.

During the WTT, Monica Tan of LGFI also addressed the participants to launch a Book Drive for Marawi City, which is a project of LGFI and Ortigas Library. In this program which will run for two months, Lopez employees are invited to donate books to benefit the young children and community of Marawi. More details about this project will be announced to Lopez employees soon by the HR Council.

As a continuous improvement of this wellness undertaking, BMI monitoring of several participants still went underway during the event.

Walk  
the  
Talk

## AN ACTIVITY THAT MY KIDS ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO

“Dhi, when is the walk the talk?-  
my son always asked me.”

It has been four years now, when my kids, my wife, and I had been attending the Walk The Talk Activity.

Back in 2014, when I first joined the Walk the Talk, I saw other families with their kids were happy walking, running around, and enjoying every trail and sceneries.

The next Walk the Talk, I let my kids and my wife joined the activity. We as family enjoyed the trip heading to the different venues and destination.

From there, we met other employees' kids, and my kids made friends with them. Since then, my family has always been looking forward for another Walk the Talk activity, making us one of the perfect attendees for three years in a row now (2015-2017).

It helps us improve our physical wellness as we were able to check our BMI's. For we always talk big things during the walk—like my kid's dreams, pasion, and their new friends on the trails—our ties as a family become stronger.

Aside from building happy memories with them—taking pictures at many junctures of the trails—my family enjoys the long trips heading to different Walk the Talk venues.



**LEADERSHIP  
TRAINING COMBINES**

# Music with Values





**C**an music-making and values formation go hand in hand, and be cool and fun for young artists who come from different places? The answer seemed a resounding “Yes!” during a two-day leadership and values training held at the Eugenio Lopez Center recently for scholars of Ang Misyon.

The Lopez Group Foundation Inc. (LGFI) and Ang Misyon Inc. (AMI) in partnership with the Global Peace Foundation (GPF), the University of Asia and the Pacific (UAP) and the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) held a two-day training for 45 young scholars of the Orchestra of the Filipino Youth selected from various AMI satellites including Metro Manila, Cebu, Batangas, Talim Island in Laguna, and Rizal.

The training was aimed at developing young leaders with exemplary values that will propel the work of AMI

in the future and expand its reach to other satellites nationwide.

The children, ages ranging from 24 years old to as young as 11 years of age, sat through a few lectures, did exercises, played games, did physical activities and reflection sessions that are aimed at developing their leadership skills and imbue values essential to their functions as upright young musicians.

The activities included a short theater workshop facilitated by PETA, which saw them producing their own 3-5 minute short value-laden skits. At the end of the two-day workshop, the children said they learned among other things the value of teamwork, perseverance, and how to be “*walang hiya*” (not to be ashamed).

**FAITH BACON**



# LOPEZ ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

## 2017 WINNERS

One remarkable thing about the recent Lopez Achievement Awards, given in October 2017, was that all six winners showed strong elements of values-driven CSR in their objectives, implementation and community impact. This was not so evident in the 14 previous LAA annual competitions. This may be happenstance or coincidental or there may be deeper reasons for it. Bridges would not speculate on these reasons but is giving the 2017 LAA winners greater prominence in this edition for their adherence to Lopez CSR philosophies.



## LA MESA WATERSHED PROJECT SAVED METRO MANILA'S MAIN WATER SOURCE AND ONLY REMAINING FOREST

**T**he La Mesa Watershed project of the former ABS-CBN Foundation, now known as ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation Inc. (ALKFI), rehabilitated the watershed and reservoir which together constitutes the primary source of drinking water of Metro Manila's more than 12 million people. It covers 2,659 hectares of watershed running across Quezon City, Caloocan City, and Rodriguez town in Rizal, and is the last remaining forest of the metropolis.









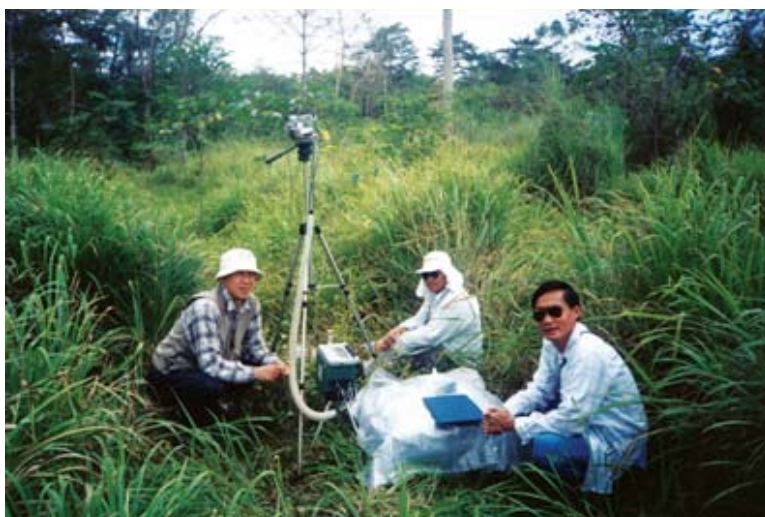
After nearly two decades of work with countless volunteers and partners, ALKFI has seen the revival of Metro Manila's last remaining forest and primary source of drinking water. Now, families enjoy picnics and fishing, boating and hiking in the serene beauty of La Mesa Nature Reserve.

It was considered a totally disturbed watershed when the Bantay Kalikasan program of the foundation started a tree-planting project there in 1999 under an agreement with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System.

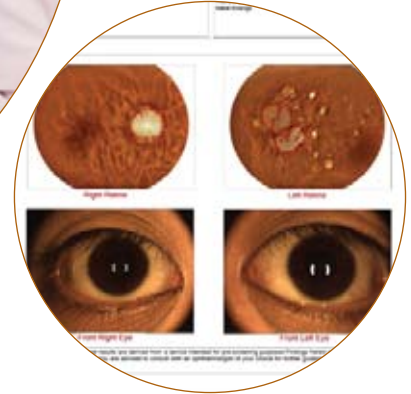
In the past 17 years, the watershed project has planted more than a million trees in reforesting 1,552 hectares, with a survival rate of 93%. The project has earned the support of major collaborators Maynilad Water Services, Manila Water Co., the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the local government of Quezon City, and many other organizations and countless volunteers.

The project also rehabilitated a 33-hectare nature park (Ecopark), which since 2004 has served as a live classroom to educate students and tourists on biodiversity and to generate income to help fund the watershed project. In 2016 alone, more than 400,000 visitors came to the Ecopark, bringing total revenues of Php 38.7 million.

From 1999 to 2016, a total of 4,148,535 visitors have come to the Ecopark while 111,516 visitors have enjoyed the beautiful scenery of La Mesa Watershed. Donations to the watershed rehabilitation have totaled some Php 331,880,000 and revenues of the Ecopark have reached Php 2,917,000. The project has been recognized as the golden standard for watershed rehabilitation in Asia by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO).

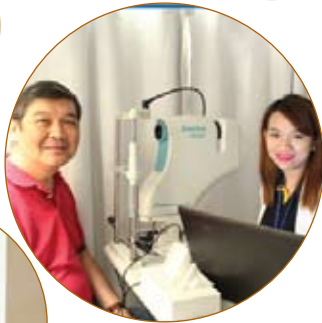






## AEI'S EYE SCAN OFFERS AN AFFORDABLE, PORTABLE WAY OF DETECTING EYE DISEASES

The Philippine Department of Health says that in its 2015 survey, 59% of 295,152 Filipinos examined were blind in both eyes due to cataracts. The country has over half a million backlog of cataract cases but PhilHealth data says only 1.5% to 2% of these cases are treated annually. There is only one ophthalmologist for every 83,000-plus patients in the country which is a far cry from the World Health Organization's standard of one ophthalmologist per 20,000 people. Most eye doctors and ambulatory clinics are working in the National Capital Region and the other big metropolitan cities.





In response to the problem, Asian Eye Institute has launched a pioneering technology-based service called Eye Scan which promotes prevention of sight diseases and blindness through early detection. It addresses the low priority given by most Filipinos to eyesight-threatening diseases by making possible their detection at a cost that is affordable to more people and accessible to more areas.

Eye Scan is a non-invasive, no-contact test with the help of a portable machine that can detect signs of potentially blinding eye diseases and give patients the state of their eyes' health so they can get treatment when needed. The service is offered directly to customers at a few hundred pesos, and to ambulatory centers and polyclinics at a lower price to serve their patients. The scan involves taking digital images of the front and back parts of the eyes and can be done in 15 minutes for patients who are over five years old.

Since Eye Scan and trained specialists can screen the people who need treatment, the few ophthalmologists available can spend more of their time with a bigger number of patients who actually need their expertise rather than have these doctors doing the screening themselves. Eye Scan can be transported to reach patients in remote areas or serve even those in far cities through digital technology. For the business side of AEI, Eye Scan allows its doctors to serve more patients who have more serious needs.

Eye Scan offers the first teleophthalmology service in the country, and is linking up the service with partner clinics in Jakarta and other Asian cities. Eye Scan serves as a feeder to the AEI eye care ecosystem and provides data banking which can lead to big data businesses instrumental in clinical research and predictive software development.



## SORSOGON'S BUHATAN RIVER CHANGED FROM A FLOWING TRASH BIN INTO A BOOMING ECOTOURISM SITE

In Sorsogon province, a big and important river that was once filled with garbage and debris arising from carelessness and neglect has become one of the most successful ecotourism sites in the city of Sorsogon.

The Buhatan River Eco-Adventure is a joint project of ALKFI's Bantay Kalikasan arm and the Sorsogon city government with the support of Energy Development Corporation. Tourism infrastructure was built, community workers and volunteers were trained, various media platforms were introduced as means of advertising the river tour. In two years, people realized they not only had transformed a former trash bin into a beautiful flowing river, but they were





also earning good money from it. More than Php 1.1 million has been earned, and at least 67 residents had gotten regular jobs earning anywhere from Php 2,000 to Php 15,000 per month depending on hours worked and number of visitors served.

A huge floating restaurant measuring some 300 square meters in all, two floating cabanas, eight solar panels, life vests and life rings for emergencies, and other assets allow for family parties, firefly-watching and sunset tours, bird watching, kayaking and mangrove observation tours. Hundreds of volunteers from Sorsogon State College and the Computer Communication Development Institute planted 15,000 mangrove seedlings and 1,000 mangroves along the river banks.

Some 3,000 tourists came to the river adventure in 2016 and the river tour had been featured in many print, broadcast and social media outlets.

The project put several organizations to work together in restoring the environment and forming a profitable enterprise. The people were mobilized and worked for 10 months in putting up the infrastructure and sourcing the equipment, sending six residents to culinary school so that delicious meals could be served in the floating restaurant, and others looked after the operations and advertising the tour. With integrity, the people pledged to be prudent with their transactions, opening two bank accounts – one for operations and maintenance, the other for the community, education, and training expenses.



## SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT OF GRANT FOR RESETTLED FAMILIES IN CALAUAN, LAGUNA

Exemplary work was done in implementing a grant to families that had been relocated in what is now known as Southville 7 in Calauan, Laguna. The grant amounted to \$1.5 million from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction channeled through the Asian Development Bank, while the grant implementor was the Bayanijuan team of ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation Inc. (ALKFI). The project resulted in improved service delivery in Southville 7, which ALKFI attributed to the residents themselves who had learned how to get involved in decision-making and accessing and responsively using resources.

ALKFI (then known as ABS-CBN Foundation Inc.) signed in 2009 a co-management agreement with the National Housing Authority over a 107-hectare resettlement site in Calauan. Under the agreement, part of Southville will be a relocation site for families displaced from the Pasig River and its estuaries.

Southville7 became home to 5,659 families including 1,686 families from Estero de Paco and Estero de





Pandacan. The big challenge, especially for the Calauan local government, was the sudden influx of some 25,000 relocated families which more than doubled the municipality's population and strained the LGU's resources and capabilities.

Through the grant, ALKFI was able to put electricity in more than 900 households, and completed other projects in water supply, livelihood assistance, and community governance training. Some of the community projects were solar-power street lights, meeting spaces made of nipa and bamboo, school facilities, and a Materials Recovery Facility. With Bayan EDGE as fund-manager for livelihood projects, Php 9.25 million in zero-interest loans was given to 734 individuals and three group accounts, with nearly half of that amount already repaid.

Through the foundation's project partners in the private sector, ALKFI has invested in Southville some Php 200 million in infrastructure and service delivery

projects, including Php 48.6 million committed by Lopez Group companies. After completing the implementation of the grant objectives in November 2016, ALKFI has been working with NHA and the local government for the turnover of these assets in 2018 for Southville 7 to manage their community affairs on their own.

