FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
01 August 2013 – 28 February 2019

Philippine-American Fund
AID 492-C-13-00016

28 February 2019

This document was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and was prepared by the Gerry Roxas Foundation for the Philippine-American Fund Project, under contract number AID 492-C-13-00016.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACGS	ASEAN Corporate Governance Scorecard
ADS	Automated Directive System
AFON	Antique Federation of Non-Government Organization
APPROACH	Advocates for the Protection and Prevention of Abuse and Exploitation of Children
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATIP	Anti-Trafficking in Person
C3MC	Candis 3 Marketing Cooperative
C3PH	C3 Philippines, Inc.
CAP	Corrective Action Plan
CLAFI	Conrado and Ladislawa Alcantara Foundation, Inc.
CLB	Children's Legal Bureau
CO	Contracting Officer
CODE-NGO	Caucus of Development NGO Networks
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CWD	Children with Disabilities
DEPED	Department of Education
DGP	Development Grants Program
DOJ	Department of Justice
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
ELLN	Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
ESR	Environmental Screening Report
FAA	Fixed Amount Award
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
FIT-ED	Foundation for Information Technology Education Development, Inc.
FMO	Financial Monitoring Officer
FORGE	Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors (FORGE)
GMT	Grants Management Team
GPH	Government of the Philippines
GRB	Grants Review Board
GRF	Gerry Roxas Foundation
IACAT	Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
ICD	Institute of Corporate Directors
IMAN	Integrated Mindanaoans Association for Natives, Inc.
iREAd	Innovations for Rural Education Advancement Project
JVOFI	Jaime V. Ongpin Foundation, Inc.
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
KM	Knowledge Management
LGU	Local Government Unit
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

MPA	Marine Protected Area
MTBMLE	Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education
NATRIPAL	Nagkakaisang mga Tribu ng Palawan, Inc.
NCPC	Naga City People's Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NUPAS	Non-U.S. Organizations Pre-Award Survey
OROCHAMBER	Cagayan de Oro Chamber of Commerce and Industry
OSY	Out-of-School Youth
PARFUND	Philippine Agrarian Reform Foundation for National Development
PBCFI	Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc.
PFG	Partnership for Growth
PLMES	People-Led Monitoring and Evaluation System
PMP	Performance Monitoring and Management Plan
PRA	Pre-Award Risk Assessment
PREDA	People's Recovery Empowerment Development Assistance Foundation
RBI	Resources for the Blind, Inc.
RPO	Regional Program Officer
SGV	SyCip Gorres Velayo & Co.
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SPIADFI	South Pacific Integrated Area Development Foundation, Inc.
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
TAMACO	Tamaraw Salt Producers Cooperative
TDFI	Tuason Development Foundation, Inc.
TLDFI	Tribal Leaders Development Foundation, Inc.
TOC	Theory of Change
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UPPAF	University of the Philippines Public Administration Research and Extension Foundation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VC	Venture Capital
WEAVE	Women Entrepreneurs and Valuing the Environment
WiForFISH-MIS	Wildlife Forestry Fishery Indicator Spatial Hub-Management Information System
WQMA	Water Quality Management Area
YPS	Young Public Servants
YVP	Youth Vote Philippines

1.0 Executive Summary

On Aug. 5, 2013, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded Gerry Roxas Foundation (GRF) a five-year contract to manage and implement a grant facility called the Philippine-American Fund or Phil-Am Fund. The Fund will support non-state organizations in activities that address challenges in economic growth, biodiversity conservation, governance, anti-trafficking in persons and last mile challenges in education.

GRF conducted three solicitation cycles and nine pre-bid conferences for the Philippine-American Fund. The conferences held in Manila, Davao and Cebu, attracted the participation of 837 organizations nationwide. A total of 487 concept paper applications and 428 full proposals were received.

GRF, through its grants management team (GMT), performed field validation for shortlisted applications, assessing grant award management capacity and ensuring social acceptability and viability of the projects. SyCip Gorres Velayo & Co. (SGV), the premiere accounting firm in the country and the management advisory partner of GRF, performed due diligence checks on the proponents making sure of the credibility and integrity of each organization and its proposed staff. SGV also did pre-award risk assessment through USAID's Non-U.S. Organizations Pre-Award Survey (NUPAS) tool. The results of the NUPAS was used as a baseline to determine the management and financial competency of the grantees and their capacity needs.

In the end, 38 projects were awarded: six (6) for Anti-Trafficking in Person or ATIP, seven (7) for Economic Growth, four (4) for Education, five (5) for Governance and 16 for Biodiversity.

The capacity-building component is embedded in the design of Phil-Am Fund. GRF's and the GMT's sustained efforts at hand-holding, monitoring, and providing technical assistance and customized capacity-building programs spelled the difference for the Facility's success. GRF also organized workshops and training sessions focused on identified common weaknesses of the grantees or on special topics of interest for the grantees like proposal packaging, knowledge management and communications, technical writing and financial management, among others.

The grants from Phil-Am Fund became an "on-the-job" training for the grantees in managing USAID awards. During the end line assessment of organizational competencies, grantees showed improvements in their organizational policies and project management procedures. Grantees, while being reluctant at first, appreciated the organizational reforms brought about by their participation in the project. Improvements in NUPAS scores, on the average, increased by 0.6 points advancing grantees from 'weak' to 'adequate' ratings. Beyond the scores, project and financial management controls of grantees improved to the point that annual recipient-contracted audits performed for Phil-Am Fund did not result in any significant findings. Some of the grantees shifted from manual to computerized accounting, and are now preparing financial reports using the AuditPal accounting software.

AuditPal is GRF's homegrown computerized accounting software that allows real-time financial recording, consolidation, and reporting. The rollout of the software to the grantees came with a

dedicated computer system, user's training, and on-call technical support. The system was dedicated for the use of grant funds making the transactions and expenditures easy to isolate from other organizational resources, allowing for faster and more precise reporting. For grantees, with internet connectivity issues, an offline version of the AuditPal software was also provided. During closeout, Phil-Am Fund provided the grantees a copy of all their financial records and reports in AuditPal. Realizing its importance in financial management, some of the grantees continued the use of the accounting software beyond their grant with Phil-Am Fund.

As the Project draws to a close, Phil-Am Fund reports to its public its collective technical accomplishments in the five thematic categories:

- Anti-trafficking grants supported activities that led to the treatment, healing and protection of around 750 trafficking victims. Grants supported activities that resulted in the education and awareness of more than 167,000 people on the issue of human trafficking. A total of 223 survivors were also assisted in seeking justice.

- Biodiversity grants were instrumental in improving the management of more than 462,000 hectares of key biodiversity areas (KBAs) in the Philippines. These led to the protection of 22 KBAs which include the Central Cebu Protected Landscapes, Mt. Apo in Davao, Negros Island, the Ligawasan Marsh in North Cotabato, Mindoro, Palawan, Siargao Island, Southern Leyte and the Verde Island Passage, among others.

- Economic growth grants supported startup ventures and agribusinesses, and were able to establish 738 micro-enterprises in the provinces of Cebu, Bukidnon and Davao del Norte. Project activities created self-sustaining cooperatives through partnerships with private corporations dealing in high-value crops. Their initiatives have improved the capacity to access loans and financing of 16 cooperatives in Bukidnon and Mindoro. Economic Growth Grants were also instrumental in acquiring innovative technologies that can maximize the potential of these organizations to establish more sustainable communities in Batangas and Occidental Mindoro.

- Education grants played a vital role in improving the access to basic education of more than 15,000 students, out-of-school youth and adult blind learners nationwide. The digital ELLN developed through one of the education grants reached more than 4,000 teachers from 31 DepEd divisions in 11 regions nationwide.

- Governance grants promoted participatory planning and budgeting in 31 municipalities in the provinces of Antique, Benguet, La Union, Ilocos and Camarines Sur. Through their YVP Chapters, YPS educated more than 17,000 Filipino youth on government processes to exact accountability from their public officials. ICD implemented a corporate governance scorecard which helped improve the corporate governance practices of 392 publicly-listed companies, 11 of which reached the ASEAN Top 50 Corporations.

Through the grants, Phil-Am Fund demonstrated that civil society organizations are the best strategic partners, given their knowledge of the local context, to devise solutions to development problems at the community level where they operate. A review of the outcomes shows that local organizations are capable of being 'engines for growth' in promoting the "Journey to Self-reliance".

GRF as the grant making facility made Phil-Am Fund happen. It helped USAID deal directly with civil society organizations, making USAID assistance present in 42 out of the 81 provinces of the country. As Mr. Gerry Porta, sharing his thoughts about the facility, puts it:

> *"The biggest benefit that we got from that is, in the previous way of doing things, there is no way that we can have 37 grants in five years. There would have been no people to manage it—the management burden of procuring 37 grants would have been very, very challenging. Phil-Am Fund made that happen."*

2.0 Project Description

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has awarded Gerry Roxas Foundation (GRF) a five-year contract to manage and implement a grant facility called the Philippine -American Fund or Phil-Am Fund. The Phil-Am Fund will finance local activities that support broad-based, inclusive and sustainable growth in the Philippines and will help to address constraints to growth as identified in the Partnership for Growth (PFG) Initiative. PFG is an initiative between the United States Government and the Government of the Philippines (GPH) that aims to support the latter achieve its high growth potential by creating a more transparent, predictable, and consistent legal and regulatory regime; fostering a more open and competitive business environment; strengthening the rule of law; and supporting fiscal stability.[1]

The Phil-Am Fund will complement the support being given by the USG to GPH in advancing the goals of the PFG and in supporting other vital objectives of USAID in helping the Philippines achieve a stable, prosperous and well-governed status. By providing grants to local civil society and private sector organizations, USAID/Philippines also hoped to contribute to achieving the goals articulated in the USAID Forward reform agenda. Part of the reform efforts of USAID is changing the way it does its business by providing more grants to varied local partners through its Implementation and Procurement Reform. The Phil-Am Fund was envisioned to build capabilities of local organizations and streamline USAID procedures to enable USAID to work with a broad range of local partners and increase competition in grant procurement.

The project acknowledges the fundamental role of civil society organizations in achieving the country's development objectives. Known as the 'third' sector in development and governance, civil society organizations are often defined as groups of like-minded people representing the interests of the society. Over the years, their role evolved not only as the 'third' sector but as partners of the government and private sectors in mobilizing resources and delivering meaningful programs for the community. Civil society organizations 'served' as catalysts building networks and linking institutions to address the development challenges of the community.

2.1 Goals and Objectives of the Phil-Am Fund

The Phil-Am Fund will enable local organizations to design and implement local and community-based programs to address common development challenges. The Fund will support non-State actors in activities that contribute to overarching strategic goals of USAID/Philippines, by seeking to improve government accountability and transparency, engage citizen participation and advocacy, strengthening the trade and investment environment, catalyzing entrepreneurship, supporting business start-ups, and fortifying the underutilized potential of the Philippines' human, economic and natural resources. The Fund will also support local initiatives that combat human trafficking; provide innovative, technology-based solutions to address 'last-mile' challenges in the path to improved child

[1] Fact Sheet: U.S.-Philippines Partnership for Growth ... (n.d.). Retrieved from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/28/fact-sheet-us-p

and adult literacy in the Philippines; and support biodiversity conservation initiatives that contribute to more sustainable growth.

2.2 Strategic Priorities

Phil-Am Fund will issue grants that support inclusive and sustainable growth under the following five broad categories:

Category 1: Promotion of New Business and Entrepreneurship through Economic Growth Grants. This category aims to stimulate more business start-ups by supporting strategic initiatives that promote competitiveness, innovation, and development of entrepreneurial spirit in the economy as key drivers of broad-based, inclusive economic growth. Activities that can be supported can include those that expand the availability of venture capital and other non-bank financing options for SMEs and enhance business networks and public-private alliances. The required indicator is an increase in the number of new businesses established

Category 2: Advancing Integrity and Transparency through Governance Grants. This category will promote effectiveness, integrity, transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in and advocacy of reforms in government institutions and public policy reform processes. At the end of the projects under this category, USAID expects to see greater political and economic competition from an empowered civil society that advances the public interest. A required indicator is the number of mechanisms for external oversight of public resource use.

Category 3: Combating Trafficking in Persons. This category will support efforts of non-state organizations to improve, strengthen and sustain efforts to protect Filipinos against trafficking, illegal recruitment and other forms of labor or sexual exploitation through expanded prevention, stronger enforcement and enhanced protection of victims. Anticipated outcomes for this category are:

a. More women and vulnerable groups empowered and their vulnerabilities to trafficking or illegal recruitment reduced as they get employed or are self-employed because of improved financial and livelihood opportunities, they are less likely to migrate to seek employment, and communities are more active in preventing/impeding traffickers and advocating against trafficking.
b. More local government units, inter-agency and local task forces capacitated and strengthened to provide holistic and integrated services to trafficking or prospective trafficking victims, as well as to conduct qualitative community education campaigns against trafficking and illegal recruitment with the cooperation of community networks and TIP champions.
c. Greater involvement of the private sector in partnering with government and civil society to strengthen prevention of trafficking activities and support anti-trafficking enforcement, and consequently improve the tier ranking of the Philippines.

Category 4: Combating 'Last Mile' Challenges to Literacy through Innovative Use of Technology. This category of the Phil-Am Fund will provide grants for innovative, scalable, cost-effective and transformative technology-based solutions to solve select 'last-mile' challenges to both early grade and adult illiteracy. At the end of the project period, USAID expects to see strengthened human capital through a more literate adult and early grade child population.

Category 5: Improving Natural Resource and Environmental Management through Biodiversity Conservation Grants. This category will support activities that protect the natural systems supporting human wellbeing and ensure long-term resilience of local communities. At the end of the project period, USAID expects to strengthen environmental resilience and sustain inclusive economic growth by improving the conservation and management of natural resources. Ultimately, the results achieved should lead to:

- Prevention of degradation of biodiversity and natural resources, while also more deeply integrating climate change considerations into long-term planning;
- Strengthened, more sustainable governance of natural resources;
- Expansion of benefits from sustainable natural resources management, while confronting issues of overexploitation and undervaluation that reduce benefits in the long term; and
- Strengthen the resilience of key environmental services and already fragile ecosystems to buffer the risks posed by natural disasters and climate change impacts.

3.0 Grants Process

GRF organized the Grants Management Team (GMT) composed of the GRF Executive Director, GRF Finance and Administrative Director, Phil-Am Fund Chief of Party, Grants Manager, Finance Management Specialist and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. The team provides direct project oversight and coordinates with USAID for the day-to-day operations of the project. Major decision points during the grants review process including solicitation, proposal review, endorsement, and negotiations are also managed by the team. General oversight was also provided by the team in grants implementation, audits and close out.

The grants review process begins with the issuance of the solicitation guidelines and the call for applications. In general, the grants management cycle goes through the following general processes:

- Solicitation;
- Proposal Review;
- Pre-Award Risk Assessment Survey;
- Awarding;
- Grants Implementation and Monitoring; and
- Close-out.

3.1 Grants Solicitation

The GMT prepares the guidelines for each solicitation cycle. USAID approves the solicitation document before Phil-Am Fund releases the guidelines through the following channels:

1. Advertisements in major broadsheets
2. Posting in the GRF website
3. Announcement in the Phil-Am Fund microsite
4. Email blast to all partner network organizations and
5. Cross-posting in the GRF partner networks

The GMT also conducts regional pre-bid conferences to discuss solicitation guidelines and reach as many potential grantees as possible. The conferences also provided a venue for enhancing awareness of the Phil-Am Fund structure, opportunities, mechanisms, and priorities. It also served as a means to respond to inquiries on the solicitation. Responses to questions raised by participants during the conference and those sent to the official Phil-Am Fund secretariat email were consolidated and published in the microsite and in the GRF website.

Phil-Am Fund used a two-tiered approach in proposal processing for its first grant cycle. During the solicitation, initially, concept papers were solicited by GRF and assessed on their alignment with the Phil-Am Fund goals, innovativeness, and potential to contribute to the USAID Phil-Am Fund development goals. Only those applicants whose concepts were selected were invited to submit full-blown proposals. The initial stage of concept paper solicitation prolonged the review process, taking close to nine months from solicitation to

awarding of the grant. To shorten the process, the concept paper stage was eliminated in the succeeding grant cycles.

Prescribed templates for the concept papers (for the first cycle) and full proposals are included in the solicitation guidelines to facilitate submission by applicants.

3.2 Full Proposal Submission

Applicants are required to submit a complete technical and financial proposal using the prescribed templates attached in the solicitation guidelines. In addition to the templates, guidelines are also provided to assist applicants in proposal writing. It includes information on priorities, grant ceilings, results framework, indicative activities, timeframe, and the evaluation criteria.

The technical application specifies the issue or problem that the proponent seeks to address. It also contains the operational strategies in implementing solutions to the identified problems. The technical application is used to determine the applicant's technical expertise in the category they are applying for. On the other hand, the cost application contained in the financial proposal provides budget assumptions and detailed information on the funding requirements of the project.

All applications must be submitted on the specified time and date in the solicitation guidelines. Applications are accepted in either printed or electronic form.

3.3 Review of Full Applications

Following the receipt of full applications, the GMT logs the application packages by order of receipt. Initial review of the submissions focuses on assessing the completeness of each submission. Applicants with incomplete submissions were informed that their proposals were dropped from the review process.

The GMT then receives all shortlisted applications and reviews them based on their technical merits. To accelerate the process, consultants or short-term technical assistance (STTA) were engaged during the 3rd and 4th cycle to assist GMT in reviewing applications. During the meeting, GMT decides on the applications that will proceed to the field validation phase of the review process. GMT also prepares a list of questions to be raised during the field visit. Other applicants who did not pass the technical assessment were informed of the decision.

3.4 Site Visits and Background Check

Once the GMT completes its initial shortlist for field validation, the list is submitted to the SyCip, Gores, Velayo & Co. (SGV) Team for due diligence checks on the applicant organizations. SGV determines eligibility of these organizations to receive funding from USAID based on federal regulations. Background checks on the board members of

applicant organizations are also performed to make sure that none of them are listed in the following exclusions list:

- System for Awards Management Exclusions;
- Al Qaeda Sanctions List of the United Nations;
- Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List of the Office of Foreign Assets Control;
- Accused parties involved in the Priority Development Assistance Fund scam; and
- Accused parties involved in Malampaya Fund scam.

GMT, on the other hand, performs office visits and field validation to shortlisted applicants. STTAs were engaged during the 3rd and 4th cycle to assist GMT in performing field validation. During the office visit, individual GMT members meet with the representatives and the Board of Trustees of the organization. The office visit seeks to establish the management capacity of the applicants and ensure the commitment of board members for the implementation of the proposed project.

During field validation, GMT members assess appropriateness of proposed activities in the target areas. Members consult target beneficiaries of proposed projects to determine social acceptability of the community and their participation in proposal development.

Based on the field visit, individual GMT members prepare validation reports for the deliberation of all shortlisted applications.

3.5 Grants Management Team Deliberations

Following the field validation and due diligence checks, the GMT will once again deliberate to decide on the applications to be endorsed for the review of the USAID Grants Review Board (GRB).

The GMT member or STTA assigned to perform the field validation prepares a project summary to present an overview of the proposal. The summary also includes their observations during field validation. During the deliberations, the GMT member or STTA assigned will present the overall objectives and activities of the application, address questions raised by the GMT members before field validation, and make final recommendations if the application is for approval, deferral, or rejection.

After the presentations, the GMT members votes to determine which applications will be endorsed to the GRB. The USAID Contracting Officer's Representative, whenever available, was invited to observe the deliberations.

Proponents whose applications are recommended for deferral or rejection were notified of the decision.

Project summaries for applications that passed the deliberations are finalized by the GMT for submission to the USAID Grants Review Board.

3.6 Grants Review Board Meeting

The Grants Review Board (GRB) provides overall direction of the Phil-Am Fund and final approval in selecting grant recipients. The board is chaired by the COR and comprised of the Chief of Party, Office Directors (or his/her designate) of USAID, the Mission Director and the Deputy Mission Director.

From the results of the GMT deliberations, the GRF recommends grant applications to the GRB for approval. GRB members are provided with project summaries including merits of the proposal, challenges that need to be addressed by proponent once project is implemented and recommendations of the GMT. The relevant documents are forwarded to the GRB before the deliberation meeting. The COR presides over the meeting and the voting process. No technical presentations are made during the meeting. The COR only reads the project title and the name of the proponent while the GRB votes on each one with a yes or no vote. Questions are entertained if these will sway the vote of a voting member of the GRB. When there are more applications than can be funded due to limited budget for the thematic categories, the GRB ranks all approved applications by indicating them as pass or low pass.

The voting members of the GRB decide which applications move on to the next stage of application processing. Proponents whose applications did not pass the GRB review are officially informed of the decision.

3.7 Pre-Award Risk Assessment

The Pre-Award Risk Assessment (PRA) ensures that financial, organizational, and other risks in a grant award are identified, and that corresponding measures are recommended to manage those risks. This is undertaken by the SGV as part of the review process. It seeks to determine the level of financial and managerial capacity of applicants in managing USAID funds in accordance with the Automated Directive System (ADS) 303 of the USAID. The result of the pre-award risk assessment also determines the most appropriate method of financing and the degree of support and oversight needed under the potential Phil-Am Fund award.

3.7.1 PRA Process

The Pre-Award Risk Assessment (PRA) is a simplified process based on the Pre-Award Responsibility Determination of the USAID provided in ADS 303.3.9. Risks in terms of financial and managerial controls to handle a Phil-Am Fund award are evaluated. The PRA covers the following areas:

1. Legal Structure;
2. Financial Management and Internal Control Systems;
3. Procurement Systems;

4. Human Resources Systems;
5. Project Performance Management; and
6. Organizational Sustainability.

Under the PRA, the applicants are rated as follows:

Rating		Definition
1.00 – 1.50	Inadequate	Key deficiencies and significant weaknesses not remediable before the award.
1.51 – 2.50	Weak	Some deficiencies and significant weaknesses not easily remediable before the award.
2.51 – 3.50	Adequate	Deficiencies and significant weaknesses remediable before the award.
3.51 – 4.00	Strong	There are no deficiencies or significant weaknesses.

The PRA process starts after the GRB approves the technical applications endorsed by the GMT. It is composed of three (3) main activities:

a. ***Desk Review.*** All submitted requirements included in the full application package of the applicants are inspected and reviewed to initially assess the applicant's background, governance, policies, procedures and practices, management structure, personnel composition, and other factors that would contribute to its managerial capacity to handle grant funds.

b. ***Field Visit.*** The PRA Team visits the administrative offices of the applicants to address or clarify the associated risks (i.e., weaknesses or deficiencies) identified during the desk review phase. The field visits comprise of various procedures such as: (1) interview with the Board of Directors/Trustees and personnel; (2) inspection of sample reports and accounting records; (3) testing of computerized and manual accounting systems; (4) review of minutes of meetings; and (5) observing office practices and decorum. In certain cases, key project partners, beneficiaries, and partner organizations will also be interviewed.

c. ***Report Writing.*** The findings and recommendations are written in the PRA Report. The PRA Report is submitted to the GMT for review and approval. The report also forms part of the Memorandum of Negotiations of each applicant.

If an applicant is selected for the award, the report is forwarded for their review and concurrence. Upon receipt of the PRA Report, applicants are given the opportunity to clarify observations and confirm the findings and recommendations of the GMT and SGV. The report serves as the basis for the preparation of grantee Corrective Action Plans (CAP).

The PRA results determine the mode of financing for each grant. If a grantee scored 2.50 or lower in the PRA, the grant is funded through a modified cash advance arrangement. On the other hand, if a grantee scored 2.51 or higher, funding is provided under the regular cash advance method. Grantees may also qualify for the cash advance method, from the modified cash advance arrangement, following their compliance to the CAP recommendations.

3.7.2 Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

The Corrective Action Plan (CAP) contains the grantee's plan of action to comply with the PRA recommendations and requirements. Upon submission of the CAP, the SGV team reviews the plan and classifies recommendations as first and second priorities.

The first-priority recommendations are expected to be implemented within 90 days from the time of the award. Addressing the first priorities would enable the grantees with weak or inadequate capacity to upgrade from modified cash advance to regular cash advance. However, failure to address the first priorities within the allotted period will revert the organization's mode of financing to cash reimbursement.

Second-priority recommendations are those that may be addressed by grantees during project implementation. Addressing CAP recommendations improves the grantee's organizational and financial capacity to manage USAID grants.

3.8 Final Technical and Cost Negotiation

Parallel to the conduct of the pre-award risk assessment, the GMT initiates the final technical and cost negotiation. Potential grantees are invited to a workshop to address issues and comments raised by the GRB. The results framework of each application is enhanced to ensure proper linkage of activities with the desired outcomes of the project. During the negotiation workshop, finance monitoring officers also help review and clarify budget assumptions of each application to address issues raised during the initial review of its financial application. Cost realism analysis is also performed to ensure realistic estimates of the budget proposal. The revised technical and financial application serves as the basis for the GRF best and final offer.

Following grantee's acceptance of the final offer, the GMT prepares waivers and certifications required for funding specific USAID grants:

- ***Initial Environmental Examination.*** The GMT, in coordination with the applicants, prepares an Environmental Screening Report (ESR) for all proposed applications. Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plans (EMMP) are also prepared for applications with potential environmental risks. The GRF approves all ESRs and EMMPs developed and submits final copies of the document to the USAID for reference.

- ***Use of Notwithstanding Authority.*** The GRF drafts a waiver for the use of notwithstanding authority for applications that will provide training and other assistance to law enforcement activities or personnel. The waiver is submitted to the COR for review and approval.

- ***Agricultural Procurement Memorandum.*** The GMT drafts a memo for all agricultural and planting goods and services to be procured using grant funds. The agricultural procurement memorandum is submitted to the COR for review and approval.

- ***Bumpers and Importation Sensitivity Analysis.*** For grants with potential impact to U.S. industries, an importation sensitivity analysis is prepared by the GRF. The sensitivity report is submitted to the COR for review and approval.

The GMT also prepares the Memorandum of Negotiations for individual applications endorsed to the Contracting Officer (CO) for approval. The memo documents the process of technical and financial reviews and negotiations undergone by each application. Changes from the original application are also recorded in the memoranda.

GRF, on the other hand, prepares an Action Memorandum to the CO requesting approval to award the grant and obligate funds for implementation, including method of payment. The draft Grant Agreement between the GRF and the proposed grantee is also attached to the Memo to the CO.

Once the Memo to the CO is approved, the Grant Agreement is signed by the GRF President and the authorized representative of the applicant. The Grant Agreement contains the final amount of grant award, the final technical application, branding and marking plan, and special award conditions and provisions for grant implementation.

Administering a Fixed Amount Award (FAA)

Selected applications were administered under a FAA instead of a regular grant award. Fixed amount (i.e., fixed price) awards are appropriate when the work that will be performed can be priced with a reasonable degree of certainty. FAA provides several advantages for both the Phil-Am Fund and the grantee. It focuses on outputs and results, limits risk for both parties, and requires only limited financial and management capacity.

Aside from the regular review and negotiation process for standard grants, administering FAAs requires an additional procedure which is defining milestones. Milestones are for a verifiable product, task, deliverable, or goal of the recipient. Milestones must be objectively verifiable with regards completion and quantity, and within the grantee's control to successfully complete, as designed. Milestones generally have three (3) parts: (1) a description of the product, task, deliverable, or goal to be accomplished; (2) a description of how the recipient will document the completion of the product, task, deliverable, or

goal; and (3) the amount that the Phil-Am Fund pays the recipient for the deliverable. Some milestones may also have dates indicating the expected or required completion date.

The negotiated schedule of milestones, deliverables, and payment tranches are included in the Grant Agreement.

Example:

Milestone	Deliverable/ Documentation	Expected Completion Date	Amount
1. Survey in X Province	Survey Report	MM/DD/YY	USD1000
2. Training in X Province	Training or Activity Report	MM/DD/YY	USD1000

The award document should contain additional detail on what is expected for each milestone, as well as the contents of the documentation.

Risk Assessment for FAA

The Phil-Am Fund uses the FAA Entity Eligibility Checklist to assess the NGO's capacity and capability to accomplish the milestones. If the assessment identifies weaknesses or deficiencies in the organization that call into question the ability of the organization to complete the proposed activity, the Phil-Am Fund, as part of the risk assessment required in ADS 303.3.25, documents the weaknesses and deficiencies and describes the mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate risk(s) of failure to the organization and the GRF. Mitigation measures include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) capacity-building technical assistance, including, but not limited to, financial management and procurement functions; or (2) increased monitoring visits to confirm adequate progress on milestones.

The checklist will be included in the Memo to the CO to be submitted prior to the awarding of grants.

3.9 Grant Awarding

Following the approval of the CO, grantees are invited to a signing ceremony where the GRF president and the authorized representative of the grantee organization signs the grant agreement. USAID representatives are also invited to witness the event.

The Grant Agreement

The Grant Agreement provides information on the effective grant period, budget, technical and cost proposal, deliverables, reporting requirements, termination conditions, and other special considerations of the application.

Each grant package includes the following:

a. Grant Agreement;
b. Final Technical and Cost Proposal;
c. Standard Provisions; and
d. Branding and Marking Plan.

3.10 Post-Award Orientation

After the signing of the grant, the GMT conducts a post-award orientation to help grantees understand the requirements of implementing a USAID grant. Representatives from the USAID may be invited as resource persons for special topics such as environmental compliance, fraud prevention, trafficking in persons, performance management, and monitoring and compliance. USAID representatives also discuss requirements for gender and development, disability inclusion, and branding and marking.

During the orientation, the GMT and monitoring officers provide guidance on the following: (1) securing their account in the Data Universal Numbering System of the USAID; (2) setting up the AuditPal accounting system and the financial management system for the project; and (3) drafting their Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Reporting Requirements are also discussed.

A grantee toolkit was also provided to the grantees. The toolkit contains templates and forms which the grantee may use as reference throughout grant implementation. The toolkit also provides guidelines in accomplishing reporting templates such as activity designs, activity orders, activity reports, cash advance requests, financial reports, and quarterly progress reports.

Post-award orientation was done through individual grantee visits during the 3rd and 4th cycle. This was a result of the quarterly visits of the monitoring officers and cost-cutting measures implemented by Phil-Am Fund. Individual grantee orientations provided a more focused learning experience for the grantees. It also allowed board members and staff of the organizations to participate in the orientation, acknowledging their various roles in the implementation of the grant and in addressing CAP recommendations.

3.11 Grants Implementation and Monitoring

Grantees have varying timeline for the implementation of their respective grants. The grantee toolkit helps grantees during project mobilization. It provides templates for opening bank accounts and guides grantees in setting up their financial management system for the project. The kit also contains guidelines for the preparation of the annual work and financial plan which triggers the release of the first tranche of grant funds.

During grants implementation, the grants management team provides day-to-day guidance to its grantees through the regional program and financial monitoring officers. The regional program officers (RPO) review activity designs of each grantee and provide guidance in

the implementation of project activities. The RPO also performs field validation ensuring project-funded activities are implemented. RPOs solicit stories of interest from the grantees, project beneficiaries and partners to showcase accomplishments on the ground.

Financial monitoring officers (FMOs), on the other hand, perform desk reviews of grantee financial transactions using the AuditPal accounting software. Observations or possible audit risks are communicated to the grantees for remedial measures. During quarterly visits, financial monitoring officers validate measures undertaken by grantees to address issues observed during desk reviews. Actions implemented to address recommendations in the CAP are also assessed to mitigate financial management risks.