Community-based organizations are now managing their own water stations that serve more than 2,300 households and improved local governance. The zero-interest loans also gave rise to small businesses from rice trading to food services. The Level II Water Project showed the importance of partnering with community organizations and the Laguna Water District for expertise and sustainability. In the livelihood projects, community leaders visited houses of borrowers to follow up on loan repayments, and carefully recorded daily water transactions and did early flagging of possible delays in project implementation.



## EDC AND 7 OTHER LOPEZ COMPANIES REBUILD CHILDREN'S LIVES THROUGH STURDY CLASSROOMS

Three years after Typhoon Yolanda, Energy Development Corporation collaborated with seven other Lopez Group companies and other organizations to deliver typhoon and earthquake-resistant classrooms to remote communities that had not been reached by massive volunteer and donor-funded efforts. These classrooms could withstand 250-kph winds and 7.2 intensity earthquakes and were designed for free by construction industry experts tapped by EDC.



EDC's Adopt-a-School Program, actually in its Phase 3, was joined by Rockwell, First Balfour, First Gen, First Philippine Industrial Park, First Philec, ThermaPrime Drilling, and ALKFI, as well as external partners Lockton Insurance and Reinsurance Brokers Inc. and the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation Inc. Each partner contributed expertise and resources to the project.

Looking for remote sitios badly in need of classrooms, the team went to mountains of Bukidnon and river-isolated villages in Aklan. In some villages, the team met resistance and skepticism from residents disappointed with earlier promises of

various groups. Some other areas were difficult to reach which posed challenges to building contractors, and some areas had peace and order problems that needed LGU intervention for the schools to be built.

Despite many obstacles, the team simultaneously built 65 classrooms in 11 provinces, completing the work within budget and timeframe. By the end of 2016, the project was able to turn over the 65 classrooms for a total of 150 classrooms since the project started in 2014. Some 9,000 students benefited from the sturdy classrooms complete with light, tables and chairs, and toilets.



# FPJ'S ANG PROBINSYANO: 'TELESERYE' FOR VALUES FORMATION

“FPJ's Ang Probinsyano” sought to prove it is really a “Teleserye Beyond Entertainment” because it went beyond delighting viewers with star power and riveting stories but also taught them how to protect themselves and stay safe in a world filled with dangerous elements. It is ABS-CBN's first infotainment and public service teleserye that advocates values relevant to the Filipino family. It proves that show business success can work hand in hand with values formation especially for the youth.

Winning under the Business Management category of the Lopez Achievement Awards, it is a series that broke audience ratings and revenue records in Philippine television. With unprecedented average ratings of 40% versus target of 30.76%, the series has been the number one TV show since its launch in September 2015 to the present. Its actual gross profit was worth Php 2 billion for a 78% profit margin vs target gross profit of Php 1.5 billion or a 75% profit margin, which were all ambitious figures driven by the show's success in 2015. The show has won 81 awards from various industry bodies which indicate high quality standards in different aspects of production and management.



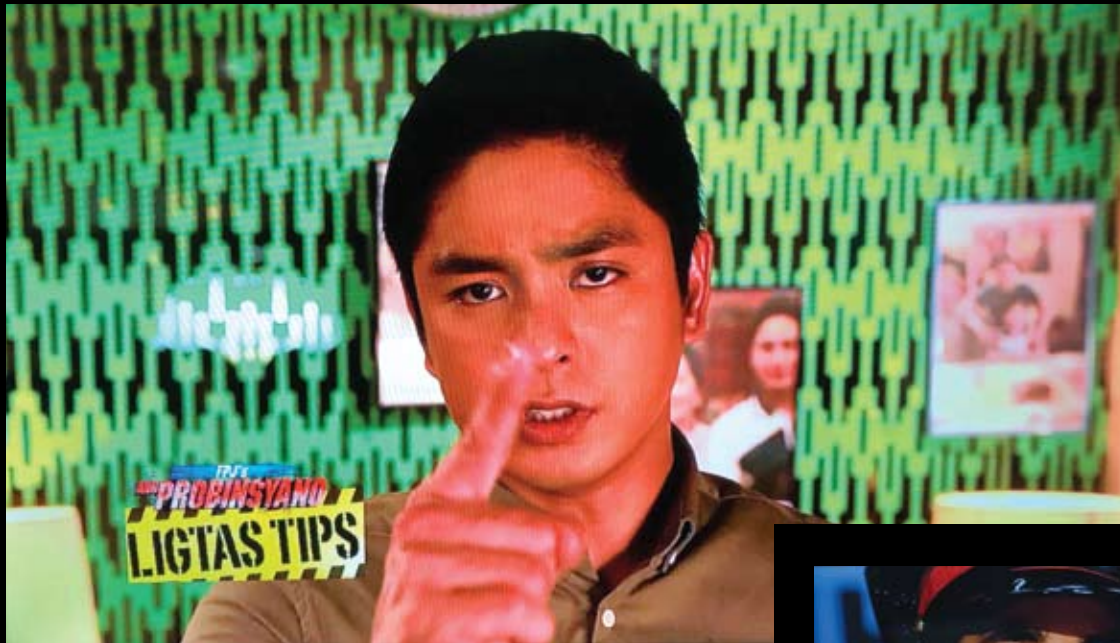




In numerous outreach projects and personal advocacies, Coco Martin, Susan Roces, and the show's other lead characters supported many community sectors such as children, elderlies, persons with disabilities, and overseas Filipino workers. These showbiz icons also provided good role models for the Filipino families that constitute their millions of followers.

The teleserye exemplifies many Lopez values, among them Pioneering Entrepreneurial Spirit in showing that good ratings for action-drama can go side by side with values formation and practical advice on safety and personal well-being. Business excellence

is observed in the crew consistently working hard and pushing their understanding of real-life situations into each show, and in the process keeping their extraordinary audience share and huge revenues. Unity and nationalism are also shown in the theme and dialogues which harped on family unity and love for fellow Filipinos and the downtrodden. Integrity is again wrapped around the solid character and ethical values of the lead players, while the testimonials of the cast and crew and other people involved in the show point to the priority given to personal well-being, emotional support during difficult periods and camaraderie.



# LOPEZ COMPANIES IN THE LIGHT OF CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY

BY AGNES DE JESUS





In this period of disruptions and threats at a global scale, every country, organization and citizen has a shared responsibility to achieve and maintain the stability of the planet and society. For business, this action is within the ambit of the philosophy known as “Corporate Sustainability” (CS) which entails the balancing of the interests of the environment (planet), society (people) and business (profit) or the 3Ps for the current and future generations. By managing the risks and capturing the opportunities arising from developments in the 3Ps, a robust environment is maintained and a harmonious relationship with stakeholders is attained.

The UN Global Compact aptly asserts that “business cannot thrive unless people and planet are thriving.” Indeed, business cannot thrive in a damaged planet and a failed society. Business needs people to flourish so they can buy the products and services of business and people can only flourish if they live within the carrying capacity of the environment. Both people and business depend on the environment for its raw materials and the protection of its assets from natural hazards.

Recognizing that global risks affects business locally because of the interconnectedness of everything, the Lopez Group understands the need for its businesses to share with their respective countries the responsibility of attaining the prosperity of people and planet through the “global plan” called the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our country was a signatory to the SDG agreement in October 2015, a quarter before the Paris climate deal.



The SDG is the global plan to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure the enjoyment of peace and prosperity by everyone. The Lopez companies are known to be good stewards of its environment and host communities for several decades and in 2016, one of the conglomerates, the First Philippine Holdings (FPH) was the first to start the journey for the group while two companies, INAEC and ABS-CBN, are closely tracking FPH process to learn how to install sustainability in their own sector soon.

The FPH sustainability strategy is to maintain a robust environment that will continue to support the needs of business and society. In return, business and society must protect the environment by living within nature's carrying capacity. In summary, the FPH subsidiaries adhere to the following beliefs:

- For the environment  
We must defend nature to sustain FPH operations so that the environment will continue to provide the goods and services needed by business and the people.
- For society  
As a responsible investor, we should ensure that as business progresses, the people must progress with us.
- For the economy  
FPH businesses stimulate the economy and use innovation for productivity, efficiency, and new products for the benefit of society and the environment.



Management consultation

The conglomerate installed sustainability systematically by:

- Consulting across the organization of the nine subsidiaries for internal stakeholders to assess the level of understanding and willingness of all groups to adopt the sustainability philosophy.
- Elevation of the sustainability philosophy in FPH governance by adopting a sustainability policy after a year of consultation with all subsidiaries and until it was embraced by all.
- Reviewing the risks and opportunities of FPH subsidiaries vis a vis the megatrends opportunities.
- Alignment of FPH sustainability measures with the SDGs to help their business thrive.



## **CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY POLICY STATEMENT**

*We are committed to improving people's lives and futures by ensuring that as our businesses grow, the environment, our employees and our other stakeholders progress with us.*

*We are constantly working to transform the Philippines in positive and innovative ways through our responsible growth and investments.*

*We resolve to contribute to a low carbon world as we search for sustainable solutions for the benefit of everyone.*

*All of these are made possible through our values. As a Lopez company, we work with nationalism, integrity, social justice, unity, excellence, a pioneering entrepreneurial spirit for the service of our nation.*

  
FEDERICO R. LOPEZ

- Identification of specific activities of FPH to protect the interests of people, environment, and economy/business.

- Based on the risk and opportunity assessment, the conglomerate selected the most critical sustainability indicators to address and monitor the use of renewable energy, carbon footprinting, water management, energy management, waste management and greening the supply chain.

- To ensure that the FPH subsidiaries can implement the strategy, Management agreed on a capacity

building session on the indicators and metrics with the help of in-house and/or external experts.

- Since 2016, FPH has been conducting an embedding program for employees so that they will appreciate sustainable practices and understand FPH's path.

- For transparency and to communicate the FPH's sustainability strategy, process outcomes to internal and external stakeholders, the 2016 Sustainability Report was issued in May 2017. The results of this inclusive and systematic process are of substantial benefits to people, planet, and profit.



Town hall meeting with employees



Chief Sustainability Officer De Jesus and team



## THE UPLAND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OF EDC

*sharing responsibility...  
sharing accountability*

BY LIEZEL SALAGUBANG

**E**DC has been an active partner of the National Greening Program (NGP) through the company's BINHI program which aims to restore 10,000 hectares in 10 years in all its project sites since 2009. While this is a fraction of the 1.5 million-hectare goal of NGP the challenge is to sustain the interest of the farmers to reach this goal.

Mang Rodel and Mang Richard are just two among the over 5,000 beneficiaries of BINHI across EDC's five sites and part of the 20 million Filipinos (as of 2000) that live in the uplands competing with forest resource use and forest degradation. BSBFAI, formerly Bagong Silang Multi Purpose Cooperative (BSMPC), was an inactive organization in 1996-2010 and was re-organized in 2011 to implement the BINHI project. VIFA, on the other hand, was organized by the Community Relations arm of Pantabangan Hydroelectric Power Plant (PHEPP) in 2009 to take on reforestation projects. It took years of engagements and training to have these former kaingineros and charcoal makers to become tree planters and micro-entrepreneurs.

EDC as deputized manager of less than 1% of the total land area in the Philippines believes that protecting forests and watersheds is a shared value and a shared responsibility with the communities living in it. As the company depends on healthy watersheds for its successful geothermal operations, so are the upland communities which depend on forest resources for their subsistence and livelihood.

In Leyte Geothermal Project (LGP), BINHI farmers are provided with livelihood trainings on planting high-value cash crops such as lettuce to serve as their additional income while waiting for the tree crops to grow. In 2016, BINHI farmers in LGP successfully established and maintained an Organic Farm Garden through EDC's technical assistance. The EDC Watershed Management is currently linking the farmers to potential market such as supermarkets in Ormoc City and other establishments.

In Southern Negros Geothermal Project (SNGP), Baslay Farmers Association (BFA) have 72 hectares of coffee plantation under the BINHI Tree for Food module. EDC supported the linkage between BFA and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to strengthen their capacities on post-harvest processing of the coffee beans.