During quarterly reporting, RPOs and FMOs review submissions of grantees to draft grantee progress of the grant making facility. RPOs also update indicator tracking tables of each grantee for the facility to timely update reports to USAID. RPOs, with the help of the FMOs, perform variance analyses to identify activities not implemented during the quarter. FMOs review financial reports or the grantees and endorses cash advance requests of grantees for the next quarter. Issues identified during implementation are identified in the individual report of grantees and tracked on a quarterly basis. Grantee reports form part of the quarterly progress report of Phil-Am Fund to USAID.

RPOs also provide technical support to the GMT during capacity building events of Phil-Am Fund partners. FMOs extend assistance to the facility in reviewing reimbursements of grantees during these events.

3.12 Capacity Building

Capacity building is embedded in the design of Phil-Am Fund. During the course of project implementation, the GMT supported its grantees in strengthening policies and procedures for organizational development and project management. GMT, through its RPOs and FMOs, assisted grantees in managing procurement, designing project activities, managing USAID visits, and enhancing financial management and reporting procedures.

Phil-Am Fund assigned RPOs for each grantee to serve as their direct contact for inquiries. RPOs also assist the grantees in preparing for USAID visits, like drafting itineraries and scene setters. The RPOs also review grantee designs of project activities to make sure that project activities are implemented according to its purpose in the original grant. During the review, RPOs also determine types of assistance needed by the grantees in implementing activities.

Once determined, the GMT deploys specific personnel to assist the grantees based on their needs. For example, the Communications Officer of Phil-Am Fund provided coaching assistance to grantees needing help in writing stories of interest. The Knowledge Manager of the GRF assists grantees in branding and marking knowledge products, IEC materials and grantee-sponsored events. This ensures that the development assistance of USAID is properly communicated to its intended audience. The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

was also sent to grantees needing assistance in improving reporting procedures, data analysis and in ensuring integrity of data or information reported to the facility.

FMOs on the other hand, help grantees address issues on financial management to prevent audit findings during recipient contracted audit. FMOs also share templates and forms to help grantees standardize financial and administrative reporting procedures of the grantees. During quarterly visits, FMOs review actions taken by the grantees in addressing open recommendations in their respective corrective action plan. This actions are reported to the GMT for timely feedback.

FMOs also identify assistance needed by the grantees. In most cases, grantees require help from the GMT in the procurement of goods and services, making sure that their procurement process comply with USAID requirements.

The grants management team also designs specific capacity-building session on identified common weaknesses of the grantees. Events of the facility also served as a venue to share special topics of interest for the grantees. Some of the capacity building programs implemented by the facility are as follows:

1. **Grants Programming Workshop** – GMT organized workshops to help grantees enhance their technical and cost proposals, noting difficulties of organizations to fill in the templates in the solicitation guidelines. During the workshop, grantees are also provided guidance on USAID standard indicators, which they will be required to report on. FMOs and finance officers of GRF assist grantees in detailing their cost proposal and in preparing budget notes. At the end of the activity, participants submitted their final technical and cost application which served as the basis of their grant agreements.

2. **Writing Project Reports with a Results-based Lens** – One of the difficulties encountered by Phil-Am Fund grantees is in writing reports. Grantee reports focus more on activity-based reporting rather than the results of their interventions. Basics on results-based management were shared with the grantees, which they can use as a 'lens' in reviewing their reports. At the end of the activity, the participants themselves observed changes in their own style of writing.

3. **Theory of Change for Biodiversity Grantees** – Representatives from the Forest and Biodiversity Bureau of USAID visited biodiversity grantees of Phil-Am Fund to share the use of the Theory of Change (TOC) framework in monitoring environmental conservation programs. They also required the grantees to submit individual TOC frameworks for their grants. GMT organized workshops to simplify the model. Each grantee was also assisted in developing their own framework. Participants recognized the importance of the framework in setting a common vision or objective for the total program. The framework provides directions and illustrates linkages of their activities to the project outcomes.

4. **Stocktaking Workshop for Anti-Trafficking Grantees** – Grantees encountered difficulties in reporting on USAID standard indicators for counter trafficking in persons due to perceived overlaps in the indicator definition. GMT organized a stocktaking workshop to understand the various intervention of each grantee and level off on the definition of each indicator. At the end of the workshop, each grantee identified the indicator/s which better fit their project and to which they can report on.

5. **Peer-to-Peer Exchange Visit to Cambodia** – Grantees working on anti-trafficking were sponsored on an exchange visit to Cambodia, where they visited other non-state organizations working on countering trafficking. The learning visit aided grantees identify good practices or innovative interventions which they can implement in the country.

6. **Grantee Summit** – The grantee summit served as a venue to showcase accomplishments of the grantees in implementing their individual grants. It also served as a learning venue where they can source ideas of good practices and lessons for future programs of their organization. To cap the event, special lecture sessions on monitoring and evaluation, taxation for non-state organizations, corporate governance, financial management and communications were organized by the GMT. The topics were selected based on the choices of the grantees.

7. **Sustainability Forum** – Grantees have planned out the sustainability and phase out plans for their project interventions, however, left organizational sustainability out of the picture. Non-government organizations in the country are dependent on external funding for their sustainability. The workshop helped grantees identify other sources of funding to fund their advocacies. Tips in pitching project proposals and business propositions were also shared with the participants.

8. **Learning Session on Project Proposal Development and NUPAS** – during the sustainability forum, the grantees identified the need for a training on writing project proposals. GMT invited senior officials of USAID to share some tips and techniques that will guide participants in writing their own proposals. Coming from a donor's perspective, they shared ideas how donors perform proposal reviews. Finance officers of USAID also shared guidelines in preparing cost proposals. SGV was also invited to discuss NUPAS process and guidelines.

9. **Closeout Workshops** – GMT developed templates and checklists to assist grantees in undergoing closeout of their USAID grants. The templates were shared during a workshop, helping grantees understand federal regulations governing grants and grant termination. The team also held coaching sessions with individual grantees to assist them in filling out the templates and determine closeout activities for their respective grants.

3.13 Grants Closeout

Grants or award closeout refers to the culmination of an award. Closeout procedures are guided by USAID policies ADS 302 and 303. Since most of the grantees under Phil-Am Fund are first-time awardees of USAID grants, GMT devised simplified procedures and templates for the grantees to comply with USAID regulations while undergoing closeout. GMT also conducted closeout visits to assist grantees in managing closeout activities. GRF also created a compliance team to ensure all documentary requirements of award closeout are complete prior to the release of closeout certificates.

The grants manager, accompanied by the RPOs and FMOs, visit the grantees within 90 days before closeout. The visit aims to review their respective closeout plans and assist them in managing open findings to facilitate grantee closeout. The RPOs ensure that all activity documentations are on file and all contractual deliverables were submitted to the GMT. FMOs assess if all financial monitoring observations were addressed by the grantee. The GMT also deployed the junior grants officer to assist grantees perform final inventory checks and prepare commodity disposition plans.

Following the endorsement of the GMT, the compliance team ensures completeness of closeout documents by reviewing GMT submission based on the checklist. The team also approves the commodity disposition plan of grantees upon review. Once complete, the team provides grantees with electronic copies of their closeout documents and issues the clearance certificate, signifying the termination of their grant with Phil-Am Fund.

4.0 Phil-Am Fund Milestones

This chapter outlines the significant events and accomplishments of the grants making facility of Phil-Am Fund.

4.1 Philippine-American Fund Award

On Aug. 5, 2013, USAID awarded Gerry Roxas Foundation a five-year contract for the management of the Philippine-American Fund project. The project seeks to address national development challenges by supporting innovative community- and local- based solutions in the fields of anti-trafficking, biodiversity conservation, economic growth, education and governance. The Phil-Am Fund contract is the single largest award given to a local organization, placing GRF in the Top 20 local organizations that received funding from USAID in 2014.

4.2 First Grants Solicitation

GRF launched Phil-Am Fund and issued the first grants solicitation on Sep. 30, 2013 at Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila. Regional pre-bid conferences were also conducted in Visayas and Mindanao to broaden the scope of the solicitations. A total of 295 non-state institutions participated in the solicitation conferences. During the 1st cycle, Phil-Am Fund only required the submission of concept papers instead of full blown proposals to provide better opportunities for local organizations to pitch their ideas. The response from the civil society sector was overwhelming, Phil-Am Fund received a total of 487 applications for the 1st cycle.

4.3 Special Grants Programming for Haiyan-affected Areas

Upon the request of USAID, the Team also responded to the emergency situation in the Visayas where Typhoon Yolanda left a significant number of children, young adults, both men and women, prone to trafficking in persons due to loss of family members or loss of homes and livelihood. On Dec. 6, 2013, the Phil-Am Fund Team released solicitation guidelines inviting non-state applicants to submit full proposals to address the problem of trafficking in persons in Leyte. The team invited applicants who submitted concept papers on anti-trafficking in persons (ATIP) targeting Yolanda-hit areas.

A workshop was conducted on Dec. 11-13, 2013 for applicants who responded to the solicitation call. USAID and representatives from the International Justice Mission, UNICEF, Plan International, DSWD Region 7, and DOJ-IACAT Region 7 were invited to provide the context and identify gaps in service delivery as basis for project proposal submission.

4.4 Awarding of Grants for Cycle 1

In June 2014, Phil-Am Fund awarded its first 12 grantees. Then U.S. Ambassador Philip Goldberg and Former Mission Director Gloria Steele led the awarding of the grants. GRF President Judy A. Roxas congratulated the organizations for making it to the top 12 out of the 487 applications that Phil-Am Fund received. For its 1st cycle grantees, two are in anti-trafficking, two in biodiversity conservation, three in economic growth and five are in governance.

4.5 Development of the AuditPal Accounting Software

In September 2014, USAID approved the expansion of GRF's AuditPal accounting software for its grantees. Desktop sets were also provided to each grantee for the use of the AuditPal.

The AuditPal Accounting System is a customized accounting software to facilitate the tracking of financial transactions and the generation of financial reports at the Phil-Am Fund facility level and grantee level. The system enables the GRF to track and access the financial transactions of the facility and the grantees online and in real time during the life of the project.

As a sustainability mechanism and as part of the capacity-building intervention of the Phil-Am Fund, grantees were trained to manage the system, including its expansion to other databases even after the Phil-Am Fund project implementation.

The software features include the following:

- AuditPal is based on the traditional process of accounting procedures which makes it a user-friendly system. It generates real-time reports and is equipped with audit-trail features. Users can drill down from a summarized table, such as Trial Balance, and see underlying source documents. This can be used by the auditors in reviewing the data gathered by the system.

- AuditPal Expenditure Reports are tailored after the requirements of the USAID. From the encoding of transactions, necessary information are gathered and structured to be presented as reports that match USAID requirements.

- Other features:

    - ✓ ***Network-Ready and Multi-User Environment***. May work as a stand-alone program, as well as in a network environment, accessed by several users simultaneously.
    - ✓ ***Remote Network Ready.*** May work in a remote location using a stable internet connection.

- ✓ ***User-Definable Chart of Accounts***. Users can define their own Chart of Accounts structure. There are four levels which represents the accounts hierarchy.
- ✓ ***User-Definable Subsidiary Ledgers***. Users can define Subsidiary Ledger groupings on the fly. Any accounts can be set up to handle a Subsidiary Ledger. There are no limits in the number of Subsidiary Ledger Accounts.
- ✓ ***User-Definable Budget Line Items***. Users can define its budget line items, which is used to compare the budget to the actual expenditures.
- ✓ ***User-Definable Financial Projection Templates***. Users can set up templates for financial projections for use in its financial monitoring.
- ✓ ***Security and Audit Trails***. Built-in security system that categorizes user accessibility. An audit trail feature, pinpoints who created, modified, and when a transaction is made.

4.6 Awarding of Grants Under the Development Grants Program

Two applications approved in Cycle 1 but failed to obtain grants due to limited funding were assisted by GMT to qualify for the USAID Development Grants Program (DGP) in Washington D.C. On Nov. 7, 2014, the DGP approved funding for the grants to Pagtambayayong – A Mutual Aid Foundation, Inc. and PinoyME Foundation.

4.7 Second Grants Solicitation

Phil-Am Fund issued its 2nd grants solicitation on Nov. 24, 2014. The solicitation covers five thematic categories: anti-trafficking, biodiversity conservation, economic growth, education, and governance. The concept paper submission stage was omitted to shorten the review process and to make it possible for the facility to award three-year grants.

Regional pre-bid conferences were again conducted to solicit applications across the country. A total of 279 institutions were represented in the solicitation conferences. In this cycle, Phil-Am Fund received a total of 96 full applications.

4.8 Awarding of Grants for Cycle 2

On Aug. 6, 2015, 12 out of 96 applications were approved by the GRB for awarding. USAID Mission Director Gloria Steele congratulated the new partners of Phil-Am Fund and witnessed the signing of the grants. For its 2nd cycle grantees, two are in anti-trafficking, five in biodiversity conservation, one in economic growth and four in education. Unfortunately, months after the award Filamer withdrew from the project, resulting in the pre-termination of their grant.

4.9 Third Grants Solicitation

Phil-Am Fund opened its 3rd cycle of grants solicitation on Aug. 27, 2015. Unfortunately, funds for education and governance categories were no longer available, hence only applications for the remaining three categories were processed. The 3rd solicitation

guidelines included a second deadline (4th grants solicitation), in case funding is still available for the remaining categories. Phil-Am Fund conducted regional pre-bid conferences reaching 263 organizations nationwide. For this cycle, a total of 64 full proposals were received by Phil-Am Fund.

4.10 NUPAS Midline Re-assessment

From April to July 2016, SGV assisted the grants management team in performing re-assessments to grantees with scores below the adequate level during their initial NUPAS.

4.11 Awarding of Grants for Cycle 3

On Jul. 1, 2016, Phil-Am Fund awarded seven grants for two anti-trafficking and five biodiversity conservation grantees. The grant for the Cagayan de Oro City Chamber of Commerce and Industry was put on hold. Phil-Am Fund is still waiting funds for the economic growth category before awarding the grant.

4.12 Awarding of the last Grants under Phil-Am Fund

Proposals for the 4th cycle was reviewed starting April 2016, while waiting for USAID's approval of the 3rd cycle grants. A total of 53 applications were reviewed for the last solicitation cycle. This brings the total number of applications received by Phil-Am Fund to 700, in all of its solicitation cycles. On Oct. 15, 2016, Phil-Am Fund awarded three biodiversity grants to the Institute of Social Order, Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, and the C3 Philippines. In January, Phil-Am Fund also issued the award to the Cagayan de Oro City Chamber of commerce for their economic growth grant. Completing the grant solicitation of Phil-Am Fund, an award was issued to the Surigao Economic Development and Microfinance Foundation on Jun. 1, 2017. This brings the total number of awards made under Phil-Am Fund to 38 grantees. Information sheets about the grants supported under Phil-Am Fund is attached as ***Annex A***.

4.13 Expansion Grants

In April 2017, USAID approved the issuance of expansion grants to four anti-trafficking and eight biodiversity grantees. USAID also approved the issuance of expansion grants to two economic growth grants in 2018.

4.14 Anti-trafficking Consortium in Cebu

Phil-Am Fund supported the formation of the Advocates for the Protection and Prevention of Abuse and Exploitation of Children (APPROACH) Consortium in Cebu. The consortium seeks to consolidate and harmonize efforts in countering trafficking in persons in the Visayas region. Composed of its three Cebu-based grantees, Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc., Children's Legal Bureau (CLB) and Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors (FORGE),

the organizations aim to avoid duplications in service delivery and create a holistic network to prevent trafficking, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators of trafficking.

4.15 Launch of Two Shelters for Trafficking Victims

On Nov. 7, 2017, Phil-Am Fund supported the launch of People's Recovery Empowerment Development Assistance Foundation's (PREDA) Victoria Children's Home in Subic, Olongapo for girl-victims of trafficking in persons. The shelter can accommodate 80 children and offers therapeutic healing services for victims. On Dec. 1, 2017, the FORGE launched its shelter in Cebu for boy victims of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking. The shelter addresses the lack of available transition homes for male victims of trafficking in the country.