EDC commissioned a socio-economic study with UPLB Foundation Inc. (UPLBFI) to determine the impact of BINHI to the lives of its farmers. Initial results of the survey showed that BINHI beneficiaries have



*"Dati po kami po ang nagkakaingin sa kabundukan sa Pantabangan. Ngayon po kami na po ang tulong-tulong na nagbabantay at nag-iingat dito dahil po sa aming mga tanim na puno sa BINHI." - Rodel Santos, President Villanueve Farmers Association (VIFA), Pantabangan Hydroelectric Power Plant (PHEPP)*



*"Dahil sa BINHI dahan-dahang bumabalik ang dating nasira naming kagubatan. Nagkaroon ng puhunan ang bawat miembro ng asosasyon para sa livelihood at ang iba ay nakapagpatayo ng maliliit na negosyo"- Richard Diotay, Member, Bagong Silang BINHI Farmers Association (BSBFAI)*



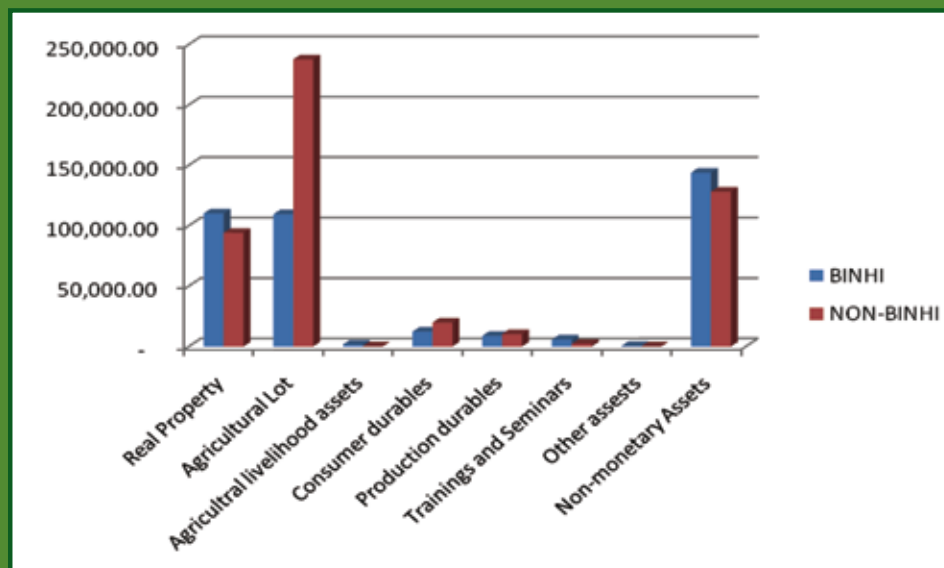


UPLB, other scientific studies show BINHI project's social impact is increasing and will be sustained

higher non-monetary assets than the more educated and employed sampled population in their community. BINHI beneficiaries, at least for BMGP, might not have as many agricultural lots as the contemporary member of the communities, or as many consumer durables (e.g. appliances, automobiles, books, cellphones, etc.) and production durables (e.g. machines and equipment, etc.), but their Net Asset Values almost catch up and are at par with the more educated and advantaged group in the communities.

The above findings in BMGP were validated by the farmers in PHEPP. The Cadaclan Farmers

Association (CADA), which is a recipient of BINHI reforestation projects for eight years now, proved that there is no limit to the potential of a disadvantaged group if given opportunity to improve themselves. As of date they had already acquired numerous assets such as three hand tractors which they lend to their members; a multi-purpose hall which is earning from reservation fees, including tables and chairs for rent. Because of their passive income from these assets, the accumulated membership fees are intact and is growing through bank interests. The money would be used to venture into other enterprise such as seedling production and fruits. They had also





been awarded and recognized by the barangay as an asset to the community because of their bayanihan initiatives.

In 2016, a researcher from the World Agroforestry Center conducted an impact study of BINHI on one of its farmer associations in NNGP, i.e. the Bagong Silang BINHI Farmers Association Inc. (BSBFAI). She said:

*“EDC’s efforts appear to be having a positive impact*

*on organizational capacity and initiative of BSBFAI members. Even when the EDC rangers are not present, BSBFAI continues to organize activities, keep records, and address problems in its projects. Moreover, with initial planning assistance by EDC, BSBFAI saved part of its reforestation payments and invested the money in its own community livelihood projects, including the purchase of several hectares of piñahan (pineapple farm) and talamnan (irrigated rice paddies), which BSBFAI manages on its own. The capacity building work of*





Members of Matin-ao Farmers Association (MATFA) packing their lettuce harvest from their organic garden, prior to delivery to identified markets.

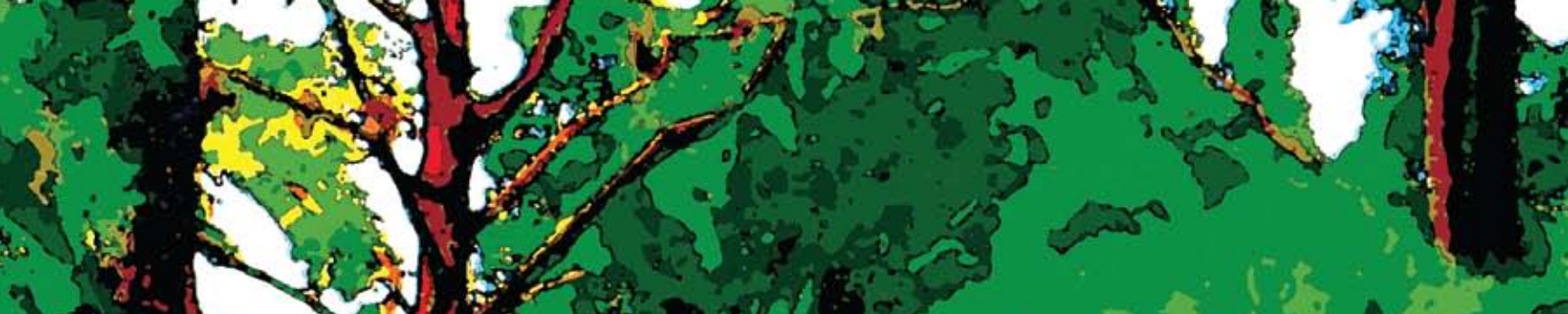
*EDC has helped BSBFAI gain recognition as a top performing people's organization, which has made it a desired community partner for other projects. BSBFAI has new projects beginning now, including one under the NGP (Cagalanan, D., 2016)".*

Cagalanan concluded that BSBFAI members benefited from: 1) improved social capital and technical capacities; 2) positive reputation that increased their opportunities for additional projects from outside agencies; and 3) continuing community organizing and capacity building.

These consistent results and outcomes are what inspires the company to engage our upland communities more in the restoration of our forests and make them understand that we are all intrinsically dependent on it.



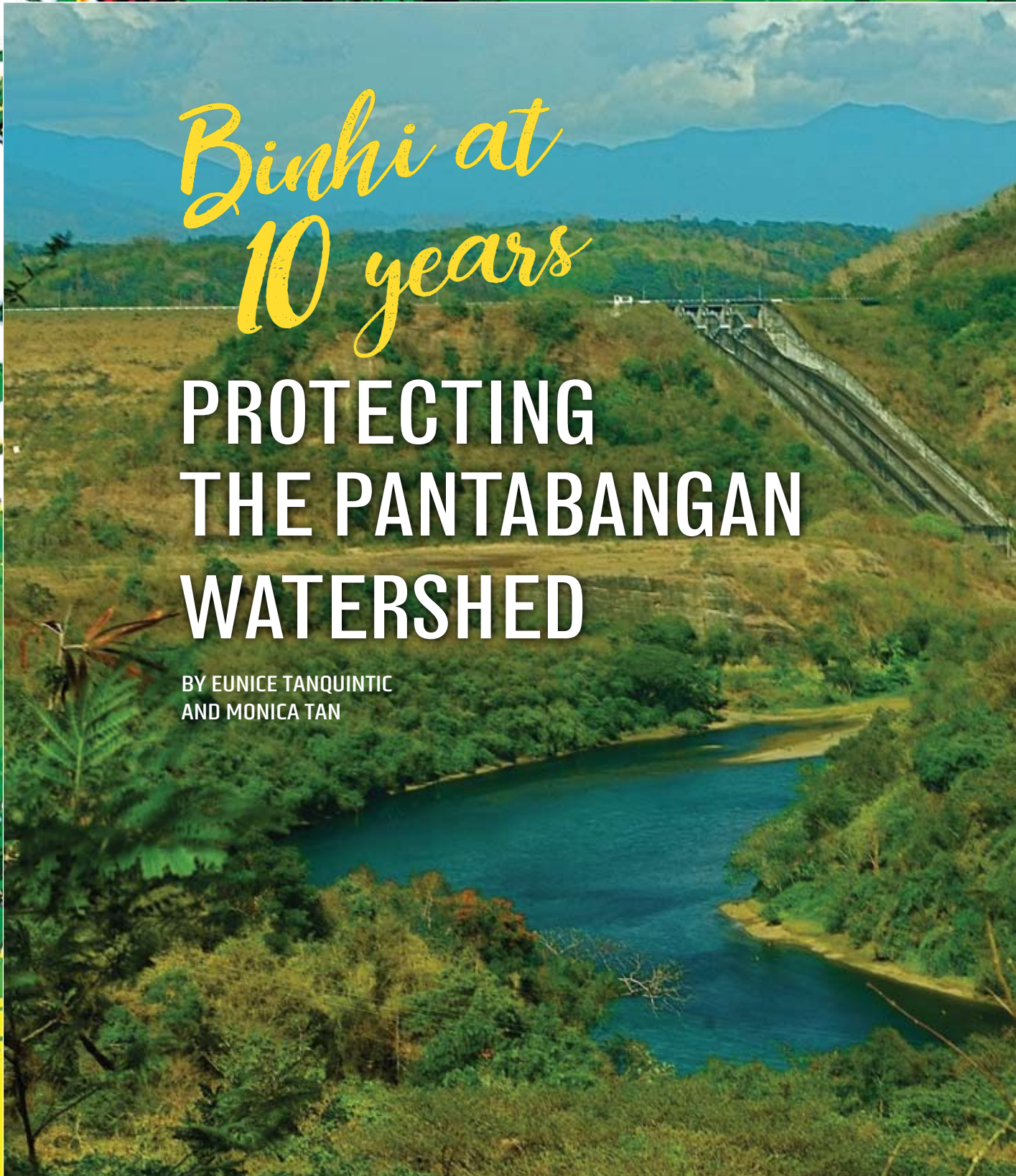
Fire prevention and management trainings to farmers to proactively address forest fires.



*Binhi at  
10 years*

**PROTECTING  
THE PANTABANGAN  
WATERSHED**

BY EUNICE TANQUINTIC  
AND MONICA TAN





Rodel Santos, who heads the Villanueve Farmers' Association (VIFA) and a native of Pantabangan town in Nueva Ecija, recalls the time when community members were part of the denudation of forests in and around the Pantabangan Dam, “Nag-uuling kami (We produced charcoal).” This was easy work that brought in a steady, although insufficient, income for the locals.

Such a practice was common all over the country over the past decades. In 1934, forests comprised more than half (57%) of the country's total land area. In 2010, the forest cover has gone down to 2.3 percent or about 6.8 million hectares mainly due to increasing agricultural and housing needs, commercial and illegal logging, and kaingin (slash and burn farming) and forest fires.

Pantabangan, a first-class municipality in the northern part of the province, lies between the Caraballo and Sierra Madre Mountain Ranges. Its location makes it both a valuable natural resource, being site of a watershed, as well as a hotspot for illegal logging and other destructive activities. Its rich forests are coveted even by locals who serve as “capitalists” who finance their town mates to cut down trees, paying as much as Php15,000 “allowance” for each logging trip that lasts up to one month. The cut trees are then sold in the lowlands.