4.16 End Line NUPAS Review

In March 2018, GRF initiated an end line review of the NUPAS for selected grantees. The end line assessment seeks to validate organizational competencies developed by the grantees over the life of their grant. While the initial NUPAS assessment was geared towards assessing the capacity of grantees to manage fiduciary risks, the final assessment looked into the improvements made by the grantees in their management and internal control systems. The assessment also identified opportunities to improve their organizational structure, policies, and procedures.

Through the assessment, the team observed significant improvements in operations manuals and strengthened internal controls as a result of the coaching and mentoring sessions with the GMT. Specifically, grantees incorporated additional policies and procedures on financial management, procurement, and human resource management. Grantees also acknowledged the importance of the templates and forms provided by the Phil-Am Fund in enabling them to comply with government regulatory requirements. Most of the grantees recognized the value of AuditPal in improving their financial management practices, especially in accessing future funding opportunities from USAID. Some (10) of the grantees, even, opted to use the accounting software beyond their project with Phil-Am Fund.

The engagement of the board members during the reassessment enabled the grantees to accelerate policy approval for updating their manuals and address outstanding organizational concerns on sustainability.

4.17 Grantee Summit

Phil-Am Fund conducted the Grantee Summit on Jun. 28-29, 2018 at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila. More than 250 representatives from grantee organizations, partner local government units, partner communities participated in the event. With the theme "Showcasing Gains and Creating Opportunities for Partnership", the event featured good practices of the grantees in five parallel thematic sessions. Experts from government and

the development sector were also invited to share insights and lessons gleaned from the grantee presentations. Accomplishments of the grant facility and its grantees in the different thematic categories were capsulated in audio video presentations and photo exhibits displayed throughout the event.

Several capacity-building sessions on various aspects of project management were also conducted to address organizational gaps identified in their NUPAS report. These include:

- Accessing Funds and Resource Mobilization
- Managing Finances for Non-accountants
- Understanding Monitoring and Evaluation
- Conducting Strategic Planning Sessions
- Understanding CSO Good Governance
- Using Social Media in Development Communications
- Writing Stories of Interest and Photography
- Managing Audit
- Customizing AuditPal Accounting Software

The grantee summit culminated in a networking dinner event, graced by the U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines H.E. Sung Y. Kim, to give grantees opportunities to meet other grantees and explore partnerships. In his speech, the U.S. Ambassador congratulated the grantees for completing their programs. *"I would like to congratulate all grantees and all those involved in the implementation of the Philippine-American Fund. I encourage you and your partners to continue the good work that you're doing in your communities… toward shaping a brighter future for the Filipino people",* he said.

4.18 Compendium of Stories

Phil-Am Fund distributed a compendium featuring the various stories of individuals, whose lives were touched by the project. Some highlights of the compendium include the story of a 10-year-old girl from Maguindanao who never attended formal school yet now able to read and write. Of a farmer in Bukidnon, who can now safely pay for the tuition of his children due to his duck-related enterprise. An avid computer gamer in South Cotabato learning the importance of securing his vote for improved governance. A trafficking survivor now a registered social worker, working to protect children from experiencing abuse and exploitation. These are among the 60 stories featured in the compendium. Attached as ***Annex B*** is the Compendium of Stories.

4.19 Development 'Pathways'

Phil-Am Fund worked with the University of the Philippines Public Administration Research and Extension Foundation (UPPAF) to identify 'models' or interventions in each thematic category that were critical in achieving the outcomes in the five thematic categories. Attached as ***Annex C*** is the study on the "The Roads Taken: CSO Initiatives Towards Inclusive and Sustainable Development"

Sixteen (16) interventions were identified in the study as pathways to development. Each pathway is discussed within two pages. Each write-up gives the reader an appreciation of the development problem or the challenge that was addressed, the critical program intervention implemented, and the results arising from the experience. Lessons drawn from the field and those that are deemed relevant for future grant programming, or of similar development assistance programs are also identified.

By sharing these interventions as possible development pathways, Phil-Am Fund hopes that the ideas and interventions could help improve the designs and programming of future grant facilities and enable other state and non-state stakeholders to consider them in their own programs and activities.

4.20 The Grants Manual

The grants manual of Phil-Am Fund outlines the entire process of grants making from solicitation to closeout, the persons responsible and the management structure of the facility. Initially considered as a 'living document', the manual documents the entire experience of Phil-Am Fund in its grant making activities into policies and procedures for the grant facility. The manual can be used to help mobilize future grant making programs of USAID or other projects with grant making components.

5.0 Evaluation Results

5.1 Relevance

"Our goal is to use assistance and development to help nations realize their potential, develop their own ability to govern, and become our economic partners[2]." *- Secretary of State John Kerry*

"Each of USAID's programs should look forward to the day when foreign assistance is no longer necessary. Each country must lead its development journey by financing and implementing solutions to its development challenges[3]." *- USAID Administrator Mark Green, August 2017*

2011-2016 Philippine Development Plan Major Guide Posts:

1. Anti-Corruption/Transparent, Accountable and Participatory Governance
2. Poverty Reduction and Empowerment of the Poor and Vulnerable
3. Rapid, Sustained, and Inclusive Economic Growth
4. Just and Lasting Peace and Rule of Law
5. Integrity of the Environment, Climate Change Adaptation, and Mitigation[4]

Philippine-American Fund was a response to the challenges of its times in the areas of innovation, local solutions, and inclusive development. It was conceptualized and born during the implementation of the USAID Forward, a set of fundamental reforms intended to promote sustainable development through high-impact partnerships. Basically, the reform lays down the foundation to "support institutions, private sector partners and civil society organizations that serve as engines of growth and progress for their nations."[5] USAID brought forward the need to develop the capabilities of its partners to direct and achieve their own long-term and sustainable development.

Phil-Am Fund was a product of the Washington initiative called Partnership for Growth (PFG). PFG is a partnership between the United States and a select group of countries, including the Philippines, to accelerate and sustain broad-based economic growth by putting into practice the principles of then President Barack Obama's September 2010 Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development. One of PFG's signature objectives is to engage governments, the private sector and civil society with a broad range of tools to unlock new sources of investment, including domestic resources and foreign direct investment. By improving coordination, leveraging private investment, and focusing political commitment throughout both governments, the Partnership for Growth enables partners to achieve better development results.

[2] USAID Forward Progress Report 2013
[3] https://selfreliance.usaid.gov/
[4] Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016.
[5] USAID Forward PROGRESS REPORT 2013. P.6.

This context is where Phil-Am Fund finds its relevance and value. Embedded in its design are strategies seeking innovative local solutions, improving capacities of local CSOs, and laying down the building blocks for the long-term sustainability of not only development interventions but also its grantees.

5.2 Value for Money

> ***"The biggest benefit that we got from that is, in the previous way of doing things, there is no way that we can have 37 grants in five years. There would have been no people to manage it – the management burden of procuring 37 grants would have been very, very challenging. Phil-Am Fund made that happen."***
>
> *- Gerry Porta, Phil-Am Fund COR from 2014 to 2017*

In his speech during the closeout program of Phil-Am Fund, Mr. Jeffrey Lehrer, the director of USAID Office of Economic Development and Governance, emphasized that the project fulfilled the vision of a grant facility that enables a wide range of non-state institutions to identify and design local- and community- based projects that promote inclusive and broad-based development. He affirmed that in supporting Phil-Am Fund, the U.S. government acknowledges the fundamental role of civil society organizations (CSO) in achieving the country's development objectives. The engagement of CSOs recognize the importance of engaging local citizens who understand the local context and are best positioned to help build a better life for all Filipinos.

After five years of implementation and 37 grants completed, Phil-Am Fund demonstrated how its grant-making approach could be a potential model in engaging civil society to advance inclusive and broad-based development:

- Wholesale vs. retail approach. Phil-Am Fund allowed USAID to channel its grants resources. The award is a Federal Contract where GRF acts not as a Grantee but as a service provider. GRF became an "extension" of USAID and was responsible for implementing USAID policies and procedures in facilitating grant awards. While USAID control the direction and the whole process of the grant-making activity, through Phil-Am Fund, USAID was able to deal directly with local CSOs and communities, allowing for more meaningful engagement and significant contributions to local development. It provided deeper interaction allowing for quicker feedback and adjustment if necessary.

  Grant-making also allowed USAID to mobilize myriad forms of resources from the grantees, local communities, and other support organizations located where the grants were implemented. By design, Phil-Am Fund did not require cost share nor counterpart funds, but grantees committed their own or their stakeholders' resources for the completion of the grants. Leveraged resources came from diverse sources as diverse as the range of grantees and their thematic concerns. Implemented locally, the grant awards promoted a deeper sense of ownership from the communities, which, in turn, increased the chances of sustainability for most, if not all, the projects.

The retail approach allowed Phil-Am Fund to support several organizations under specific categories or in some cases, in particular locations. In anti-trafficking, for example, several CSOs working on various spectrums of victim support services were supported by Phil-Am Fund. Realizing the need to synergize and harmonize their efforts, these CSOs built a consortium to stop trafficking in the Visayas region. With different expertise, resources, networks, and priorities, these CSOs came together and established a secure network that effectively expanded the coverage of the ATIP work.

- The facility also addressed the concern on the absorptive capacity of local CSOs. Phil-Am Fund enabled USAID to provide grants to relatively small CSOs. The Facility utilized various grant instruments, like regular grants and Fixed Amount Awards (FAA), employing the best modality depending on the nature of activities and the capacity of potential grantees.

  Capacity building initiatives were embedded in the grant which strengthened the grantees' capacity to manage the funds. Grants were also released in tranches and each tranche became an opportunity for grantees to learn aspects of funds management, activity implementation, and monitoring and reporting. Phil-Am Fund grants became an "on-the-job training." It enabled grantees to pursue their advocacy while learning how to manage the resources that fuel that reason. The results of the pre-award survey, NUPAS, and the regular quarterly monitoring served as methods to determine the capacity building needs of its grantees.

  Phil-Am Fund amplified the impact of USAID's grants resources. The grants allowed more CSOs and even local communities to learn and benefit from the grants. All sample grantees during the NUPAS assessment, whether standard of fixed amount grants, improved their financial management and internal controls. Community-based organizations like the NATRIPAL, C3MC, TAMACO, among others, have significantly enhanced their capacities to manage their organizations and its resources. Beyond NUPAS, NATRIPAL initially joined budget planning sessions of Phil-Am Fund using columnar pads and pencils. TAMACO was producing agricultural-grade salts, and C3MC were fisher folks wanting to improve their situation. At the end of the project, NATRIPAL now does its financial reports and transactions through the AuditPal accounting software. TAMACO, now, operates the first commercial salt processing plant in the country. And, C3MC was awarded another grant by USAID.

- Following the diversity of grantees, Phil-Am Fund provided a venue for synergy-building among the various sectors under the Facility. During learning events, knowledge shared across the hall benefited all grantees of Phil-Am Fund. The economic growth sector provided leads and ideas to grantees in biodiversity and ATIP, and breakthrough technologies and practices from education and governance served as references for other grantees as well. The meeting of people from previously remote sectors planted the impetus for cooperation and a more holistic approach to development. Phil-Am Fund did not only allow USAID to have a more profound

interaction with a broader public. It opened up windows to develop personal connections that could allow constructive criticisms or feedbacks which eventually could input into USAID's development agenda or grant-making strategies.

While Phil-Am Fund completed its implementation in 2018, its relevance lives on for USAID. In the same speech, Mr. Lehrer informed the public that USAID is undergoing a major transformation under the theme "Journey to Self-Reliance." He said, *"Experiences from the field show that this journey begins at the community level. Through initiatives that build and strengthen the capacity of local organizations, such as the Phil-Am Fund, USAID and its partners are paving the way for self-reliance."* The experience of the grantees can affirm his speech. Grants from the Phil-Am Fund enabled the grantees to become catalysts of sustainable development solutions in their communities.

5.3 Capacity Building and Local Solutions

5.3.1 Gerry Roxas Foundation, Inc.

Phil-Am Fund's relevance for GRF as its Contractor lies in its journey for continuing growth and development. In implementing and managing Phil-Am Fund, GRF expanded its existing capacities and competitive advantages:

- ***Donor Relations.*** Relating with USAID entailed building a positive working relationship not only with its Mission Director, Contracting Officer, and the Contracting Officer's Representative or COR. It also required coordinating for technical guidance and support with the various office heads and different technical experts from Phil-Am Fund's five major areas of sub-granting – governance, economic development, biodiversity, anti-trafficking of persons, and basic education. Processing and monitoring grants under the five different categories required constant and timely coordination with the various offices. It was a must that grants approved under each category has clearly defined value and contribution to the goals and objectives of each office. To achieve this, GRF sustained an open line of communication with USAID personnel, effectively and efficiently sharing information that is relevant to its grants and grant-making activities. In providing hand-holding support to its grantees, GRF engaged different experts from USAID for technical inputs and compliance. From its startup period until its completion, GRF also engaged USAID's key personnel and experts on Gender, Branding and Marking, Environmental Compliance, Financial Management, and others, to make sure that the facility lives up to its reason for being. As the Contractor, GRF was able to facilitate meaningful and high-quality interactions not only between GRF and USAID but more so between USAID and the grantees—promoting donor recognition and acknowledgment at all levels of Phil-Am Fund engagement. Coming out from Phil-Am Fund experience, GRF is now better equipped in developing and managing the relationship with its current and potential donors.

- ***Partnership Building.*** Other than with USAID, GRF improved its approach to developing partnership and has greatly expanded its network within the CSO community. Under Phil-Am Fund, GRF worked with SGV to help the grantees improve its organizational policies. While the grantees were reluctant, at first, they realized the importance of having 'corporate-like' policies to improve their performance as an organization. The due diligence process during project reviews and the continued guidance and technical support did not just help improve grantee performance but stimulated trust and confidence for better project implementation.

"With the FMO/RPO who regularly visited us help us a lot in terms of what to do/how to do the better way to implement the project. They served as monitoring team as well as our guide during the implementation without the FMO who really helped us to guide us on better spending & prepared proper documentation for all expenses, we may end up into disallowances."

- Mabuwaya Foundation, Biodiversity Grantee

- ***Enhancing Organizational Management Capacity.*** Implementing and managing a significant project like the Phil-Am Fund compelled the organization to expand its capacity in various areas of management tools and skills. As mentioned above, the grant funds came from five different categories and should be disbursed and reported as such. In its first quarterly report of August to September 2013, GRF acknowledged that the "color of money" posed challenges in the allocation of funds for grants and its required supporting activities like capacity-building support. It also necessitated the upgrading of the computerized systems of GRF to ensure that its financial management system is adequate for tracking disbursements and expenses according to the five categories under the Fund.

  Other than its financial management system, the Foundation also expanded its knowledge management system to support Phil-Am Fund documentation, branding, marking, reporting and communications. GRF's knowledge hub now has a method of organizing knowledge products for easy access of its partners and stakeholders. GRF also devised knowledge management systems to transform lessons learned from projects into knowledge products, which it can share with the public. Among the knowledge products of Phil-Am Fund are:

  1. Manuals for grant-making activities
  2. 'Models' of development interventions
  3. Compendium of people-level stories
  4. Grantee information sheets
  5. Audio-visual presentation of thematic accomplishments
  6. Philippine-American Fund newsletters

  Phil-Am Fund also opened opportunities for GRF staff to build their competencies. Most of the staff engaged in the project learned about the

intricacies of grant making work making them viable candidates for other grant making projects of USAID and other funding agencies. USAID also sponsored the training of two organic personnel from GRF on the systems thinking course in 2019.