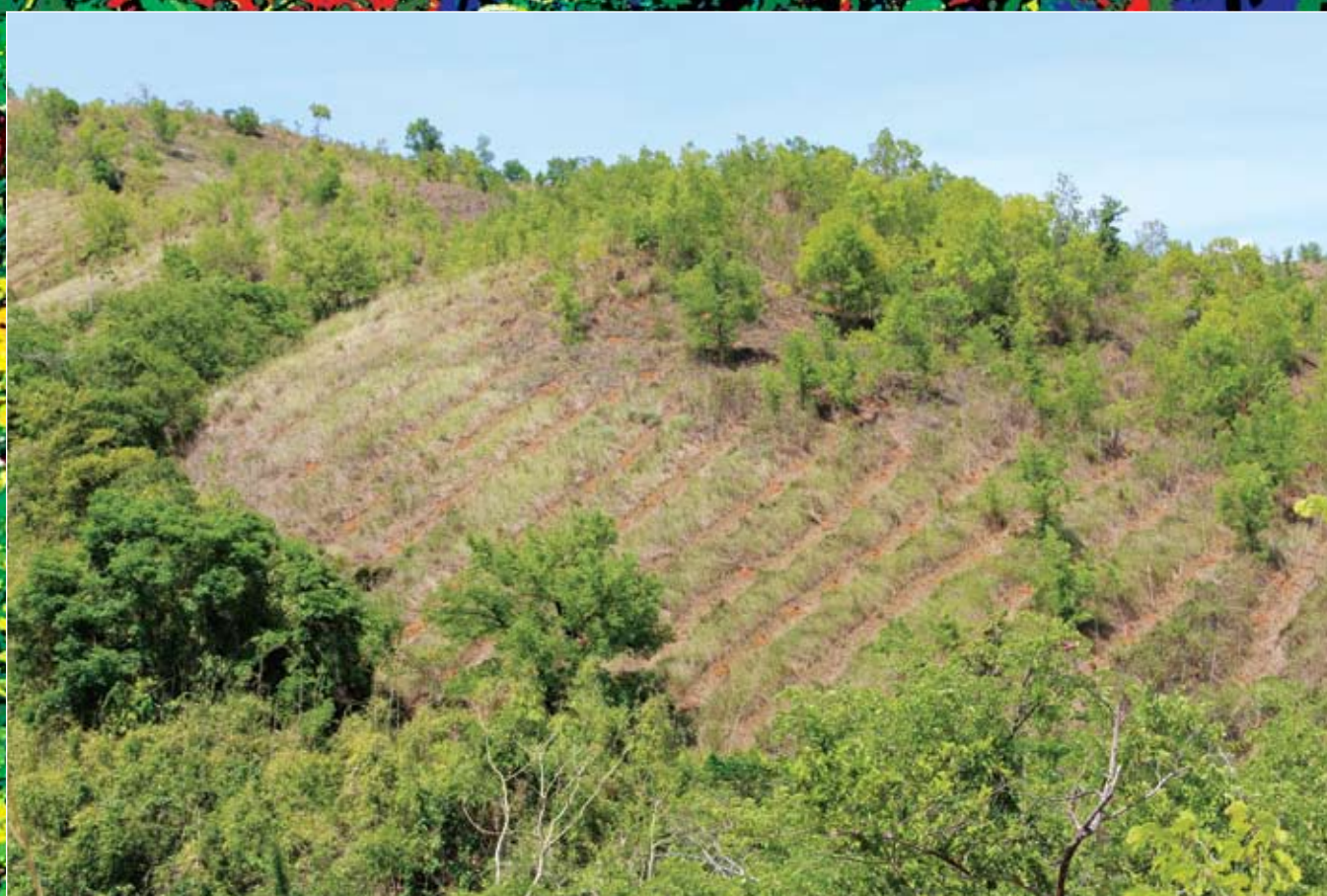
To help protect the watershed, BINHI, a program that aims to preserve and protect endangered indigenous tree species, was first implemented in 2009 by Energy Development Corporation (EDC), which holds a 60% stake at the First Gen Hydro Power Corporation (FG Hydro), which in turn owns and operates the 132-MW Pantabangan-Masiway Hydro Electric Power Plant. In 2013, FG Hydro took over the direct implementation of the BINHI Program from EDC. By then, the first association, VIFA, was joined by the Maluyon Indigenous Christian Farmers Association (MICFA) and the Cadaclan Farmers Association (CAFA) as partners in the environmental protection and conservation. One more organization, the Liberty Fishermen and Farmers Association (LFFA), also joined the roster of BINHI partners in Pantabangan. All four association, with a total of 268 members, who work under BINHI's Tree for Food (TFF) and Tree for Life (TFL) Modules, have agreements with FG Hydro to render certain tasks and oversee implementation of both modules.

LFFA's President Ernesto Palacio said that their association was once part of a cooperative but nothing happened to their first endeavor. FG Hydro helped them regroup and with their new-found skills and knowledge, gain access to resources and work opportunities, and to improve both their personal well-being as well as the organization's. LFFA members, in addition to farming and fishing, now derive decent incomes (as much as 50% more from pre-assistance levels) from patrolling their assigned areas, enhancement planting via reforestation technique, nursery establishment and upkeep, and servicing biologists doing surveys in the area and local tourists with their boats as well as assisting them as guides.

Shifting from doing kaingin to vegetable and fruit farming or other environment-friendly pursuits is still a continuing process for other residents in the area. VIFA still hopes though they can be agents of change in the community. Since being formed in 2009 through the invitation of their barangay (village) captain, now Mayor of the Municipality of Pantabangan, most of its members now have a deep sense of responsibility towards the environment and their organization.

Like the other organizations, VIFA works as a partner of FG Hydro for the BINHI Program, with its members doing patrolling, planting and maintenance works. FG Hydro also assisted the organization in processing its documents to qualify as a recipient of an in-kind grant from the Department of Agriculture (DA). As a result, DA granted VIFA a tractor, which the organization rents out to members and non-members, to improve productivity, and to augment the organization's and





## 88.56% survival rate of trees planted, new skills and mindset of farmers ensure continuing improvement of communities

members' incomes. Membership policies are strictly enforced and capital build up is at a very impressive level. In fact, VIFA was able to purchase a plot of land and construct a simple one-story center to serve the various needs of the association. Not a small feat for a small, grassroots based organization that started only nine years ago. For Mrs. Jesubel Santos, a member of VIFA, what she is most grateful for is the extra income from VIFA that enables the education of her children and helps finance her sari-sari (variety) store.

The Cadaclan Farmers Association or CAFA is another upland association assisted through the BINHI Program. From its beginnings with 64 members, it now has 92 members. Aside from patrolling, planting and maintenance works, their knowledge of planting techniques has vastly improved. The members also look forward to earning from bamboos due for harvest in the near future.

For Mrs. Banniaga, a member of CAFA, she and her husband are grateful for the opportunities opened by the project. Even though they are now in their senior years, they still work in farming. Their income derived from CAFA-related tasks helps them with cash during each planting season; they no longer have to borrow capital for this. The members are also now very much aware of the importance of environmental protection. Emmanuel Banniaga, president of CAFA and a barangay councilor, said that their family jeepney, which used to be rented to anyone, now only accepts trips for non-destructive and legal purposes.

Almost all members of MICFA were able to purchase kolong-kolongs, motorized vehicles suitable for their rocky upland roads, which now make traveling to and from their sitio more convenient. Extra income is derived from these vehicles as these are rented out often to researchers from the UP-Diliman Science Research Foundation who have been studying the flora-fauna and aquatic components of the watershed for over six years now under grants from FG Hydro. The kolong-kolongs are also for hire to any group that wishes to ascend the mountains of Maluyon. All four associations have cited their enhanced awareness of the relationship between a healthy ecosystem and improvement in people's lives. "Ayaw namin

namaubos ang kagubatan (We don't want the forests to be denuded)."

While a very small number of residents still do not adhere to having "clean" livelihoods, those who do so believe that they can be agents of change and that their kababayan will have a change of heart and mindset. Their dearest wish is to sustain the gains made in the past years, not only in material terms (they can now afford to have at least 10% savings while sending their children to school, a few of whom had already graduated from college) but also in terms of the bayanihan (brotherhood) spirit. VIFA and CAFA cited some members who only rent a small parcel of land ("nakikitanim lang") that need help in acquiring small assets of their own. For LFFA, they wish to help in making the numerous out-of-school youth in their barangay productive by relevant trainings and opportunities to earn.

As of end 2017, there are almost 850 hectares of land planted with narra, molave, kalumpit, alibangbang and akleng-parang, all native and high-value trees under the Tree for Life Module. And to augment the partner organizations' incomes, mango, guyabano (soursop), nangka (jackfruit), bamboo, cacao, pomelo, rambutan, and mandarin orange trees were planted under the Tree for Food Module. Average survival rate of the trees is almost 88.56%. This bodes well for the sustainability of the endeavor. The next 12 months will be spent not only for replanting, maintenance, and patrolling but also in enterprise development, including assistance in marketing of the fruits and bamboo expected for harvest in two years or so. This marketing component is Phase 2 of BINHI, to round off what is aimed to be a sustainable environmental and livelihood program.

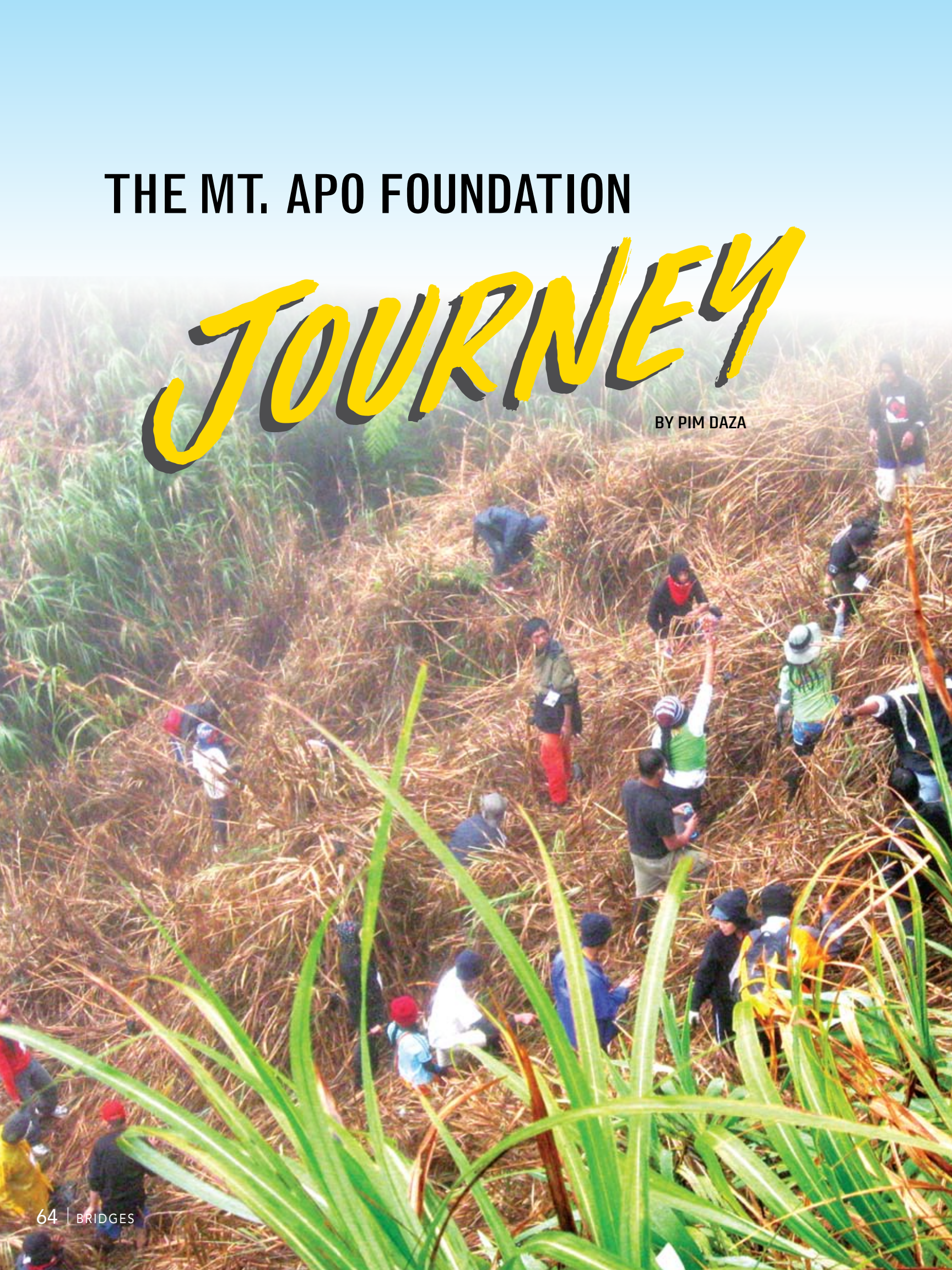




THE MT. APO FOUNDATION

# JOURNEY

BY PIM DAZA







**M**AFI was established in compliance with one of the conditions of the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for the Mt. Apo Geothermal Project in 1992. The condition requires the establishment of an Environmental and Tribal Welfare Trust Fund (ETWTF) that would be funded by the operations of the Mt. Apo Geothermal Project.

One centavo per kilowatt of electricity generated would be remitted to the ETWTF. The funds were to be managed by a multisectoral management group comprised of then PNOC-EDC, DENR, NPC, CTCC (Cotabato Tribal Consultative Council) and the LGUs of North Cotabato.

In 1993 this multisectoral management group was incorporated into a foundation to be known as Mt. Apo Foundation Inc. (MAFI).

The ETWTF would be used “to pursue the development, protection and enhancement of the environment, forests, watersheds and the natural resources of Mount Apo National Park and to promote, contribute and assist in the upliftment and improvement of the socio-economic conditions and well-being of the upland/tribal people and communities living in and around the Mt. Apo National Park, and at the same time preserve and protect their own culture, customs and traditions...”(according to MAFI’s Articles of Incorporation).

To pursue this mandate, MAFI embarked on a four-fold program consisting of (1) Community Assistance, (2) Tribal Capability, (3) Environmental Consciousness and (4) Education Development covering Barangays within a 10 km. radius from the Mt. Apo Geothermal Project. This consisted of around 4,640 households. Two barangays outside the 10 km AOR but predominantly composed of Indigenous People (IP) were later added. Community assistance programs delivered basic social assistance and services for the general welfare of the community. The assistance and services are related to health, infrastructure and income-generation. Regular community surveys are conducted to identify latest needs of the communities so programs can be adjusted.

Since 1993, over 4640 households in the 10 km AOR plus two extended barangays have benefited from MAFI’s Community Development Program in various forms from financial assistance for livelihood projects and skills training, medical outreach, supplemental feeding, eye



In 1992, then President Fidel V. Ramos instructed PNOC-EDC to donate Php 4 million to MAFI to serve as seed money for its operation.

Construction of 36.5 meters Manobo-Kinarum Hanging Bridge in 2010

clinics, goiter and harelip operations, day care centers, spring development, potable water systems, school drinking facilities.

Tribal capability programs supported tribal and indigenous people's initiatives that build opportunities for and socio-cultural and educational development.

These tribal capability programs cover adult literacy of IPs, financial assistance for teachers' thesis/ dissertations that provide significant impact to the IP communities, medical assistance for ailing IP members and support in building competencies. Environmental consciousness programs aim to develop people's interest and participation in the preservation, protection and conservation of the environment.

Aside from an Information Education Campaign (IEC) on the Mt. Apo Natural Park and networking with co-organizations and regulatory bodies on protecting



Mt. Apo, reforestation has been a staple of MAFI's Environmental Consciousness Program.

Educational development programs provide collegiate, law, masters in education and vocational-technical scholarship grants to qualified and deserving students with and around Mt. Apo Natural Park. It also extended financial assistance to public high school students within its area of responsibility. MAFI has produced over 200 college graduates, Masters in Education graduates and one lawyer. It is the Educational Development Program that MAFI has been known for over the past 20 years in its area of responsibility.

This is not surprising considering the value that tribal elders and their people put on education. As one esteemed tribal elder said during a senate inquiry on opposition to the Geothermal operations at Mt. Apo in the 1990s said:

MAFI's area of responsibility is about 38K hectares, approximately 20% belongs to the Mt. Apo National Park





Thirty graduate scholars were admitted as members of MAFI in 2007



Dorothy Joy Elid, now a teacher in Makilala, Cotabato, personifies MAFI's own journey in preserving Mt. Apo and the cultural heritage of its communities.



DATU BULATUKAN LAMBAC

*“Education is the key to free my brothers from the bondage of ignorance and poverty”*



MAFI adopts the annual Allow-to-Sondawa (Day of Sondawa) celebration every April 7th of the year.



Dothie Joy at her work station

“It is not the pollution of the air and environment, but pollution of the mind,” Datu Bulatukan Lambac said. It is also where it has made tremendous impact not only for the student scholars but also to their family and community as well. Dorothy Joy Elid is one such person.

Her journey started when a tricycle accident on Dec. 24, 1979 led her mother to the emergency room of Brokenshire Hospital in Davao City with Dorothy still in her mother’s womb and her father losing his job on the same day. Doctors had to ask the father to choose whose life to save. The father of Dorothy, a simple man whose heart was strong and whose spirit was full of faith, refused to choose and put his faith in God. He believed God will save both his wife and the unborn child through the doctors hands. Dorothy was born successfully and mother survived, much to the amazement of the doctors.

Because of the accident, the family had to sell some of their properties to pay the hospital bills, and this set the stage for the next leg of Dorothy’s journey. “We rented and stayed in my uncle’s house, at the house’ upper deck. This time, my father left us to work in Surigao del Sur as a goldminer. Here, we already felt the hardships. My father could not send our allowance regularly since it was too far then. My mother always worked hard for us during this time. I felt the heaviness in mama’s heart. I saw it in her eyes. I also experienced being bullied. I cannot forget when my elder sister and I wanted to watch on my uncle’s television, and my cousin did not let us in. She slammed the door. Because of our eagerness to watch our favorite sitcoms, we peeked through

a tiny window on the side of the stair. I walked to school every day. I was always neat and got good grades every year. Mama and Papa were proud of me since I was always in the honor’s list. One time, Papa came to school to hand me my allowance. He rode a bicycle that time. He always told me to study hard. He went back to work. At my young age, as I looked at Papa’s situation, I told myself that I should strive hard and finish studies, so that Papa would not leave us to work. I always looked forward of seeing Papa that time, praying that he would stay longer for us.”

Dorothy’s father decided upon the prodding of his brothers to return with his family to his home in Brgy. Malasila, Makilala, Cotabato where she completed her secondary education with flying colors and excelled in extracurricular activities of journalism, writing and speech. Her father valued higher education and encouraged her to apply for college.



Dothie Joy with family



Dothie Joy with co-teachers at Malasila National Vocational and Technological High School (MNVTHS)



“I decided to enroll at a private higher education institution – the Colegio de Kidapawan (formerly North Cotabato Institute of Technology) because I did not want to stop. I was with my granny that time during enrolment. She really wanted me to get a teaching profession that time, but I was reluctant, I insisted to take BS MassCom. My granny did not allow me to get in, but she insisted on a BS Education course. I had no choice but to follow her since she was the one who paid my fees. During my first year in college, I just availed half of the tuition fee discount, but still it was not enough for my daily needs: my boarding house, transportation allowance, projects, miscellaneous and others. Every time I went home to ask for my allowance; I just went back to my boarding house empty-handed. I always cried in silence every time I went home. That time, I always asked myself why I am not rich, why we’re poor? And every time I

thought of this, I would always run down to the river, a short distance from home. There, I cried, prayed, and meditated. Later, my father told me to apply at Mount Apo Foundation Inc. So, I did. I went through a series of application procedure and thank God, I was able to be listed in.”

Dorothy is now Master Teacher 1 at Malasila National Vocational and Technological High School Malasila, Makilala, Cotabato, married and has one child.

This is her journey. It is MAFI’s journey as well.

It was 1:00 a.m. when Billosane M. Badal, Jr. and his team in the Bantay Dagat or “Sea Rangers,” were on duty watching over the waters of Lobo, Batangas, their two patrol boats spotted a fishing vessel. They approached and arrested the illegal fishers from neighboring Batangas City for using a compressor for fishing, which was prohibited by law. They took the offenders to the Mayor’s house for investigation. At another time, also during the wee hours, they gave chase to a commercial fishing vessel and found out that the people in the vessel were heavily armed. Undaunted, the Bantay Dagat team, with only two policemen each with a .45-mm pistol, confronted the intruders for their violation. They were offered a handsome sum of Php300,000 in exchange for letting the intruders go. The money was turned down by the group. For them, their duty was to ensure that laws are followed for the common good and not to enrich themselves. The poachers were brought to the Mayor’s house to face charges.



are fisherfolks, others are former local government officials, and a few are simply concerned citizens. The group’s beginnings can be traced back 15 years ago when some of them started as volunteers after a series of meetings by a fisherfolk association in partnership with the local office of the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR). Back then, they only had one

This is the kind of heroism the 21 members of Bantay Dagat-Municipality of Lobo possess. Some of them

## FIRST GEN AND THE VERDE ISLAND PASSAGE: SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL

BY EUNICE TANQUINTIC  
AND MONICA TAN



to be the Center of the Center of Marine Biodiversity.

The importance of the Verde Island Passage is not an unknown fact to the locals who are vigorous in protecting the natural resources they have. In fact, a Marine Protected Area (MPA) was declared in the municipality. “MPAs”, according to the World Conservation Union (IUCN) – the world’s authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it, “involve the protective management of natural areas so as to keep them in their natural state. MPAs can be conserved for a number of reasons including economic resources, biodiversity conservation, and species protection. They are created by

patrol boat, a very small pool of volunteers, and little scientific understanding on marine conservation and protection. What resonated with them was the need to protect the marine life within their municipal waters (“Kailangang pangalagaan ang pangisdaan namin.”), almost 26-kilometer long and covering 10 barangays, which is part of the wider Verde Island Passage, said

delineating zones with permitted and non-permitted uses within that zone. “The job of the BD-Lobo team is to ensure that the MPA’s zones are strictly respected.

Badal, Jr., Chairman of Lobo Bantay Dagat, said they encountered many problems in the early years, such



as lack of boats (their only patrol boat also kept breaking down), equipment and other resources (their monthly honorarium from the local government was a mere Php150.00), inadequate legal knowledge even within the legal system (cases were dismissed due to technicalities/errors made by government prosecutors/fiscals), and physical threats to their lives and safety. Not to mention the series of trainings they had to undergo to be deputized as sea wardens. Yet they never lost hope.



By 2009, Conservation International Philippines (CIP) started its work in Lobo through training for the Bantay Dagat Task Force. The training included rescue operations, paralegal skills (including environmental and fisheries laws), patrolling and coastal clean-up. First Gen Corporation joined the initiative in 2010, supporting the province-wide Bantay Dagat Network with much needed financial resources and supplementary livelihood. With this support and the local government's, Lobo Bantay Dagat Task Force now has five boats, a monthly allocation of petrol, allowances for patrol duty, educational assistance for their children or grandchildren, and adequate equipment and gear.

First Gen and CIP's joint efforts were not in vain as the Lobo Bantay Dagat Task Force won thrice (first prize in MPA Category in 2013 and 2015, second prize in Bantay Dagat category in 2015) in the Batangas Recognition Awards for Verde Passage Outstanding Marine Protected Areas and Bantay Dagat (BRAVO) held every two years. CIP and two other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), EcoFish and Tanggol Kalikasan (Defense for Nature), had since exited the project after completing capacity building trainings for the group.

Today, Lobo's Marine Protected Area (MPA) can boast of world-class corals as assessed by the Department of Tourism (DOT). Their average fish catch also increased, thereby enabling them to earn better throughout the year. Amended laws on fisheries such as the Republic Act (R.A) 10654 (An Act to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, Amending Republic Act

Number 8550, Otherwise Known as "The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998," also helped – for instance, the fines now for certain offenses are much higher, discouraging poaching, illegal fishing, use of cyanides and compressors and other destructive practices.

But more than winning accolades, First Gen recognized the importance of sustainability at the grassroots level. The Lobo Bantay Dagat Task Force had long proven their commitment and mettle. The next logical step was to ensure that they have the means to continue their operations even after project funding has ceased. First Gen partnered with ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation, also under the Lopez Group, on the development of the Lobo Marine Ecotourism Project operated by five grassroots level organizations, including the Lobo Bantay Dagat Task Force, to provide all members with a viable supplementary, regular income.

The other four organizations are the Samahan ng mga Maliliit na Mangingisda at Pangangalagang Barangay Lagadlarin (SMMPBL), Malabrigo Fisherfolk Association (MFA), Olo-Olo Seaside Workers Association (OSWA), and Samahan ng mga Nagkakaisang Mamamayan sa Pagsulong at Pagunlad ng Barangay Sawang (SNMPPS). All five grassroots organizations, with experience working on various enterprises such as saltmaking, plant nurseries, aquaculture and ecotourism, have formed the Lobo Marine Tourism Federation (LMTF) to run the social enterprise.

This ecotour includes the Lagadlarin Mangrove Swamp Forest housing the 1,000-m boardwalk, a multi-purpose



## Joint action in Lobo has helped families financially and enabled them to move closer to attaining their dreams, while ensuring a healthy marine life to benefit all

center and picnic huts, the century-old Malabrigo Lighthouse, and the snorkeling areas at Malabrigo and Sawang-Olo Olo marine sanctuaries. Guests are encouraged to come in groups of four to make it cost effective for guests and the operator. The all-in fee of Php1,000/person includes entrance fees, service of a local guide, boat transportation, use of snorkeling gears, and lunch prepared by the members of LMTF; part of the fee goes to the conservation of the site.