- ***Opportunity for Expanded Competitive Advantage.*** Implementing Phil-Am Fund opened significant learning opportunities for GRF. The facility acquainted GRF into the challenges, dynamics, and opportunities in working in the areas of governance, education, anti-trafficking, economic growth, and biodiversity. Presented with significant knowledge and resources in each of the categories, GRF can choose to take advantage of these opportunities and deliberately develop internal competencies along those themes. Developing internal competencies in those five categories will expand opportunities for GRF in mobilizing resources, including potential grants from USAID and other donors. Ms. Teresa Robielos of USAID mentioned that the Agency is currently considering implementing a Local Works initiative—a funding mechanism similar to Phil-Am but will focus on a single thematic category. In ATIP for example, the possibility is awarding a grant to an organization with internal competency in doing anti-trafficking work which in turn will also do sub-grants using the Phil-Am Fund approach.

5.3.2 Capacity Building and Phil-Am Fund Grantees

"Through the project, local policies were passed, encouraged participation of concern Government agencies & offices such as DepEd, Barangay Councils & other stakeholders which have vowed to continue and sustain the program. Essentially on increases on the awareness among students who are the primary beneficiaries & was evident by TIP cases has been reported." - Balaod Mindanao, ATIP Grantee

"NUPAS was a great and humbling experience for PPOCFI. It was at times hard to swallow the glaring truth about our performance institutionally, but it was perfect timing – a much-awaited opportunity. We sometimes wished we were also closely mentored financially and organizationally so we can even improve more. Our NUPAS score of open issues was staggering. We intend to bring it lower and to zero open issues by the end of 2019." - Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Biodiversity Grantee

The project's relevance to its grantees revolved on capacity needs of CSOs to implement a USAID grant award. Embedded in Phil-Am Fund's grant-making process—and part of GRF contractual obligation—was the strategy to address any gaps or weakness on the part of the grantees through a tailored-fit capacity-building program. Phil-Am Fund, therefore, did not only support actions to address local challenges; it also ensured that the grantee had the necessary skills and systems to support their work.

- ***Capacity-Building.*** The NUPAS process allowed the Phil-Am Fund to determine the presence of structured, auditable systems and procedures of accounting and activity management capacity of each of the grantees. Where gaps and weaknesses were observed, targeted capacity-building support was provided. All Phil-Am Fund grantees benefited from the NUPAS and the consequent capacity-building programs that GRF implemented through the Facility. Grantees agreed that passing and improving their scores in NUPAS lent them credibility and confidence to manage the award. It provided them the roadmap to professionalize their ranks further and improve the way they operate. Moreover, the USAID or Phil-Am Fund grant-award became a testimony to the organization's integrity and capacity to manage projects, enhanced their track record, and established their credibility.

- ***Local Solutions.*** For all the grantees, the award was an opportunity to contribute to addressing local challenges in their chosen fields. They breathed life into what the U.S. government acknowledges as the fundamental role of civil society organizations in achieving the country's development objectives and for making growth more broad-based and inclusive. Most of the Phil-Am Fund grantees were area- and community- based, experiencing and responding to the challenges of economic growth, trafficking-in-persons, declining environmental health, inadequate educational services, and poor governance in their communities. The grant allowed these local solutions to be implemented—changing both organizations and individuals as well, for the better.

  Overall, Phil-Am Fund did not only respond to the agency's development goals, objectives, and strategies. It also proved to be pertinent for the Foundation, as GRF, in its journey to build a "bigger and better GRF." It was also relevant to the local CSOs whose set of actions funded under the Facility was found responsive to challenges and problems that beset their localities. The grants also demonstrated impact on the lives of the local communities. The project affirmed the notion that the journey to sustainable development starts at the community and the CSOs, being knowledgeable of the local context, are in the best position to become partners in development. In the end, the project came up with new methods and ideas for future development programs. New skills were acquired. New friendships were built. But most of all, the project ended with individuals gaining newfound confidence and competence to participate in development activities.

5.4 Impact

5.4.1 Contractual Obligations

The Gerry Roxas Foundation's (GRF) contract with USAID for the Phil-Am Fund encompassed three broad areas of activities:

1. Establish a grant-making facility to provide funding to qualifying recipients (here, referred to as grantees) through a local, competitive process

To fulfill this primary contractual obligation, GRF designed and implemented a grant-making facility that ensured inclusivity and supported innovations. This grant mechanism is evidenced by the facility's Grants Manual, Performance Monitoring and Management Plan (PMP) and other supporting documents like Grantee Toolkit, Environmental Compliance Manual, Gender and Development Guidelines, and Branding, Marking and Outreach Plan.

Phil-Am Fund's Grant Manual submitted to USAID in September 2013 was reviewed with the Contracting Officer and the COR. Considering the dynamism of the CSO sector and the changing development context in the Philippines, it was agreed to be a "living document." It will integrate new guidelines and instructions learned through evolving processes that the facility went through. It attempted to find a balance between inclusivity and prudence, innovation and risks, flexibility and adherence to the standard provisions of USAID. The Grants Manual contained processes, roles and responsibilities and other support mechanisms along the grant-making process of the facility. Phil-Am Fund submitted its revised manual on September 2016, which indicated the process undergone for each solicitation cycle.

Another supporting document for the grant-making facility is the Performance Management Plan or the PMP. The PMP involves the collection and analysis of performance information to track project progress against planned results, gathering lessons learned to aid in decision-making, and communicating results, both achieved and not, and the reasons thereof. Desired outputs, intermediate results, outcomes, and impact of individual projects also inputted into the PMP. Phil-Am Fund's PMP followed a two-track framework to help GRF establish a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the activities and results at the facility and grant levels. Track 1 adopted a log frame on the activities of the GRF at the facility level while Track 2 described the results frameworks of Phil-Am Fund projects and activities at the grantee level. The PMP also provided an avenue for the grantees to identify their indicators of success against which their performance was monitored and evaluated.

To issue the calls, GRF submitted for USAID approval a solicitation guideline explicitly mentioning that grant "applications will be accepted from Philippine private, for-profit and non-profit organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) including private universities, research organizations, professional associations, faith-based and community organizations and other similar special interest associations." Recognizing however that Phil-Am Fund has to promote responsible grant awards management, the only limiting factors for interested applicants were the following conditions:

- At least three (3) years of continuous operation as a legal entity
- With full-time project, administrative, and financial personnel

- With at least two (2) recent audited financial statements with accompanying management letters

To ensure the widest reach, inclusivity, and competitiveness, Phil-Am Fund conducted nine solicitation conferences. The conferences were strategically held in Manila, Cebu, and Davao to reach as much CSOs in all major regions of the country. The calls were also published in major newspapers with nationwide circulation and was published online in the websites of GRF and USAID. Applications came from almost all regions of the country and CSOs ranging from business entities, farmers and fisher folk organizations, service NGOs, and especially the indigenous communities. The diversity of applicants regarding geographic location and sectoral priorities underscores the efforts exerted by GRF to make the grants highly inclusive and competitive.

Of the 147 validated and reviewed by the GMT, 37 were finally approved. Even the approved projects adequately represent the major islands and sectors of the country.

Other Deliverables

To sum up, aside from delivering 37 grant awards, GRF submitted the following documents to USAID in compliance with its contractual obligations:

- Annual Work Plans
- Performance Management Plan
- Grants Manual
- Environmental Compliance Manual
- Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plans
- Bumpers Study of selected economic grant proposals
- Grantee Toolkit
- Branding and Marking Plan
- Quarterly or Periodic Progress Reports
- Financial Reports
- Commodity Inventory and Tracking Reports
- Final Performance and Financial Report
- Closeout

2. Integrate the overall strategy, allocations, and management of USAID grant-making activities in the areas of governance, economic growth, counter-trafficking in persons, education, and biodiversity

Phil-Am Fund's grants manual contained the detailed processes followed in the grant-making process. While the manual benefitted from inputs from USAID, SGV, and GRF, the manual was generally based on USAID's Automated Directive System (ADS) Chapter 303 - Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations. During the startup period of the facility, GRF was tasked to "mirror"

USAID policies in managing the grant awards. As such the grants manual was crafted to contain specific provisions from ADS 303 and the Contract between GRF and USAID.

Grant-Making Process

The detailed flowchart of the Phil-Am Fund grant-making process is presented in Grants Manual (See ***Annex D***). In general, the grants management cycle goes through the following general processes:

- Solicitation
- Proposal Processing including Desk Review of Grants Management Team, Field Validation, SGV review, and facility-level deliberations
- Non-US Organization Pre-Award Survey by SGV
- Awarding
- Monitoring and Administration
- Close-out

Solicitation. To ensure extensive circulation, GRF released Phil-Am Fund's solicitation guidelines in national dailies and the Facility's microsite. The solicitation guidelines were also advertised through major NGO networks in the country. Moreover, Phil-Am Fund conducted solicitation conferences in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao for each of the grant-making cycle. The solicitation conferences provided opportunities for prospective applicants to interact with USAID, GRF and Phil-Am Fund for a better understanding of the grant-making priorities, timelines, processes, and requirements. Participating organizations were also provided guides and tips in proposal development. Materials and presentations distributed during the solicitation conferences were also posted in the microsite. A total of 837 organizations attended the conferences

In 2013, when Super Typhoon Haiyan ravaged the country rendering a lot of communities vulnerable to trafficking, Phil-Am Fund held a grants programming workshop with 11 organizations to assist them in proposal development and discuss appropriate responses to combat trafficking in disaster-affected areas.

Review Process. To understand the efforts exerted by the Phil-Am Fund, it is necessary to mention the details of the proposal review process. From solicitation, Phil-Am Fund received numerous applications and for transparency and reporting, every single application needed to be officially recorded, acknowledged and initially reviewed. Initial reviews were made based on the proposals' eligibility and alignment with Phil-Am Fund priorities and these processes required communications with proponents, meetings and exchanges with USAID, GRF, and among GMT members. Phil-Am Fund's first cycle utilized the two-step process where concepts were requested first and only proposals aligning with Phil-Am Fund priorities were asked to submit full proposals. Both USAID and GRF found the process time-consuming

and decided to do away with it during the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th cycles. The 1st cycle process generated 487 concept papers with 211 shortlisted for full proposal development.

Rigorous due diligence work followed the receipt of proposals. While initial desk review was more accommodating, a number of proposals were trimmed based on the proponents' capacity to respond to Phil-Am Fund's request for more information and to manage the negotiation process. Stronger applications went through the validation process at two levels – technical and capacity to manage a potential USAID award. The Phil-Am Fund team and its technical experts did the technical review of the proposals' viability as against the requirements of Phil-Am Fund's different categories while SGV conducted the NUPAS process. The NUPAS process provided the baseline for the potential grantees' capacity to manage the award, specifically identifying weaknesses and areas needing improvements or enhancement relative to implementing the grant award. For the Phil-Am Fund team, field validations included a visit to the applicants' offices, target sites, meetings with their local partners, their officers and board, and looking into their previous activities. Results of field validation were instrumental in the drafting of the project summaries and recommendations for the USAID Grants Review Board (GRB).

Overall, Phil-Am Fund field validated 147 applications and endorsed 61 applications for GRB approval. Of the 61 applications submitted to USAID for deliberations, 38 were approved. Out of the total, 6 grants are fixed amount awards and 32 are standard grants. In terms of geographic reach, 18 awards are in Luzon, 9 in Visayas and 11 in Mindanao. By thematic category, 6 grants were awarded under the anti-trafficking category, 7 in economic growth, 16 in biodiversity conservation, 4 in basic education and 5 in governance.

The number of efforts as reflected in the accomplishment of Phil-Am Fund attests to GRF's effort in integrating the overall strategy, allocations, and management of USAID grant-making activities.

3. Manage and administer the grant facility on behalf of USAID.

To effectively and efficiently manage Phil-Am Fund, GRF established its main grant-making office at its main office in Cubao, Quezon City. Regional offices to manage were also established in Cebu and Davao to focus on the grants at the regional level. Projects in Luzon were monitored from the main office. Startup activities relative to managing and administering the facility included:

a. Finalization of Procurement Plan
b. Finalization of Staffing Plan
c. Contracting Key Personnel
d. Holding of organizational meetings
e. Orientation of the PAF Team on USAID policies & contract requirement

f. Formalization of Engagement with SGV
g. Finalization of Start-up Plan and Team Tasking
h. Drafting Performance Management Plan
i. Finalization of First Year Work Plan

With the Phil-Am Fund grants management team organized, GRF through its Executive Director and with support from its administrative, finance, human resources, and knowledge management team, continued providing support to the Facility especially in delivering contractual obligations to USAID.

Within the organizational structure, Phil-Am Fund was placed under GRF's Special Projects initiative and was given all administrative, financial management, and human resources support throughout its implementation. The KM unit was the backbone for communicating project messages. A KM Plan was developed which includes communications and branding plan to ensure compliance with USAID branding in materials and knowledge products produced by the Phil-Am Fund and its grantees. The KM unit also ensured that communications and reports produced by the Facility were in accordance with USAID guidelines, templates, and technical formats. The KM, under guidance of the GRF Executive Director, provided technical assistance during the preparation of materials for the Phil-Am Fund launch and other events conducted under the project. The KM team also assisted in packaging the solicitation documents for its tri-media launch and consequently monitored the extent of its reach.

One of the most notable outputs of GRF through its KM unit is the establishment of the knowledge resource center which also serves as the repository of Phil-Am Fund knowledge products. It provides on-demand access to knowledge products and documents produced under the project. It also contains information on how GRF managed and administered the Phil-Am Fund.

While the Phil-Am Fund GMT managed the proposal review process, GRF took lead and managed important events requiring USAID involvement. These events included sub-grant contract signing, the orientation on implementation guidelines to sub-grantees and in coaching and mentoring sessions where USAID personnel were invited to provide inputs.

In the area of monitoring, GRF regularly submitted Progress Reports to USAID. Grantee-level expenditures were consolidated and submitted by the GMT to GRF which are then integrated into project-level expenditure reports to USAID. All financial transactions of the project were between GRF and USAID.

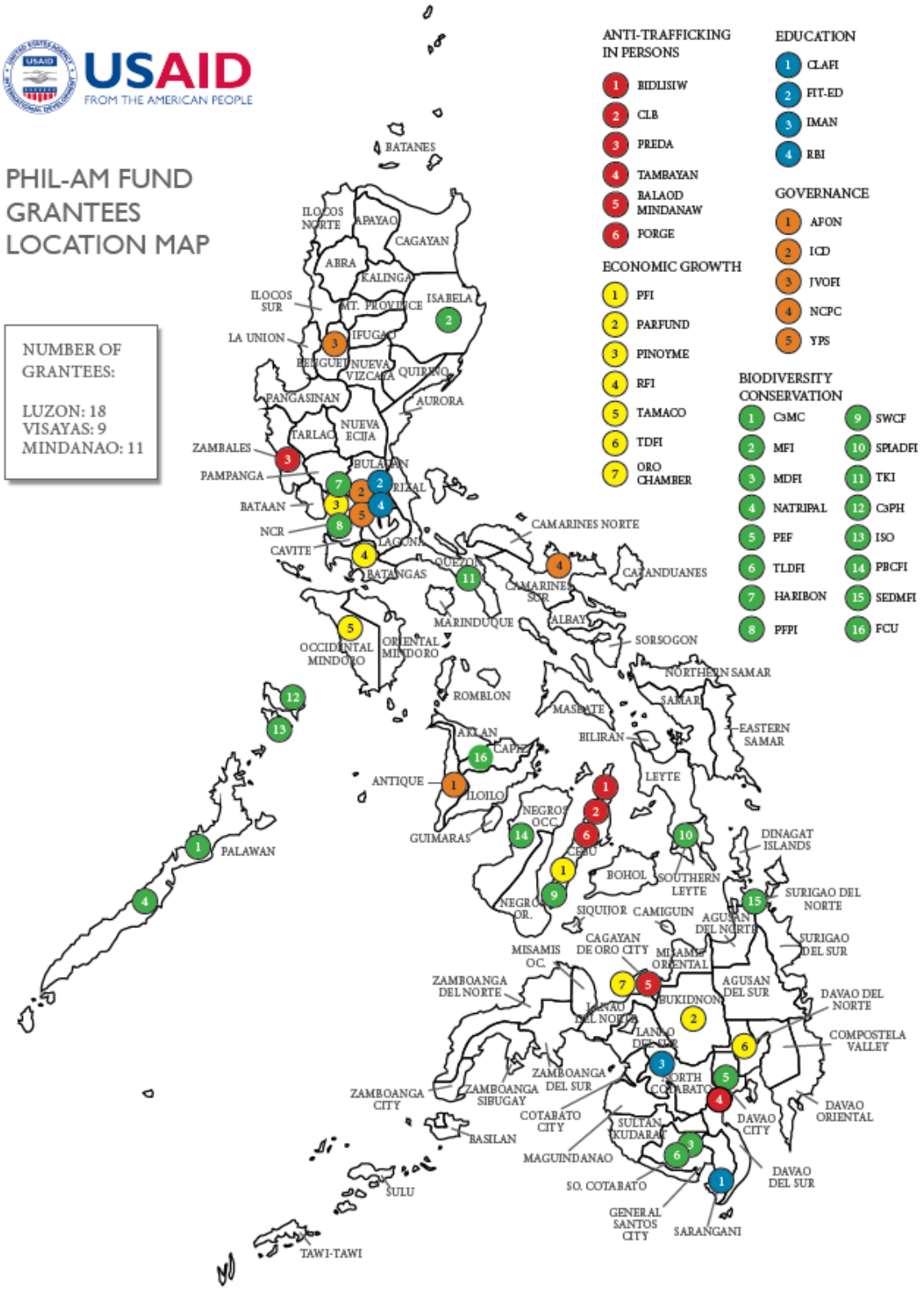
During the close-out process when contracts of most GMT members started to expire, major responsibilities shifted back to the GRF personnel. GRF led the End of Project Conference and the consolidation of lessons learned through the project.

All of the above proved GRF's competencies in managing all aspects of the Phil-Am Fund project. GRF built a strong relationship with USAID's personnel from its Mission Director, office heads and representatives of various offices that provided funds to the facility (Education, Anti-trafficking, Governance, Economic Development, and Governance, and Environment). GRF made sure that policies and priorities for each office were cascaded to the grantees and that sub-grant accomplishments align with and contribute to USAID priorities.

In the same manner, GRF developed a positive relationship with its institutional partner, the SGV. Together, GRF and SGV pioneered an approach in developing capacities, ensuring transparency, and enhancing accountability of local CSOs in managing a USAID award. Harnessing SGV's expertise in management advisory services and GRF's proficiency in working with local NGOs and communities, Phil-Am Fund enhanced all of its grantees organizational and project management capacities as evidenced by the pre-and post-analysis of the individual grantees' NUPAS reports and the quality of their technical and financial report submissions.

One of the major highlights of GRF's grant making function was how it brought USAID closer to local CSOs in the country. From developing and implementing communications plan and branding to development of capacity building and technical support, GRF ensured understanding and appreciation of USAID's assistance in the country. By engaging local CSOs in its grants, USAID assistance was present in 42 out of the 81 provinces of the country. In all the projects that Phil-Am Fund supported, the grantee, their partners, and their communities were informed of USAID's role in building capacities of local CSOs and promoting inclusive development along the five major grant categories:

a. Promote New Business and Entrepreneurship through Economic Growth Grants
b. Advanced Integrity and Transparency through Governance Grants
c. Combatting Trafficking in Persons
d. Combat 'Last Mile' Challenges to Literacy through Innovative Use of Technology
e. Improved Natural Resource and Environmental Management through Biodiversity Conservation Grants


USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
PHIL-AM FUND GRANTEES LOCATION MAP
NUMBER OF GRANTEES:
LUZON: 18
VISAYAS: 9
MINDANAO: 11
ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS
1 BIDLISIW
2 CLB
3 PREDA
4 TAMBAYAN
5 BALAOD MINDANAW
6 FORGE
ECONOMIC GROWTH
1 PFI
2 PARFUND
3 PINOYME
4 RFI
5 TAMACO
6 TDFI
7 ORO CHAMBER
EDUCATION
1 CLAFI
2 FIT-ED
3 IMAN
4 RBI
GOVERNANCE
1 AFON
2 ICD
3 JVOFI
4 NCPC
5 YPS
BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION
1 C3MC
2 MFI
3 MDFI
4 NATRIPAL
5 PEF
6 TLDFI
7 HARIBON
8 PFPI
9 SWCF
10 SPIADFI
11 TKI
12 C3PH
13 ISO
14 PBCFI
15 SEDMFI
16 FCU
BATANES
ILOCOS NORTE
APAYAO
CAGAYAN
ABRA
KALINGA
ILOCOS SUR
MT. PROVINCE
ISABELA
LA UNION
IFUGAO
BENGUET
NUEVA VIZCAYA
QUIRINO
PANGASINAN
AURORA
NUEVA ECIJA
TARLAC
ZAMBALES
BULACAN
PAMPANGA
RIZAL
BATAAN
NCR
CAVITE
LAGUNA
BATANGAS
QUEZON
CAMARINES NORTE
CAMARINES SUR
CATANDUANES
MARINDUQUE
ALBAY
SORSOGON
OCCIDENTAL MINDORO
ORIENTAL MINDORO
NORTHERN SAMAR
ROMBLON
MASBATE
SAMAR
EASTERN SAMAR
BILIRAN
AKLAN
CAPIZ
ANTIQUE
ILOILO
LEYTE
NEGROS OCC.
GUIMARAS
CEBU
DINAGAT ISLANDS
PALAWAN
BOHOL
SOUTHERN LEYTE
SURIGAO DEL NORTE
NEGROS OR.
SIQUIJOR
CAMIGUIN
AGUSAN DEL NORTE
SURIGAO DEL SUR
CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY
MISAMIS OC.
MISAMIS ORIENTAL
ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE
AGUSAN DEL SUR
BUKIDNON
DAVAO DEL NORTE
LANAO DEL NORTE
LANAO DEL SUR
COMPOSTELA VALLEY
ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR
NORTH COTABATO
ZAMBOANGA CITY
ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY
COTABATO CITY
DAVAO CITY
DAVAO ORIENTAL
BASILAN
SULTAN KUDARAT
MAGUINDANAO
SO. COTABATO
DAVAO DEL SUR
SULU
GENERAL SANTOS CITY
SARANGANI
TAWI-TAWI

5.4.2 Thematic Accomplishments

Economic Growth

The Economic Growth grant focused on expanding SMEs in the country. USAID believed that in the Philippines massive expansion of SMEs, also referred to as the "missing middle," will play a vital role in the country's efforts to promote broad-based economic growth. As such, the anticipated outcome for the economic growth grants was for USAID assistance to have ''resulted in the expansion of businesses in priority sectors through the provision of strategic initiatives that promote competitiveness, innovation, and entrepreneurship."

USAID identified several illustrative indicators to measure the success of the grant-making process and these included lowering the skills gap in the key priority sectors of the economy, creating new jobs, expanding availability of venture capital (VC) funds and other non-bank financing for SMEs, strengthening public-private alliances in support of development goals identified in the Partnership for Growth, and improving performance in doing business/competitiveness rankings, specifically in sub-factors relating to corruption. The required indicator is the increased number of new businesses established.

Under of the economic growth grants, Phil-Am Fund supported seven (7) projects. Major accomplishments of these projects include:

- 738 micro-enterprises in Cebu, Davao del Norte, Bukidnon, and Occidental Mindoro
- Improved capacities of 16 cooperatives in Mindanao to access loans and financing
- Innovations like the technology to create fabric from sugarcane; and
- Establishment of the first salt centrifuge-drying machine in the island of Mindoro

USAID's assistance through the Phil-Am Fund enabled communities to become active participants in economic value chains. Business planning, livelihood skills training, financial management training, as well as more specialized assistance line investments in technology that could sustainably help Filipino families, were some of the activities supported by the facility.

Pagtambayayong Foundation, PARFUND, and TDFI supported startup ventures in agribusinesses and were able to establish 738 micro-enterprises in the provinces of Cebu, Bukidnon and Davao del Norte. Project activities conducted by Oro Chamber Foundation and PinoyME Foundation created self-sustaining cooperatives through partnerships with private corporations dealing with high-value crops. Various training and technical assistance provided by both grantees to their partner cooperatives improved the latter's capacity and actually enabled them to access loans

and financing. The end of project report showed 16 cooperatives in Bukidnon and Mindoro being able to access new financing.

Economic Growth Grants were also instrumental in acquiring innovative technologies that can maximize the potential of partner organizations to establish more sustainable communities. Despite challenges in importation, Phil-Am Fund supported TAMACO in acquiring a salt-washing machine. In October 2018, TAMACO launched the first salt washing and centrifuge processing machine in the Philippines. The technology was the first in the province and provides an opportunity for the salt farmers to improve both the quality and quantity of their salt, resulting in higher profits.

Another innovation came from a local community in Barangay Reparo in Nasugbu, Batangas who, with support from RFI, managed to process threads and textiles from sugarcane stalks into colorful bags and pouches, and pillowcases among others. "Turning a New Leaf," a weaving business model by RFI trained rural workers in the production of sugarcane bagasse-based threads, using degumming equipment, high-speed sewing machines, big handlooms and spinning machines funded by the Facility. These products are currently marketed not only in the country but also in other countries like France and Spain.

Beyond the outcome of establishing new or expanding businesses, stories of personal success and change started to emerge. Stories of how individuals overcome challenges and gain additional income from the project and being able to better feed their families provide them new clothes or even pay for their children's tuition resonated in the communities.

With its accomplishments in grant-making, USAID through the Phil-Am Fund can measure its contribution to market-based and sustainable solutions. But more than the economic indicators measured by the facility, it is the stories of individual triumphs that provide the most meaning to the grant-making process.

From Phil-Am Fund's Stories of Interest:

Neil Belleza, 47, of Valencia City, Bukidnon, started to earn a monthly income of P6,783 through PARFUND's Duck Enterprise for Employment Generation and Growth (Duck-EGG) in Mindanao Project. It maybe not much but that income allowed Neil to send his two children back to school.

Not so many miles away from Neil lives Irene. Irene Silipin, 40, is a polio survivor. Her only dream is to be able to put her five children to school. So, she sold food or washed laundry every day. But due to her handicap, she could not land a regular job—until she was taught to weave. Irene is one of the beneficiaries of RFI's Thread Production and Weaving Facility in Barangay Reparo, Nasugbu, Batangas. This facility spins fibers from sugarcane stalks into thread. Irene, with other 149 individuals, now earn additional income that allows them to enjoy some basic comforts in life and at the same time support their children through school.

Education

Phil-Am Fund's Education grants sought to contribute to solving select 'last-mile' challenges to both early grade and adult illiteracy such as: engaging communities and parents in support of reading, removing barriers to early grade reading for children with disabilities (CWDs), transforming early grade reading in the classroom, and combating adult illiteracy in indigenous populations. USAID stated that the delivery of high-quality reading interventions is challenged by many factors including a nation's language diversity, language policy, class size, teacher education, and limited resources. While the Department of Education, together with internal donors continue to implement interventions in the basic education sector targeted to conventional young learners and out-of-school youth (OSY), there remains a need to address the needs of the 'missing population', the rungs of the ladder to achieving increased early grade reading outcomes in the Philippines.

Grants under the education category focused on innovative, scalable, cost-effective and transformative technology-based solutions to solve the 'last-mile' challenges to basic education. This category anticipated the outcome of strengthened human capital through a more literate adult and early grade child population

Phil-Am Fund supported four (4) projects under this category. Major achievements under this category include:

- Improved the access to basic education for 16,185 students and learners nationwide
- Development of a computerized module for in-service training of K-3 teachers, reaching 4,053 teachers in 40 Department of Education divisions
- Blind adult learners enhanced their Braille literacy level through technology that used a translation software

IMAN and RBI increased the quality of early grade reading instruction and adult braille literacy through the use of technology. IMAN invested in tablet computers as a learning platform for non-readers and slow readers while blind adult learners under RBI's project used braille materials and translation software to improve their braille literacy levels. Braille instructors use computerized braille typewriters and embossers to produce hard copies of their reading materials.

FIT-ED, on the other hand, improved access to school-based continuing professional development for basic education teachers through the Digital Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) Training Program. It is scalable technology-supported courseware for K-3 teachers developed by FIT-ED, in partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd). The digital ELLN has reached more than 4,000 teachers from 31 DepEd divisions in 11 regions nationwide. When rolled out, ELLN-Digital can help boost the literacy and numeracy outcomes of around 200,000 pupils. CLAFI in Mindanao revived "*Flalok*", the Blaan art of storytelling to establish a culture of reading in the indigenous group and raise literacy rates of Blaan students. The project produced various mother-tongue reading materials like big storybooks and the first Blaan dictionary. More than 19,000 teaching and learning materials were distributed to 138 partner schools in South Central Mindanao.

Dindo John Moreno, a 49-year-old husband, father, and educator and a Supervisor in the Department of Education (DepEd) Nueva Vizcaya, was one of those chosen to attend a training session on Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) Teacher Professional Development Program, implemented by the Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development (FIT-ED) and DepEd. The multimedia training is based on the modules of DepEd's basic course for K-3 teachers, which covers 14 domains of language and literacy. Dindo was so impressed with the results of the training that he has become one of its strong advocates.

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Felix Perez became totally blind when he was 14. Chosen as one the participants for RBI's Improved Braille Literacy among Adults with Visual Impairment Project which aimed to promote and facilitate braille literacy, as well as provide better employment options for blind adults. Going through the process encouraged Felix to continue his education using braille. With modern Braille technology in teaching, like the braille typewriters, braille printers and braille computer keyboards, learning becomes easier and more inspiring.

The four grants supported under this category provided and relevant and curriculum-linked technology-based reading and instructional materials for children in project areas. The use of tablets made the learning process more engaging and interesting especially for poor communities in Mindanao where technology appeared to be still elusive. The quality of materials, both new and culture-based as the *Flalok* inspired both learners and educators.

The projects supported by the Phil-Am Fund show that technology can bridge distance and physical barriers to learning. Even indigenous knowledge and language can live on with the confluence of people who have the passion to educate, appropriate support like the opportunity offered by Phil-Am Fund, and of technology that delivers lessons in new and non-conventional manners.

Anti-Trafficking in Persons

The grants for Anti-Trafficking in Person were aimed at improving, strengthening and sustaining efforts to protect Filipinos against trafficking, illegal recruitment and other forms of labor or sexual exploitation through expanded prevention, stronger

enforcement and enhanced protection of victims. USAID expected that the grant-making activities under this category would catalyze and support the broadening of private and cross-sectoral partnerships to make various anti-trafficking efforts more viable and sustainable.

The following outcomes were expected at the end of the grants:

- USAID assistance shall have resulted in reduced trafficking risk for women and other vulnerable groups and greater community involvement in preventing trafficking.
- USAID assistance shall have resulted in increased capacities for local government units, inter-agency and local task forces to provide holistic and integrated services to trafficking or prospective trafficking victims, as well as to conduct qualitative community education campaigns against trafficking and illegal recruitment with the cooperation of community networks and TIP champions.
- USAID assistance shall have resulted in greater involvement of the private sector in preventing trafficking activities and supporting anti-trafficking enforcement.

At the end of the project, Phil-Am Fund supported six (6) projects that cut across the three pillars of USAID's counter-trafficking strategy—Prevention, Protection of victims and Prosecution. The combined efforts of grantees under Anti-Trafficking significantly contributed to the country's efforts at addressing immediate and long-term needs of trafficking victims. The reach of the projects cannot be undermined:

- Treatment/healing and protection of around 750 trafficking victims
- A total of 223 child victims assisted in seeking justice against their perpetrators

Barangay Councilor Brenda Deiparine, Chairperson of the Women and Children Committee in Talisay City in Cebu, is of the 570 volunteers trained by CLB in assisting identified victims of trafficking. They were later on organized as Community Watch Groups. They come from 41 barangays in Cebu and were tasked to identify potential trafficking cases and report them to the strengthened Barangay Council Against Trafficking. In her work, Councilor Brenda was able to assist and turn over six trafficking survivors to the City Social Worker in the city where the children originally came from. Being able to determine and manage potential trafficking cases is a skill she learned from the Anti-Trafficking in Persons (ATIP) Orientation for Barangay Councils organized by the Children's Legal Bureau (CLB).