Since it opened in the last week of July 2017, LMTF has already hosted visitors from Lobo as well as large groups of over 300, with delegations from private companies from as far as Manila, some of whom have become repeat visitors. Just in its first three months of operation, LMTF can boast of visitor arrivals over 1,000, and it plans to double the monthly figures in

2018. This may even be a conservative target given LMTF's strong partnership with the local government, which has been instrumental in the development of the Lobo Marine Ecotourism, and is leading the tourism development of the whole municipality. They are crafting a 10-year Tourism Master Plan and funding tourism-related projects in 2018 to promote Lobo as an Agro-Eco Tourism Destination.

For Romel, Irene, Noel and the rest of the members of the Lobo Marine Tourism Federation, being in this project has not only helped their families financially but has helped greatly in their self actualization process. The work might be daunting, but their entrepreneurial spirit is alive and inspiring to others. *(For more information on Lobo Marine Ecotourism, kindly contact Edelyn Sulit at 0906 624 2729.)*





# ‘BATHALA’ RENEWABLE ENERGY SOLUTION

## MAPUA STUDENTS POWER UP DUMAGAT COMMUNITY

A team of engineering students from Mapua University handed over the ‘Bathala,’ a renewable energy (RE) powered cookstove, to the Dumagats last October 3, in Sitio Suha, Barangay San Mateo, Norzagaray, Bulacan.

Bathala is a dual burner rocket stove that generates up to 40 watts of electricity and equipped with a 150 watt power inverter to drive small appliances. It uses firewood when cooking, but encloses the smoke as it captures heat to distill water on one side, while storing energy on the other to power small appliances.

“We are very happy to receive this gift of Bathala—the communal cookstove will allow us to cook two meals at one time, distill 35 liters of water for drinking, provide light at night to at least 10 families and power appliances such as mobile phone and electric fan,” said Br. Martin Francisco, community organizer and chairman of the Sagip Sierra Madre Environmental Society, Inc. (SSMESI).

SSMESI is an environmental advocate group overseeing the Punduhan ng mga Dumagat, a 10-hectare property located in the sacred mountains of Sierra Madre. It also helps protect the forest and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the indigenous group.

Bathala is Mapua's winning project of a four-member team of Engineering students, namely Jeremy de Leon, Alsus Adiaton, Gabriel Layson, Norman Quinquini, and their faculty adviser Engr. Febus Reidj Cruz that bagged the Grand Prize Winner title in the 2015 Sikat Design Challenge, an inter-university competition focused on renewable energy targeted at the rural sector.

The Challenge is organized by the Sikat Solar Challenge Foundation, Inc. (SSCFI), a non-stock, non-profit company, sponsored by First Gen Corporation, Energy Development Corporation (EDC) and their parent company First Philippine Holdings Corporation (FPH).

"With the Php 1 million prototype grant from US Agency for International Development (USAID) Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for Development (STRIDE), we were able to develop Bathala Version 3.0, which has now turned from a small rocket-like contraption to a huge communal cookstove," said Cruz.

USAID STRIDE is the flagship science, technology, and innovation program of the U.S.-Philippines Partnership for Growth with Equity that spurs inclusive economic growth by boosting science and technology research.

"Our program aims to enable Philippine universities help the Filipino people in a better way through innovative research in science and technology, and Mapua's project is a good example of what we have been doing," shared Dr. David Hall, Chief of Party (COP) of USAID.

Bathala is proof that innovation in the hands of the Filipino youth can play a pivotal role in realizing the full potential of clean energy sources in addressing the challenge of energy access and climate change.

"Through Bathala and the Sikat Design Challenge, we hope to address the issue of 'energy poverty' especially in the rural sector by inspiring both the young and old to recognize the power of harnessing renewable energy in an innovative way," said Tisha Timbang, program manager of SSCFI.



# Quality Affordable Homes

FOR MORE FAMILIES



Aerial view of Stonewell Acacia Homes Project in Sto. Tomas, Batangas





For more than 22 years of creating "beyond ordinary" communities in various locations, Rockwell Land continues to grow and expand its reach to more people through Rockwell's subsidiary, Stonewell Acacia Homes.

Launched in March 2015, Stonewell is Rockwell Land Corporation's pioneering foray into the affordable housing segment. It is a 5.8-hectare residential development located in Sto. Tomas, Batangas, comprised of a well-thought-out mix of mass housing that falls under both economic and socialized classifications. The housing component consists of single-story row houses and loft-ready duplex units of modern design, which shall be home to over 750 families.

With the same mindset of quality living, Stonewell Acacia Homes envisions an affordable living space built for quality living. With an awareness of the market's primary motivation in selecting residential developments – a safe residence in a well-planned community within the prices that they can afford, Stonewell has been carefully curated for the lifestyle of the community. Tapping the broader market segment within the neighboring cities of Batangas, Cavite, and Laguna, Stonewell will allow them to belong to a community that will be worth their hard-earned money.

Stonewell Acacia Homes' entry into the affordable housing segment in Luzon not only expands the market reach in provincial areas but also reinforces Rockwell Land's corporate social responsibility. Stonewell introduces a master-planned community that is complemented by certain Rockwell elements such as generous open spaces and wide landscaped areas, a retail component and above-standard



amenities like a multi-purpose hall, a basketball court, and a children’s playground. Its aim is to become the industry benchmark in creating a low-cost housing community that challenges the norm in this type of residential development. Recent industry reports indicate a housing backlog in the affordable housing segment that will persist in the coming years, with a significant portion of that backlog emanating from areas such as Southern Tagalog.

“At the preliminary and conceptual stage of Stonewell’s development, we intended to provide decent, safe residences to families with budget constraints. However, after we acquired additional lands near Stonewell, our plans evolved,” says Marco Vinluan, Assistant Vice President for Provincial Development. “Mixed-use developments will be adjoined to the initial development, resulting into a single Stonewell community. This move allows for more open areas with a wider road network and lush landscaped areas, and of course, a retail component that completes the formula for a Rockwell community where everything is available a few steps away.

Some community’s residents have now experienced the warmth and the lifestyle, as they have started to move in to their new home since the third quarter of last year.





It is now well known that Typhoon Yolanda was unprecedented in the breadth and scope of the devastation it wreaked on the country.

But, in the wake of Yolanda, very little information could be obtained, with communication down and vast areas of Central Visayas inaccessible to government and other relief agencies.

Thus, as early as the day after Typhoon Yolanda hit the Philippines, on November 9, 2013, ABS-CBN Foundation's Sagip Kapamilya tapped the services of INAEC Aviation Corporation (INAEC), to provide air support missions to typhoon-hit areas.

INAEC's response was immediate. INAEC deployed its helicopters to conduct aerial surveys of the affected provinces, such as Leyte and Samar. From this exercise emerged vivid images of widespread chaos and absolute destruction, of communities totally wiped out by floods, of houses utterly destroyed, of impassable roads, of traumatized people walking en masse not knowing where to go, of a massive ship that was washed ashore. Only then was the entire nation given a glimpse of the extent of the crisis it was facing.

INAEC's work did not end there. It had in fact just begun.



INAEC

AVIATION CORP

# READINESS IN TIMES OF CRISES









As one of the first responders to Tacloban, INAEC conducted the rescue of Ted Failon and his news team who luckily survived the storm surge in Tacloban. Consequently, to further enable accurate news coverage of the actual situation on the hard-hit areas, INAEC transported ABS-CBN's news teams to Tacloban, Tolosa, Dulag, and Palo, all in Leyte, Basey in Samar, and such other locales that could not be reached through land transportation.

Strategically located at the Manila airport, INAEC's hangar was used as a command center so relief workers could plan out the logistics for the mobilization of fuel, relief supplies, medical equipment, and first aid responders. The hangar itself served as a warehouse for relief goods, like canned goods, bottled water, rice, noodles, blankets, clothes, and medicines, donated through Sagip Kapamilya and was likewise converted into a delivery hub for such relief goods. INAEC personnel did their part in sorting through, repacking, loading, ferrying, and distributing the necessary items to various communities.

INAEC's helicopters, fully packed with relief supplies, had to land in confined areas, like basketball courts, parking lots, and other available open spaces just to deliver these goods to the people.

INAEC likewise secured a heavy-lift cargo helicopter from Malaysia to aid the relief efforts of Sagip Kapamilya in the worst-hit remote islands of the Visayas. This facilitated the transport of large quantities of supplies to the communities that desperately needed them.

In the performance of their duties, INAEC personnel themselves witnessed first-hand the suffering of their countrymen. Deeply moved by their plight, they gave of their own money and supplies, right down to their packed meals and bottled water, as people begged for their help.

INAEC also provided logistical support in the rehabilitation of the geothermal power plants of the





Energy Development Corporation (EDC) in Leyte. Its helicopters were used to transport parts, materials, and equipment between Cebu and Ormoc. Using the heavy-lift cargo helicopter, INAEC transported one huge geothermal plant engine assembly to replace the one damaged by Yolanda. This helped restore power and the start of normalcy to disaster areas.

To uplift the spirits of the people in the stricken areas, INAEC also brought the Sky Cable team to Tacloban to provide live coverage of the championship fight between Manny Pacquiao and Brandon Ríos.

“I am ready to give all of what I can do. Fly people, fly relief.” This was what Capt. Edgar Allan Carreon,

INAEC pilot, said in response to the Yolanda relief operations. Such unreserved willingness to be of service embodies what INAEC is all about.

Yolanda presented a tremendous challenge not only for those who were in dire need of help but also for those who were ready and willing to serve their fellow countrymen during their time of need. INAEC, with its combined resources of dedicated professionals and well-maintained equipment, bridged this logistical gap, and met this challenge and lived their motto of, “making it happen” for others.





# 21 years of Loving and Protecting Filipino Children



When Bantay Bata started in 1997 as a child welfare program for children at risk, it focused on helping children who are physically abused and maltreated. Bantay Bata rescues them from the source of abuse with the ultimate goal of reintegrating the children to their family.

Bantay Bata was able to provide immediate response to children in crisis by operating the first child care hotline 1-6-3 in the country. The cases reported to the hotline were handled by trained social workers and counselors who were always on standby to respond on crisis situations. Children who experienced abuse and who cannot be reintegrated with their families were given refuge in the Children's Village where they were provided premium care and underwent counseling and therapy. The hotline also became a medium wherein children in distress and parents can ask for psychological counseling and legal assistance.





Bantay Bata 163 Children's Village in Bulacan

Bantay Bata 163 continues to evolve as it celebrates 20 years of being in the service of the Filipino Children. Aside from maintaining its core services in protecting children at risk and are disadvantaged through a nationwide network of social services, Bantay Bata 163 is now gearing towards protecting the country's future generation from online abuse and exploitation. According to a research conducted by UNICEF, the Philippines is the "no. 1 global source of child pornography and the epicenter of live-stream online sexual abuse trade."

Bantay Bata 163 calls for your support to continue its mission of being in the service of the Filipino Children by upgrading its hotline system, renovating the Children's Village, and creating awareness in the fight against online abuse and exploitation.





# ANN TRINIDAD

## UNsung HERO IN ALL THINGS

BY ANNE THERESE ARCEO

Loreta Ann A. Trinidad, fondly known as Tita Ann or Nurse Ann, is one of the persons behind the success of Bantay Bata 163. Believing in its advocacy, Tita Ann signed up as a volunteer, wishing she could help fight child abuse.

After six months of being a volunteer, she decided to take a bigger task, to be the Home Care Supervisor in Children's Village. She faced different dilemmas right after accepting the job offer. First is the tough working schedule. She is required to be at the Children's Village 24 hours for 6 days. This leads to another dilemma, working far from her husband and missing important family events and failing to see how fast his son was growing. But as if the universe conspired with her advocacy in life, her family understood her situation, and they even gave their full support because they, too, believe in Bantay Bata 163's mission and advocacy.

There were some points that made Tita Ann sad because of the situation but it didn't hinder her goal to help create a safe and nurturing environment for the Filipino children. She became the second mother of every child in the village. She supervised them and ensured they are attending their regular consultations and therapies. She's a superwoman. No wonder every child loved her as well as the staff in the village.

Every day she catered to walk-in patients, gave them medicines, and referred them to partner hospitals for their check-ups. She's always smiling, relaxed, and makes sure that every patient was well accommodated.

Her works reflect how kind her heart and how genuine her soul is. Her colleagues admire her positive aura and dedication to work. Truly, Tita Ann is a hero in all forms. An unsung hero everyone looks up to.