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Other than rescue and reintegration, efforts under anti-trafficking grants ensure long-term support to trafficking victims. Maria (not her real name), was only 13 when she was trafficked. Through the vigilance of local social workers, Maria was rescued from her captors. Now at 18, Maria resides in PREDA's shelter, where she is rebuilding her life. With assistance from USAID and PREDA, Maria went back to school and continued her studies. With PREDA's constant guidance, Maria was able to testify in court against her trafficker. Demonstrating tremendous courage, she told her story and stood her ground amidst questioning from the defense lawyer.

- Orientation of more than 167,000 individuals on the issue of human trafficking

BALAOD Mindanaw and Tambayan Children's Center reduced vulnerabilities through targeted awareness-building programs. PREDA, Bidlisiw, and FORGE supported recovery and healing of victims through their therapeutic homes and community re-integration strategies. In partnership with local governments and law enforcement agencies, CLB helped victims in seeking justice against perpetrators. Project initiatives also paved way for two grantees to operate new shelters for vulnerable children—FORGE piloted the Boys' Home in Cebu and PREDA launched the Victoria Children's Home in Zambales.

Cebu-based organizations—Bidlisiw, CLB, and FORGE—formed a consortium of what came to be known as the Advocates for the Protection and the Prevention of Abuse and Exploitation of Children (APPROACH). The three NGOs complemented each other's expertise, with Bidlisiw taking on community integration and networking, CLB providing legal aid, and FORGE organizing outreach work and maintaining shelters for trafficking victims. The synergy among the three organizations amplified their individual capacities to engage LGUs, combatting trafficking in persons, engage the private sector, and mobilize communities to counter trafficking in persons.

Advancing Integrity and Transparency through Governance Grants

Governance grants were designed to contribute to other efforts to strengthen rule of law and improved governance within USAID's Partnership for Growth. The "governance" grants provided by the Phil-Am Fund promoted effectiveness as well as transparency, accountability, and participation in government institutions and public policy reform processes.

Anticipated outcome for governance grants was greater political and economic engagement from an empowered civil society that advances public interest. The number of vocal and informed interest groups in priority sectors of the economy will be increased. There should be increased advocacy for transparency and integrity by civil society groups. Ultimately, the results achieved should lead to increased investor confidence in the Philippines as a credible place to do business and greater citizen trust in public and private institutions. The required primary indicator is the number of mechanisms for external oversight of public resource use supported by USG assistance.

Phil-Am Fund supported five (5) projects under the governance category. Major accomplishments that directly correspond to the success indicators of the governance grant include the following:

- Promoted participatory planning and budgeting in 31 municipalities in Camarines Sur, Antique, Benguet, La Union, and Ilocos
- Established an alliance of local government units to protect the Amburayan River, leading to its designation as a water quality management area
- Educated 17,580 young people on government processes to extract accountability from their public officials
- Improved corporate governance practices of 392 publicly-listed companies, mutual benefit associations, insurance companies, and government-owned and controlled corporations

The grants mobilized private sector and public support to promote cooperation between communities and the government. These grantees improved transparency and integrity mechanisms through the active and direct participation of and feedback from people's organizations. AFON, JVOFI, and NCPC promoted participatory planning and budgeting in 31 municipalities in the provinces of Antique, Benguet, La Union, Ilocos, and Camarines Sur. AFON's People-Led Monitoring and Evaluation System (PLMES) allowed civil society organizations (CSOs) to keep tabs on local government unit (LGU) purchases that covered a total of 225 projects. A similar civic engagement was led by NCPC, organizing seven people's councils across Metro Naga to serve as LGU partners in implementing social development programs. These councils are the mechanisms for civil society to engage the government for accountability, effectiveness, and transparency.

Leo Lupango, 57, a PLMES monitor and President of Anini-y CSO Alliance realized that monitoring government projects does is not just an LGU responsibility. "We monitors learned that the government is not the only one with a responsibility to monitor projects," said Leo. "The importance of the PLMES lies in how people in the community learn to be watchful toward government projects, to care, and to participate. After all, our goal is the same—to improve the quality of life of our people."

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Joven Pantollano, 21, from South Cotabato, realized that computer games and gaming in general have similar processes with economic and political reform – that both are demand driven and changes or improvements happen in response to actions and demands of target players or in political and economic reforms, of civic actions and sustained engagement with the government. Joven attended a voter's education caravan held in South Cotabato by the Young Public Servants (YPS). Discussions during the forum made Joven appreciate his role as a member of the gaming community. Inspired by new insights and a renewed sense of purpose, Joven then started participating in more activities advocating for active citizenship as a youth volunteer.

On the other hand, JVOFI established an alliance of LGUs to protect the Amburayan River Basin and Watershed, a critical resource that crosses three provinces and 15 municipalities in North Luzon. Strengthened by the commitment of government representatives, project activities led to the designation of the river as a Water Quality Management Area (WQMA). This is the first time that a civil society organization successfully initiated the designation of a water system as a WQMA. YPS provided various platforms for

collaborative exchange among the youth on citizen participation, democracy, and enhanced political engagement. Through their YVP Chapters, YPS educated more than 17,000 Filipino youth on government processes to extract accountability from their public officials.

While other projects seek to bridge the gap between the state and civil society, ICD's project focused on the private sector. ICD implemented a corporate governance scorecard for private firms to make sure they are at par with the standards of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Project activities have improved the corporate governance practices of 392 publicly-listed companies, 11 of which reached the ASEAN Top 50 Corporations.

Biodiversity Conservation

In the Phil-Am Fund, USAID underscored its belief that biodiversity, natural resources, and environmental services play a vital role in the Philippine economy, both limiting and enabling economic growth. USAID further noted that natural resources are essential to economic growth, but they must be used wisely if growth is to be broad-based, inclusive and sustainable.

Grants under Improved Natural Resource and Environmental Management through Biodiversity Conservation focused on reducing threats to biodiversity, creating enabling governance of biodiversity and natural resources, expanding the benefits from sustainable natural resources management, and improving ecosystems resilience. The synergistic impact of these initiatives hoped to deliver the biodiversity category's desired outcome of strengthened environmental resilience and sustained inclusive economic growth through the improvement of the conservation and management of natural resources.

The required indicators under this grant category are number of hectares of biological significance and natural resources under improved management (NRM), number of key national, provincial and local institutions with improved capacity for planning and adaptive NRM management, and number of methods implemented that integrate costs and benefits into accounting, marketing, and/or policymaking. In line with the desired outcome of biodiversity grants, Phil-Am Fund supported 16 projects. In a nutshell, the grant awards:

- Improved management of 462,144 hectares of key biodiversity areas (KBAs) in the Philippines
- Continued protection of 22 KBAs across the country
- Discovered new flora species in a protected area in Negros
- Confirmed the presence of Olive Ridley and Hawksbill turtle species in Palawan

It must be noted that all Phil-Am Fund biodiversity grantees are frontline conservationists and environmental advocates who work with local communities in the conservation of key biodiversity areas (KBAs). Activities supported under this grant included biodiversity research, inventories, and education efforts that underscored the importance of natural resources and their ecosystems services. Payments for ecosystems services were explored, resource use, access, and benefit sharing were also put in place. Partnering with local communities, including indigenous peoples, and the capacity building support provided for them enabled the Facility to contribute to the enhancement of the management regimes of more than 462,000 hectares within KBAs in the Philippines. The projects specifically improved the protection of 22 KBAs, which include the Central Cebu Protected Landscapes, Mt. Apo in Davao, Negros Island, the Ligawasan Marsh in North Cotabato, Mindoro, Palawan, Siargao Island, Southern Leyte, and the Verde Island Passage, among others.

Biodiversity surveys, done by the grantees, also paved the way for the discovery of potentially new species in protected areas in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. During expeditions at the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park in Cagayan Valley, the Mabuwaya Foundation team found a spectacular plant with a long erect flower which belongs to the genus Amorphophallus which can only be seen during a very short period of the year.

In Puerto Princesa, Palawan, C3MC's project affirmed the presence of Olive Ridley and Hawksbill Turtle species in the city. Previously, testimonies claimed that both species no longer visit the area to lay their eggs. Vigilance and sustained monitoring allowed the organization to document and actually care for nesting turtles and their young during the hatching seasons. Meanwhile, a team of botanists from PBCFI found a yellow-flowered mistletoe plant at the Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Natural Park in Negros Oriental. It

Tilso Butig, a Tagbanua leader from Aborlan practiced the indigenous slash and burn farming or kaingin. Participating in Nagkakaisang mga Tribu ng Palawan (NATRIPAL) project called Strengthening the Role of Indigenous People in Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Governance, Tilso realized that Kaingin is one of the major threats against biodiversity and the forests of the province. With Phil-Am Fund support, Tilso and a number of his tribe members are now forest wardens, citizen scientists and conservation entrepreneurs. They are now taking active roles in protecting the countries last environmental frontier

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Arais Sagad, 44, is a farmer-fisherman who lives in Kabacan, Cotabato Province in Mindanao experience the same change of heart. Arais resides near the Ligawasan Marsh, Mindanao's largest wetland. Arais and his community realized that the resources from the marsh are extracted at a rate where regeneration is almost impossible. The once abundant resources of fishes and various marsh biodiversity are almost gone. With this realization, Arais joined MDFI's Improved Biodiversity Conservation through Effective Local Governance Project. Through the project, Arais and other community members were trained to become "Bantay-Pawas" or Marsh Wardens. Arais and his fellow fishers and farmers living near the marsh now guard the marsh with the hope of bringing back its abundant ecosystem.

was a new mistletoe species named by her fellow scientists as *Amyema lisae*, after PBCFI's Executive Director Lisa Paguntalan, the lead scientist for the research.

Similarly, two potentially new species of orchids from South Cotabato are being assessed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. The plants were discovered in the Allah Valley Watershed Forest Reserve, a protected area with active conservation efforts by TLDFI. Apart from these discoveries, TKI's conservation project developed a technological breakthrough: a database and monitoring application for smartphones called the Wildlife Forestry Fishery Indicator Spatial Hub-Management Information System (WiForFISH-MIS). It is now being used by local governments and sea wardens to monitor their inventory of natural resources in real-time for more effective ecosystems management and law enforcement.

Behavioral change is one strategy that has been mainstreamed in almost all biodiversity projects. The baseline surveys, the information campaigns, the training, and all other capacity-building activities, are all designed to encourage a change of behaviors from either doing illegal activities or simply non-committal to any conservation work to community conservation champions and advocates. In Puerto Princesa for example, coastal residents who poached turtle eggs for food are now members of community volunteers called Bantay Pawikans (marine turtle wardens) who help in reporting turtle sightings in beaches and illegal collection of turtle eggs in highly-vulnerable areas.

5.5 Effectiveness

GRF's accomplishments in light of its contractual obligations under Phil-Am Fund attest to the effectiveness of the Project's approaches, strategies, and management tools utilized by the Foundation. As discussed above, the three (3) broad responsibilities of establishing a grant facility, integrating USAID policies in its processes and consequently managing it was most effectively complied with.

At the Facility level, partnering with SGV in establishing the grant-making facility provided value in providing a corporate perspective on the "the importance of good governance, risk management and compliance/controls in the management of donor funds."[6] SGV contributed significantly to the design and conduct of pre-award surveys which eventually led to a realistic and tailored-fit capacity-building program.

For the whole grant-making process, GRF's strategies in the crucial stages of the project successfully delivered Phil-Am Fund's desired results:

1. ***Solicitation.*** The use of multi-media approach proved to be very effective as evidenced by the 487 concept paper applications received by Phil-Am Fund

[6] Phil-Am Fund Grants Manual. 2nd Iteration. 03 November 2014. P. 32

during its first cycle and then by the, ninety-six (96) and sixty-eight (68) full proposals received during the second and third cycle grant-making activities respectively. These proposals came from a wide range of CSOs and private sector groups from all over the country. Advertisement in major broadsheets, posting in GRF's website, and cross-posting in GRF's partner networks such as the Gerry Roxas Leadership Awardees Foundation Inc., USAID Website, LoGoTRI-PhilNet, Philippine Council for NGO Certification, CODE-NGO, Association of Foundations, League of Corporate Foundations, SGV proved successful in GRF's efforts in making Phil-Am Fund as inclusive as possible.

The holding of solicitation or pre-bid conferences further provided a deeper understanding and inspired local CSOs to apply for the grant. The pre-bid conferences will provide the venue for person-to-person or more personalized discussion of Phil-Am Fund structure, opportunities, mechanisms, and priorities. The conferences stimulated ideas that could be developed as possible activities under the Phil-Am Fund. The Grants Manual explicitly mentioned inclusivity as a vital aspect of its solicitation, the pre-bid conferences employed local languages to eliminate possible communication barriers, encouraging a dynamic sharing of seminal ideas for the facility.

2. ***Proposal Review Process.*** Phil-Am Fund utilized both desk reviews and field validations to assess the feasibility of each proposal submitted for funding. The desk reviews provided Phil-Am Fund an assessment on how the proposals align with Phil-Am Fund goals and objectives. Those that passed the desk reviews were subjected to field validation composed mainly of office and site visits where the proposed activities would be undertaken. Phil-Am Fund invited SGV, the GMT, technical experts, and on occasion, USAID representatives, to the field visits. The visits allowed Phil-Am Fund to know more about the prospective grantees and their capacity to manage a potential USAID grant award, their partners and target beneficiaries, and the viability of any proposed activity in the proposed locations.

   The quality of grantees and grants that Phil-Am Fund supported and their significant collective contribution to achieving Phil-Am Fund goals and objectives attest to the effectiveness of the site visits conducted by the Facility.

3. ***Non-US Pre-Award Survey.*** As part of "mirroring" USAID processes in grant-making, Phil-Am Fund, in partnership with SGV, conducted the NUPAS on successful applicants. Under USAID policies, NUPAS has three main objectives:

   a. To determine whether the organization has sufficient financial and managerial capacity to manage USAID funds in accordance with U.S. Government and USAID requirements;
   b. To determine the most appropriate method of financing to use under the potential USAID award; and

c. To determine the degree of support and oversight necessary to ensure proper accountability of funds provided to the organization.

> *The NUPAS is actually a big help for the Foundation. It helped the foundation realize the need to set up and establish an operations Manual and really make sure it is practiced.*
> *-Mabuwaya Foundation*

> *NUPAS, really helped in improving organizational and project management. Through this, some areas that need to be addressed were resolve through the corrective action plan.*
> *- Tambayan Center*

Applying the NUPAS on Phil-Am Fund grantees allowed the Facility to gain a better understanding of its grantees as well as the gaps and weaknesses relative to their capacity to manage the grant award. It helped Phil-Am Fund recognize the risks associated in working with specific grantees and consequently enabled the Facility to establish safety nets and develop grantee-specific Corrective Action Plans (CAP), which then was used to determine capacity needs of the grantees.

GRF conducted a pre- and post-project implementation NUPAS on all Phil-Am Fund grantees to determine their progress in building their respective organizational management capacities. Results showed that all grantees improved their management performance from the day they started implementing the grant until the day they completed it.

4. ***Capacity-Building.*** Phil-Am Fund's Capacity-Building Program covered the gaps and weaknesses discovered during the NUPAS. GRF and SGV worked hand-in-hand with grantees to respond to all the concerns in the grantee's CAP to ensure that all issues were responded to and closed during the project duration. Phil-Am Fund's capacity building program covered training in financial management, monitoring, and evaluation, the inclusion of environmental, gender, and disability frameworks in project implementation.

   In implementing its capacity-building program, Phil-Am Fund either worked with individual grantees for specific needs or conducted workshops for specialized skills for all grantees. The post-implementation NUPAS conducted by GRF showed the effectiveness of the capacity-building program through improved scores from grantees' baseline at the beginning of the grant up to its completion.