Nurse Ann happily serves walk-in medical patients and families in need during Community Outreach Program of Bantay Bata 163.



Nurse Ann receives the Unsung Hero 2017 Award.



Nurse Ann during LAA ceremony with Jing Castañeda, Freda Agustin and her family.

## EVERY FILIPINO, AN EARTH WARRIOR

Launched in 1998, Bantay Kalikasan (BK), ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya's environment advocacy arm, has propelled massive changes towards the protection and sustainability of the country's natural environment. For almost two decades, it has initiated different projects such as watershed rehabilitation and management, recovery and recycling of Used Lead Acid Batteries (ULABs) and used oil, advocacy building through Information and Education Campaigns (IECs) and community empowerment.

### BANTAY KALIKASAN PILLARS

1. Empowered Communities (People Development) –included in this pillar are activities focused on values formation and transformation and the development and care of the children, youth, and family.
2. Sustainable Livelihood–this pillar includes activities towards the development of sustainable and eco-friendly enterprises that provide sufficient income for the people engaged in these enterprises. BK is currently focused on enterprises that promote good agricultural practices and ecotourism.





3. Environmental Stewardship—this pillar includes activities that address the needs of the community towards environmental conservation and protection.
4. Building Networks and Ecosystems—this pillar includes the establishment of environment and development councils where implementation of plans is done through the assistance of partners.
5. Governance—this pillar includes efforts to help the people’s organizations especially its leaders to be independent and self-governing once we phase out. Some of the interventions include sessions on leadership, and mentoring on how to deal with the local government properly with confidence.

These pillars are currently being propagated in 14 Bantay Kalikasan sites nationwide namely: Iba, Zambales; Pasig; La Mesa Watershed and Ecopark; Lobo, Batangas; Oriental Mindoro; Sorsogon; Palawan; Sibuyan Island, Romblon; Samar; Leyte; Carles, Iloilo; Guimaras; Sarangani; and Antipolo, Rizal (special project). BK has handled 28 municipalities from these sites, with 90 People’s Organizations with 7,297 members of organized primary stakeholders.

BK is also known for reforesting La Mesa – the sole watershed in Metro Manila. From only 9 in 1999, La Mesa has now 100 endemic tree species and 124 bird species that have found their home in the city. There are 120,000 seedlings maintained to ensure that trees will continue to be planted and to be grown in the coming years. To date, a total of 18 facilities have been rehabilitated at the Ecopark, which received more than 400,000 visitors since 2004.

Recovering some of the toxic wastes is another endeavor of BK. Bantay Baterya is a project that recovers and recycles used lead acid batteries into fresh raw materials for the production of new batteries. Bantay Langis, on the other hand, recovers and recycles used industrial and engine oil. These campaigns aid in the eradication of pollutants which harm human life and the environment. To date, Bantay Baterya has collected a total of 4,856,905 kilograms of used lead acid batteries, while Bantay Langis has collected a total of 1,805,645 liters of used oil.



# OPERATION SAGIP



## REACHES OUT TO MARAWI

BY ALTHEA CAHAYAG



**W**ith its partners, Operation Sagip, ABS-CBN's Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation's emergency and humanitarian assistance arm, already reached 24,041 families affected by the recent armed conflict in Marawi.

Aside from giving relief packs, food items, hygiene kits, clothes, pillows, and mats, the program also installed four viewing stations in four evacuation centers in partnership with Sky Direct. A total of 3,515 school bags were also distributed to school children as part of its Gusto Kong Mag-aral campaign. Three computer units were turned over to Marawi's Department of Education Division Office.

Operation Sagip also reached out to the soldiers

by giving 3,900 hygiene kits to the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Its relief operations started May 31 and rehabilitation plans such as rebuilding classrooms are already in the pipeline.

Last November 12, a telethon to start the Tulong Na, Tayo Na, Para sa Marawi campaign, was held at ASAP to raise funds to help reconstruct Marawi City. The telethon raised more than Php 13 million of pledges.

The Marawi crisis started May 23 and President Rodrigo Duterte declared Martial Law in Mindanao at 10:00 that night. On October 17, 2017, Duterte announced the liberation of the city from terrorist groups.



# ONE GIANT LEAP FOR BATANGAS SCHOOLS

How Knowledge Channel Foundation's teacher training program became a catalyst for change in the schools of Sto. Tomas and Tanauan, Batangas

BY MICHAEL RAMOS

It was a humid afternoon when the Knowledge Channel team arrived at San Juan Elementary School in Sto. Tomas, Batangas. It was a partially urban school taking up a small corner of a lot that was mostly converted into a barangay multipurpose hall and basketball court.

But the size, if anything, was no indication of how big of an impact Knowledge Channel's teacher training program has made in this school.

Carolyn delos Reyes of San Juan Elementary School is one of the teachers who have taken this teacher

training program called LEEP or Learning Effectively Through Enhanced and Evidence-based Pedagogies. *“Nung una, nag-iisip ako kung ano ba ang meron sa seminar na ina-attendan namin. Then all of a sudden may word na ‘constructivism’.”*

“Constructivism”, a learning theory in teaching, is at the center of LEEP’s training framework. It says that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. Unlike traditional teaching where teachers lecture, LEEP allows teachers to explore new teaching strategies that would best stimulate student learning.

### STUDENTS CREATE THEIR OWN LEARNING

*“Bago ako mag-LEEP, mayroon akong hinahanap na way kung paano ko mapapatuto ang mga estudyante ko na 44 to 50. Nag-struggle ako sa kung paano sila magkakaroon ng deep understanding o critical thinking sa kanila,” said Teacher Carolyn. “Kita mo na mahiyain sila, hindi sumasagot.”*

In a teacher-centered environment, students were expected to listen to their teacher while the teacher becomes the “sage on the stage.” This kind of learning is best described as passive, thus Teacher Carolyn’s descriptions of how her students were acting before she attended LEEP.

But after taking her LEEP training (sponsored by First Philippine Industrial Park) and implementing “constructivist” strategies in her class, her students became more lively and engaged. *“Mas nagkaroon sila ng self-confidence and mas madalas na silang nagpa-participate,”* she says. From passive learners, Teacher Carolyn’s students have become active learners.

This is also evident in her classroom. Manila papers filled with mind maps, activities, and colorful drawings were plastered on all four walls. In a traditional classroom, it would usually be bare or would only have decorations made by the teacher. But in Teacher Carolyn’s case, these works of her students were showcased as if it they were in some kind of exhibit.

Teacher Carolyn said that these were group outputs of her students from the different subjects and topics they discussed. They were clear evidences that in her classroom, students were the ones creating their own learning and not the teacher. She was a facilitator.

### IMPACT BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

San Juan Elementary School was just one of the many schools trained under LEEP. First Philippine Industrial Park (FPIP), through its Community Relations Officer Marco Amurao, has worked closely with Knowledge Channel Foundation to ensure that every school





in Sto. Tomas and Tanauan City, Batangas has experienced the teacher training program.

*“At the end of the day, we want to have quality employees in the park. It may be a long-term program but we are assured of the quality of the values and education we will have with the residents. We want them to develop, as FPIP continues to develop itself,” shared Marco.*

And this development has started to become evident in some Sto. Tomas and Tanauan schools as well.

San Fernando Elementary School in Sto. Tomas, for example, used to have 50 non-readers prior to taking their LEEP training according to Teacher Mark Louie Guevara. *“Dati pagkit-pagkit kami sa board ng Manila paper kaya tendency ng mga bata ay inaantok at bored sa klase,”* he said. But after implementing LEEP strategies and utilizing Knowledge Channel multimedia resources in their classes, their non-readers were brought down to 10.

Dr. Alcantara Elementary School in Tanauan, on the other hand, had attributed LEEP in the improvement of their performance in the National Achievement Test (NAT). Principal Elena Carvajal shared that after participating in LEEP, scores increased *“from 73 percent to 86 percent, and then 94 percent.”* In her comparative

analysis, she showed the increase in scores per subject.

According to Principal Carvajal, LEEP was one of the reasons the Division of Tanauan ranked first in Region 4A in NAT.

## ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

LEEP also trains teachers on how they can engage with different stakeholders including parents, their local government unit, and business owners to forge partnerships and pool resources for their school.

Such is the case of Sta. Clara Elementary School in Sto. Tomas. *“Isa po sa naging problems naming yung pagkakaroon po ng mga telebisyon sa mga classroom,”* Teacher Marites Rocero expressed. She





said the school wanted to acquire these technologies to catch up with 21st Century learning. Through the leadership of Principal Mila Mercado, the school was able to gather officers of the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) and came up with a “Mr. and Ms. Contest” of which the proceeds were used to purchase flatscreen televisions for all of their 16 classrooms.

## EVOLVING AND GROWING

Since 2013, LEEP has trained more than 5,700 teachers in over 1,700 schools with the support

of various local government units, non-government organizations, and companies.

LEEP has also included a Psychological First Aid module in its training. This was done in partnership with ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation (ALKFI) of which more than 250 teachers and principals from critical or disaster-stricken areas have been trained.

These changes and opportunities prove that Knowledge Channel Foundation’s flagship program for teachers is making a huge difference in the lives of Filipino teachers and learners.

And that is one giant LEEP for education.





Tobit Cruz (third from right), co-founder of Angat Kabataan with First Balfour Zero Heroes during their bokashi ball dropping in Maningning Creek in Taytay, Rizal

# First Balfour

# ZERO HERO

## LEVELS UP

In 2016, First Balfour introduced an environmental campaign called Zero Hero. Its concept involves achieving a zero-waste lifestyle with an overarching principle that by throwing less and using less, we are actually doing more for the environment. Aside from creating awareness about the impact of climate change, the campaign had modest goals of engaging employees and their families, friends, and relatives participate in daily habits to reduce their carbon footprint.

The turn of the year witnessed how the campaign leveled up its programs and activities.

In January, Zero Heroes were taught how to make bokashi balls, a Japanese technology used to clean waste water. In February, the Stuff-It-Challenge began where Zero Heroes were asked to collect empty plastic bottles and stuff them with non-biodegradable materials. This September, the collected stuffed bottles will be used as ecobricks for building toilet and hand-wash facilities in Pantay Bata Elementary School in Tanauan, Batangas.



## BOKASHI BALL MAKING

On January 27, 2017, Tobit Cruz of Filipino youth organization Angat Kabataan shared with our Zero Heroes the story of the Save Maningning Project and their ambitious dream of cleaning the three-kilometer Maningning Creek in Taytay, Rizal. The creek used to be a source of food and livelihood 30 years ago but over the years became so polluted that its water turned black.

It was Typhoon Ondoy in 2009 which triggered the project. Floods rose fast and submerged houses beside the creek. Tobit and Angat Kabataan then realized that they have to act swiftly to prevent such traumatic flooding from happening again.

They began with clean-up drives before they came across the concept of bokashi balls. Bokashi is a Japanese term for anything fermented. It helps remove foul odor, eats up algae, and solidifies the river bed. The main ingredients of these fist-sized mud balls include EM1 (effective microorganisms), dried garden soil, fermented rice bran, molasses, and cornstarch.

After sharing his inspiring story, Zero Heroes were then taught to make their own bokashi balls. And on March 18, 2017, they visited Maningning creek to drop into it hundreds of mud balls which they made in January.

Seeing the success story and replicability of the Save Maningning Project, Zero Heroes decided to adopt a creek in Parañaque City where First Balfour's corporate headquarters is located. Another bokashi ball making series was held in June 2017, and once a beneficiary had been identified, hundreds of bokashi balls were prepared for dropping.

## STUFF-IT CHALLENGE

The Zero Hero campaign thrived because of the active participation of First Balfour employees and their families and friends in an online community ([www.facebook.com/groups/FirstBalfourZeroHero](http://www.facebook.com/groups/FirstBalfourZeroHero)). Every day, tips on how to save the earth are shared and posted on this group.



## MAKE YOUR OWN 'BOKASHI' BALLS IN THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME!

**STEP 1.** Mix 10 kilos of soil with 1 kilo of fermented rice bran on a basin. Mix well and make sure to remove all stones, twigs, etc. from the soil.

**STEP 2.** Mix 30 ml of molasses with 30 ml of EM solution and 3 L of distilled water. This solution is called EMAS.

**STEP 3.** Mix the EMAS with the soil mixture.

**STEP 4.** Get a fistful of the mixture and shape them into tennis-sized balls and roll them on cornstarch.

**STEP 5.** Store them in a cool, dry place for 1-2 weeks until it develops molds. Mud balls can be stored for at most 6 months.



Bokashi ball makers strike a pose before they start molding their bokashi balls.



On December 29, 2016, a Zero Hero shared about the Stuff-It-Challenge on the group. The challenge was an easy one: collect and clean an empty two-liter plastic bottle and stuff it with non-biodegradable materials as tightly as possible. According to The Plastic Solution, a movement in the Philippines which started the Stuff-It-Challenge, the stuffed bottles – also called ecobricks – can be used as alternative fillers or bricks in the construction of walls, fences, and other simple structures.

This then became the inspiration behind this year's Project Handog, First Balfour's sustainability competition.

Project Handog seeks to challenge First Balfour engineers to use their engineering genius for a noble cause. They were asked to come up with innovative solutions using ecobricks to help improve the condition of public schools or communities where the company has its presence. The winning Project Handog entry called WASH (Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene) is set to build toilet and hand wash facilities using ecobricks in Pantay Bata Elementary School in Tanauan, Batangas.

*"Using ecobricks to build a simple but sturdy structure brings many inspiring messages and transforms waste into something useful. It not only provides a facility for hygiene, it will also educate the students about doing something now to protect the environment and ensure a viable planet in the future," shares Project Handog Committee Chairman and First Balfour HR Head Carlos Pedro C. Salonga.*

For First Balfour, this is our Zero Hero way of giving back with a difference.



A Lopez Group employee showcases his ecobrick at the July 2017 Walk The Talk activity.



Project Handog 2.0 participants present a prototype of the main material of Project WASH.

A kid smiles for the camera while painting the wall at the First Balfour Establishment in Kidzania

FIRST BALFOUR OPENS  
ESTABLISHMENT IN

# Kidzania Manila

Since its opening in May 2016, more than 20,000 kids have already visited First Balfour's Home Finishing Establishment. During its soft opening, First Balfour President and Chief Operating Officer Anthony L. Fernandez and then Kidzania Philippines State Governor Maricel Pangilinan-Arenas talked about how both companies share the same vision of helping shape a better nation by nurturing today's younger generation.



Participants of First Balfour's Establishment getting ready for their Kidzania activity

Kidzania employees strike the signature Kidzania pose just outside First Balfour's Kidzania Establishment.

*“Over the past decades, our purpose has been to contribute to nation-building and uplifting the quality of life of the Filipino. Like Kidzania, First Balfour believes in fostering a better world, a brighter future – and a brighter future comes from dreams and aspirations nurtured during the early years. We believe Kidzania provides these opportunities to young minds whose future lies in creativity and enriched imagination,”* Fernandez said.

*“The First Balfour Home Finishing Establishment was built to inspire kids to explore jobs in the construction industry. Filipinos are known for their artistry and craftsmanship, and are sought after all over the world. This is something that we can all be proud of,”* shared Arenas.

With the opening of the Home Finishing Establishment, kids now experience working as electricians – fixing electrical wirings to power up appliances – and house painters – painting the walls of a building. First Balfour now joins over 50 industry partners who have sponsored establishments which enable kids to explore, discover, and learn.



**IGNITING AND  
SUSTAINING HOPE:**

**CHRISTIAN  
RANCHE'S  
STORY**

BY YNA MUSICO



Christian Ranche at  
the Lopez Museum  
and Library



## GROWING PAINS

If one had met Christian Ranche as a grade schooler and encountered him now, one would not recognize the boy from the man. The young boy who sold food items in the streets in the middle of a school day to make ends meet is now a young man working in the Department of Social Welfare and Development. He is looking back to his roots and giving back to people who encountered similar if not much more difficult struggles.

Christian grew up in Marinduque, an only child placed under the care of his grandmother. With his grandmother who had retired and had no regular income, Christian encountered multiple hurdles in his life that would shape his determined spirit today. The two of them did not earn much, doing their best to sell food items wherever and whenever they could. From peanuts to kakanin, to balut and pancit, Christian and his grandmother would struggle to earn meager income. On the days that his grandmother would not be feeling well, Christian continued on selling to earn enough to get him through a school day. “My lola sacrificed a lot for me. She didn’t enjoy her twilight days because of me. It’s really hard for her. She’s a solo parent... and given that, it’s really difficult for her to cope with everyday living,” Christian says, remembering the days when he had to take over selling for his grandmother to be able to rest. “She didn’t want me to stop going to school...”

## CORRESPONDENCE

It was in his second year of high school that Christian was introduced to Phil-Asia Assistance Foundation Inc (PAAFI). More than the money, Christian recalls the constant encouragement from his sponsor and those within the foundation, and his gratitude for his grandmother that kept his ambition burning.

PAAFI assists elementary, high school and college students in Metro Manila public schools by providing a monthly allowance to help with transportation, uniforms and projects, as well as conducting regular social worker visits, medical and dental missions for scholars, and values education in partnership with local parishes.

The Department of Education-National Capital Region (DepEd-NCR) recognized PAAFI as a “valued partner and benefactor in promoting accessible and quality Education for All” at the first Parangal at Pasasalamat in which DepEd-NCR cited outstanding teachers, top performing schools and external stakeholders that have supported its learners, programs and projects.

“What I like about the program is the empowerment,” says Christian. “The hope nabinibigay nila (that they give). The moment that you believe in the next generation... Ang sarap lang nang may naniniwala sa yo. (It’s wonderful when someone believes in you.)”



Christian's grandmother who sacrificed a lot for him

Even when everyone around him seemed to believe that he could not get anywhere, letters from miles away helped him to his feet. There were many times in his life that Christian thought of giving up. PAAFI offered assistance not only through monetary support but also through their constant presence in Christian's life in the form of correspondence.

“We are in constant communication; me and Ate Fe.” Christian mentions how every month he would receive letters from Manila. “Kinakamusta nila ako... Yung iba [letters] nakatago pa sa bahay... Kahit mahirap, I was able to share my struggles with them.” The letters became a source of comfort, his benefactors continuously reminding him that they were right there with him, and that he could lean on them if need be.

“You are not alone in your battle,” he remembers his fellow scholars who were in Manila at that time. “There are other people struggling as well.” Christian would also receive updates about children who shared the same experiences as him through side stories told by his benefactor, or through long distance phone calls. He sent out snail mail so much that the messenger knew him well. Throughout his high school years, he was in contact with Ms Maria Fe Beltran and Mr. and Mrs. Serafin “Jun” Quiason, after which, during his college years, he was supported by Ms Mabel Ramos. When he found himself in Manila, he had more opportunities to meet his fellow scholars through their Christmas parties, and through their picking up their stipend every month. “A lot of my close friends are people I met there... We exchanged contact details and eventually became each other's support system.”

Within PAAFI Christian found a family.





## PAYING IT FORWARD

“This is just temporary. I can’t do anything about my past, but I can do something about my future. ... It’s your choice how you view your situation,” he told himself whenever he felt like his struggles became too big for him to solve. “Paunti-unti [I let go of my insecurities]. The way I speak, the way I talk. Actually it’s a process; it’s still a process.” Christian’s confidence bloomed as he grew older. The less he boxed himself within into his circumstances, the more open he became to the opportunities that presented themselves to him. “Hindi naman ako sobrang matalino eh. I was just very diligent. Lahat gagawin ko para makatapos.”

Christian graduated as a Bachelor of Science in Psychology (Cum Laude), a Registered Psychometrician and a Licensed Professional Teacher and is now a candidate for Master of Arts in Psychology at the University of the Philippines-Diliman. He works with Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, counseling people who find themselves in situations familiar to him. “Malaki yung impact ng PAAFI sa akin. It’s actually why I’m in development work... I actually ask God why I’m here. I’m just as broken.” When asked why he chose the career path that he’s in, he mentions how he wants to give the

same hope that was given him by PAAFI. “More than the money you are giving, it’s hope itself that really counts. Kasi minsan yung pera nawawala yan eh. But the hope, you don’t know if it will grow, or when it will grow but time will come [when it does].”

Aside from this Christian also does consultancy work in DSWD and has co-authored a book on psychology, further proving how much empowerment and education play a role in building futures that seem unattainable. “I have my own personal issues, so why do I stay here? [It’s because] If we don’t do something... I want to make a difference. I’m not in it for the income, I’m in it for the outcome.”

“Sometimes you just need to be reminded because we all have blind spots. There comes a time na mapapagod ka but I had people in my life who I can go to, who I can confide in. Minsan ang kailangan naman natin makikinig lang eh. Not a person who can solve our problems, but someone who listens.” From an insecure little boy living through days and not allowing himself to dream too far ahead, to a man who wants to give hope through his work. Christian Ranche is the outcome of years of perseverance, and product of a community that was ever-present in his life, in its lowest and in its highest moments.

# Remembering Presy

BY MITOS SANTISTEBAN

I am among those who had been fortunate to know Presy Lopez Psinakis quite well. She was beautiful and dignified, and conducted herself with the elegance and flawless taste one associates with royalty. But unlike many ladies to the manor born, she was simple, forthright, and sensitive to the people around her. She was compassionate to the less fortunate and fought tirelessly for what she thought was right and just.

She was tall, svelte and naturally graceful, and we often laughed with her whenever we admitted our envy for her good looks and intelligence. I have heard people describe her as fire clad in silk. Her gentle voice and demeanor belied the strength of her character. A will of steel, some said, especially under great challenges.

Named after her paternal grandma, Presentacion Hofleña, she was the only daughter of Eugenio Lopez Sr. who thought the world of her as she did of him. But when she met Steve Psinakis, a Greek-American who had been a



PRESY LOPEZ PSINAKIS

the dictatorship in the US, with Presy giving up virtually all her valuable possessions and running a fast food outlet with Steve so they could continue helping the resistance. In the Philippines, her eldest brother, Geny, suffered incarceration under trumped up charges for over five years until Steve and other family friends helped in Geny's dramatic escape with Serge Osmeña and their flight to the US.

The couple, with their two children, Michael and Geni, returned to Manila, joining up with Presy's son from a previous marriage, Rogy, after the 1986 EDSA Revolution had installed Cory Aquino, widow of Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr., as President. To get back on their feet financially, Presy went back to running Sierra Tours while Steve helped Geny and later Oscar

and the family elders and loyal associates in rebuilding the Lopez businesses. Presy was elected director of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corporation and would also chair Lopez Inc., the family's private holding company.



Presy and Lopez Inc. staff with some people close to her

In 1992, after the death of Roby, her youngest brother, Presy assumed chairmanship of Phil-Asia Assistance Foundation (PAAFI) which until now helps support deserving public school students. Here, she taught young people, mostly by example, to “never, never to relax” in resisting those who would do their country wrong. She continued joining rallies and protests against graft and crookedness in government.

senior engineer at Meralco, she had to choose a life with him in Athens, Greece. Later, Presy and Steve reunited with her family in the United States where they had flown in exile after former President Ferdinand Marcos had seized all the Lopez properties under martial law.

One can only imagine the traumatic times the Lopez family had to endure even as they continued the struggle against

A little over a year after Steve had passed away, Presy rejoined her Creator on July 25, 2017, leaving behind a legacy of steadfast love and caring for others, and the courage to fight against all odds for what she believed in. While Presy is no longer with us, her memory remains indelible in our hearts and what she did and stood for continue to inspire all of us whose lives she touched.

# LOPEZ GROUP CORPORATIONS

 <p>López Inc.</p>	 <p>INAEC INTEGRATED HOLDINGS CORPORATION</p> 	 <p>ADTEL</p>  <p>BENPRES INSURANCE AGENCY, INC.</p>	 <p>IBS</p>	 <p>LÓPEZ HOLDINGS CORP.</p>
 <p>ABS-CBN</p>  <p>SKYCABLE</p>	 <p>FPH A Lopez Group Company</p>	 <p>First Gen</p>  <p>First Philippine Electric Corp</p>	 <p>energy DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION</p>  <p>FIRST PHILIPPINE INDUSTRIAL PARK</p>	 <p>ROCKWELL LAND</p>  <p>First Balfour</p>

## FOUNDATIONS

 <p>LÓPEZ GROUP FOUNDATION</p>	 <p>KCh</p>	 <p>Oscar M. Lopez Center Science for Climate Resilient Communities</p>	 <p>ABS-CBN LINGKOD KAPAMILYA</p>
 <p>MISYON</p>	 <p>EUGENIO LÓPEZ FOUNDATION, INC. LOPEZ MUSEUM &amp; LIBRARY</p>	 <p>Phil-Asia Assistance Foundation, Inc.</p>	
 <p>GLOBE TV</p>	 <p>KEITECH</p>	 <p>Mount Apo Foundation, Inc.</p>	



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