5. ***Formative Monitoring and Evaluation.*** Phil-Am Fund's GMT spent considerable time and resources doing monitoring and providing technical assistance to its grantees. The GMT and grantees worked together to collect and build project-related information, documenting project experience, tracking the progress of implementation, collect performance measures, track project expenditures and make informed decisions on changes in project implementation. Phil-Am Fund

M&E's system also addressed real-time performance concerns of grantees and identified their needs relative to the implementation of their grant awards.

This process also became Phil-Am Fund's tool in providing hand-holding support to its grantees as the latter navigated through USAID requirements in implementing the award. Grantees testimonies confirmed the effectiveness of Phil-Am Fund's M&E efforts:

Phil-Am Fund team helped for the proper & effective implementation of the project activities since grant signing. They suggested for improvements in procedures, documentation and reporting. – TAMACO

The Phil-Am Fund definitely gave or pushed us to really put up or set up a good financial system and a better and improved HR system. The Phil-Am project led us to the right direction and placed a financial system that is really working now in the Foundation. – Mabuwaya Foundation

The monitoring policy improvement that we did was the result of our experience with Phil-Am Fund especially the adaption of procurement policies. This together with other policies we adapted, made us confident that we are in the right direction. With the strengthening of most of our policies, we are very much confident that we can pass most, if not all standards of other donor organization. In fact, we can easily get funding from another USAID program. – TLDFI

Aside from the internal resources of Phil-Am Fund, grantees were provided a funding opportunity to access other projects and/or match up technical requirements of the project with other organizations or sectors to complement those needs. – CANDIS 3

Ascertaining from the comments of all Phil-Am Fund grantees, the regular monitoring visits and provision of technical assistance of the members of the GMT proved to be one of the most effective strategies in building relationships and guiding the former to successful completion of their grant awards.

6. ***Use of AuditPal.*** AuditPal is a home-grown accounting system tested and implemented by GRF. Its use was shared by GRF with Phil-Am Fund for the use of its grantees. It is an accounting system that allowed real-time online monitoring and reporting of financial transactions. While some grantees, especially those in the far-flung parts of the countries experience problems with connectivity, the AuditPal was generally perceived by the grantees as an effective tool for monitoring and reporting. The system came with its own computer unit, a training, and sustained technical support for its use online and offline. AuditPal is unique to GRF and the Phil-Am Fund facility. The system was dedicated for the

use of grant funds making the transactions and expenditures easy to isolate from other organizational resources, allowing for faster and more precise reporting.

It helped for easier, faster recording and reporting system as an accounting software. It provided audit trails. It can record and process reports even without internet. ***– Philippine Eagle Foundation.***

AuditPal is really very helpful to us. It helps us generate financial reports on time and makes us careful in our transactions, thus, limiting our errors. ***– TLDFI***

It enhanced the capacity of NATRIPAL[7] in documentation and monitoring of financial transaction while the disadvantage is only when power problems cause interruptions. ***– NATRIPAL***

The AuditPal accounting software is able to generate variance reports direct from its System. It can generate comparative reports with prior periods, and print check vouchers in JV from the system. Its only disadvantage is the cost of the software—P12,000 per year. ***– CLAFI***

To sum up the Phil-Am Fund's effectiveness, it is appropriate to use the words of its former COR, Mr. Gerry Porta: "[USAID] offices were benefitted. Even the environment office, *sila gusto nila mag small grants [they wanted to do small grants]*—they have been doing that before Phil-Am Fund *pero nadi-"ding" sila [but they are buzzed out]* because of the level of effort to make their little projects, their little grants. Phil-Am Fund basically took the cudgels in taking the effort to make it happen from solicitation all the way to close out. So the entire ridge to reef approach in grantmaking. For me, that is the biggest benefit. We were able to significantly expand our local partnership base, and it serves the purpose of our sectoral offices in terms of them wanting to work with organizations that they otherwise would have found challenging to work with just because of the management issues that I was talking about."

Implementation Efficiency

A total of 37 grants was managed in five years. From USAID perspective, this statement basically sums up the Phil-Am Fund's efficiency. In discussions above, it was very challenging for USAID to deliver the same quantity of grants given the policies and organizational set-up of the Agency. Ms. Maria Teresa Robielos, Phil-Am Fund's COR admitted that USAID has no capacity to manage numerous small grants. The Agency does not have the personnel and even if it wanted to get people to manage small projects, the contracting process is too long and tedious.

[7] NATRIPAL is an all-indigenous peoples organization. When they first attended the Phil-Am Fund meeting to finalize project budgets, they were using a spreadsheet and were manually computing writing down the budget.

During its rapid evaluation, Phil-Am Fund's efficiency is measured in terms of how its resources and inputs were transformed into outputs. In discussing Phil-Am Fund efficiency, benchmarking could only be made in the context of USAID's grant-making activities and in delivering its contractual obligations within the most cost-effective and timely manner.

Resource Utilization. As an organization entrusted to manage a USAID Contract, GRF ensured that resources are allocated based on priority activities under the Phil-Am Fund. With limited administrative costs allotted to a local contractor, a substantial portion of the contract amount went directly to sub-grants and other activities that supported them. Activities were thought of and designed to maximize benefits by grantees in terms of access and information gathered and by the Facility in terms of reach and impact of assistance provided. Phil-Am Fund's pre-bid conferences, for example, were held in most strategic places to reach as many CSOs as possible. Invited to these conferences were USAID representatives who readily answered questions about USAID policies and priorities relating to the Phil-Am Fund.

GMT Structure. GMT members were engaged based on their capacity to contribute to the Phil-Am Fund's development objectives and the lean unit was structured to deliver the most effective way of supporting the grant-making process. With a central office located in Metro Manila and two regional offices in Cebu and Davao, Phil-Am Fund provided its grantees timely and relevant technical and advisory support. The Central office hosted Phil-Am Fund's key personnel and other support staff and the regional office for Luzon, while the regional offices were managed by a Regional Program Officer (RPO) and a Financial Management Assistant. In its Phil-Am Fund's Grants Manual, the RPOs role is defined as:

"... primarily responsible for coordinating and monitoring Phil-Am Fund-supported projects in their respective geographic area of responsibility. The RPOs will also be in charge of proactively providing technical assistance to grantees in the application of USAID guidelines in grants management and implementation. The RPOs will assist Phil-Am Fund in financial and technical monitoring by serving the first line of review for all grantee deliverables including financial and technical reports."[8]

The structure and the way functions were designed were all meant to optimize the outputs of both the Facility and the individuals engaged for the project, delivering quality support and generating significant outputs with the entrusted USAID resources. With its resources and structure, and in the five years of its grant-making activities, Phil-Am Fund delivered the following:

[8] Phil-Am Fund Grants Manual. 2nd Iteration. 03 November 2014. Page 37.

Category	Outputs
Governance	• Promoted participatory planning and budgeting in 31 municipalities in Camarines Sur, Antique, Benguet, La Union, and Ilocos • Established an alliance of local government units to protect the Amburayan River, leading to its designation as a water quality management area • Educated 17,580 young people on government processes to extract accountability from their public officials • Improved corporate governance practices of 392 publicly-listed companies, mutual benefit associations, insurance companies, and government-owned and controlled corporations
Education	• Improved the access to basic education for 16,185 students and learners nationwide • Development of a computerized module for in-service training of K-3 teachers, reaching 4,053 teachers in 40 Department of Education divisions • Blind adult learners enhanced their Braille literacy level through technology that used a translation software
Anti-Trafficking in Person	• Treatment/healing and protection of around 750 trafficking victims • A total of 223 child victims assisted in seeking justice against their perpetrators • Orientation of more than 167,000 individuals on the issue of human trafficking
Economic Growth	• 738 micro-enterprises in Cebu, Davao del Norte, Bukidnon, and Occidental Mindoro • Improved capacities of 16 cooperatives in Mindanao to access loans and financing • Innovations like the technology to create fabric from sugarcane; and • Establishment of the first salt centrifuge-drying machine in the island of Mindoro
Biodiversity	• Improved management of 415,860 hectares of key biodiversity areas (KBAs) in the Philippines • Protecting 22 KBAs across the country

At the Facility level, the following outputs were achieved by Phil-Am Fund:

Grant-Making Stage	Outputs
Start-up Activities	• Establishment of Project Office • Procurement of Equipment • Preparation of Staffing Plans • Contract Key Personnel • Organizational Meeting • Orientation of the Phil-Am Fund Team on USAID policies & contract requirements • Formalization of Engagement with SGV • Finalization of Start-up Plan and Team Tasking • Performance Management Plan • Strategic Plan
Phil-Am Fund Launch	• Solicitation Plan and Guidelines • Communications and Branding Plan • Performance Monitoring Plan • Risk Assessment and Risk Management Document • Phil-Am Fund Brochure or Portfolio Communication materials printed • Multi-media Launch of Phil-Am Fund Brand
Grant Solicitation	• First cycle: regional solicitation conferences were conducted in Manila, Davao, and Cebu. The Luzon launch was conducted at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza, Manila on Sep. 30, 2013. The Visayas launch was conducted at the Marco Polo Plaza, Cebu on Oct. 2, 2013, and the Mindanao launch was conducted at the Davao Medical School on Oct. 4, 2013. A total of 295 organizations attended the three events. • Second cycle: Luzon launch was conducted at the Intercontinental Manila. Visayas launch was conducted at the Provincial Capitol of Iloilo and at Waterfront Insular in Davao. A total of 279 organizations attended the three events.

Grant-Making Stage	Outputs
	• Third cycle: Launches were held at Sining Saysay Gateway Gallery in Manila, at Marco Polo Hotel in Cebu and Waterfront Insular in Davao. A total of 263 organizations attended the conferences • Phil-Am Fund also initiated a grant programming workshop with 11 organizations to assist them in proposal development and discuss appropriate responses to combat trafficking in persons among vulnerable communities in Haiyan-affected areas. Out of the 11 organizations assisted, two (2) organizations pursued the development of their full applications. However, the two applications did not qualify based on USAID requirements for this solicitation.
Sub-grant Proposal Review and Endorsement	• For the first cycle, 487 concept paper applications were received. Out of the total concept papers received, 211 were shortlisted for full proposal development. For the second cycle, 96 full proposals were received for review. For the third cycle, 68 full applications were received for review. • Field Validation: For the first cycle, 88 applications were validated on the field. For the second cycle, 42 applications were validated on the field and 17 applications were validated for the third cycle • A total of 38 grants approved by USAID: 14 were approved under cycle 1, 12 for cycle 2, 7 for cycle 3 and 5 for cycle 4. Out of the total, 6 grants are fixed amount awards and 32 are standard grants. In terms of geographic reach, 18 awards are in Luzon, 9 in Visayas and 11 in Mindanao. By thematic category, 6 grants were awarded under the anti-trafficking category, 7 in economic growth, 16 in biodiversity conservation, 4 in basic education and 5 in governance.
Sub-Grant Management	• For the first and second cycle, regional post-award orientation sessions were conducted to discuss the grantee toolkit with newly-awarded grantees.

Grant-Making Stage	Outputs
	• A grant programming workshop was also conducted for the first cycle grantees where USAID officials were asked to discuss USAID grant guidelines and procedures. • For cycle 3 and 4, individual post-award orientations were conducted on-site for all grantees • Capacity building programs were conducted to help grantees in the following areas: a. AWF Planning b. Branding and Marking, M&E, Gender and Development Planning c. Corporate Governance - Cycle 1 and 2 d. AuditPal Users Training e. Drafting theory of change frameworks f. Clarifying standard indicators for anti-trafficking • 24 AuditPal Computerized System to monitor financial transactions provided with grantees • Enhancements in the AuditPal system were made in years 3 and 4 to include the following specifications: a. Network Ready and Multi-user Environment b. Remote Network Ready c. User Definable Chart of Accounts, Subsidiary Ledgers, Budget Line Items, Financial Projection d. Security and User Trails • A refresher training on AuditPal was conducted in December 2016 to share updates on the AuditPal System. Re-orientation sessions on Financial Management System were conducted for specific grantees. • Monitoring of Corrective Action Plan
Project Monitoring and Reporting	• Technical and Financial Reports were submitted every quarter and incorporated in the Quarterly Progress Report of the Phil-Am Fund Project. • A total of 14 out of 20 Quarterly Progress Reports were submitted. Starting in year 2, the QPR was divided into two volumes. Volume 1 covers the facility report and Volume 2 presents grantees accomplishments.

Grant-Making Stage	Outputs
	• Annual reports were prepared for Year 1 and 2. In year 3, the reporting period was synchronized with the signing date of the GRF contract. From the regular reporting period of USAID (Oct-Sept) was changed to August - July. Phil-Am Fund was no longer required to submit an annual report. • Performance reviews conducted. • A server was procured in 2014. Knowledge products developed under the Phil-Am Fund are saved in the server.
Project Evaluation	• Data Quality Assessment was conducted in March 2016. Upon USAID's request, Phil-Am Fund engaged an STTA to perform the DQA for a total of 16 indicators for 26 cycle 1 and 2 grantees. • "Recipient Contracted Audits were conducted in 2014-2015. In 2014, Punongbayan and Araullo Associates were contracted to perform the audit. For 2015-2016, Isla Lipana was asked to conduct the Recipient Contracted Audit. • A rapid internal evaluation was conducted in October 2018 to February 2019 to determine accomplishments and results of the Phil-Am Fund project.
Project Closeout	• Closeout Conference for Individual Sub-grantees • End of Project Conference • Knowledge Exposition

6.0 Sustainability

The key to any development activity that USAID Philippines does is availability of resources. The last two CORs of Phil-Am Fund agreed that the facility has proven to be an effective and viable grant-making facility model. The idea works but replicating or continuing the mechanism is also a question of resources. Mr. Gerry Porta recalled that Phil-Am Fund was conceived in a time when financial resources of various offices were more than adequate. Mr. Porta noted that "another reason why Phil-Am Fund was interesting is that it is an amalgamation of different funding sources into one mechanism – you have basic education money, anti-trafficking money, economic growth, governance, biodiversity money." He added however, that in an era where funds are constricted, the various USAID offices would rather utilize their resources and implement programs themselves.

During the evaluation, USAID Philippines was in the process of planning its next five-years and it is up to the agency to decide on whether a facility like Phil-Am Fund would be relevant to its future directions and priorities. USAID's Journey to Self-reliance provides hope for a mechanism like Phil-Am Fund since it is focused on developing the capacity of local stakeholders. One relevant USAID initiative related to the Journey to Self-reliance is called Local Works. Ms. Robielos referred to it as one mechanism that might be similar to Phil-Am Fund but is more focused on specific theme. The potential in this initiative is for Phil-Am Fund grantees to be local implementing agencies or sub-grantees.

The challenge of sustaining Phil-Am Fund and its wealth of knowledge also falls on GRF as the main contractor and the frontline image for all 37 grantees and their respective stakeholders. Both former CORs of the facility also raised the idea of GRF sustaining Phil-Am Fund's community of grantees. While it might also be a question of resources, they pondered that sustaining the network, facilitating meetings and learning events and working together on some issues may also be a good investment. Doing so will make GRF strategically positioned to secure funding from specific offices in USAID Philippines and in the process, could potentially continue supporting some Phil-Am Fund grantees.

Blossoms from the Fields

While sustainability at USAID and GRF levels depend heavily on resources, stories of the grantees conveyed different dynamics. They tell of new investment modalities, partnerships, capacities, new-found confidence, behavior change, commitment, and affirmation of their reason for being. Sustainability at the community or stakeholder level was built on very specific accomplishments of the project. Be it a start-up business, a new technology that popularizes teaching methodologies, a new consortium, a notable improvement in scorecards, or a rediscovered species, they all contributed to specific site, sector, or community challenges.

To explore the issue of sustainability and search for Phil-Am Fund's contribution to inclusive development, the GRF initiated a study called Development Pathways – potential models for development as pioneered and tested by its grants. For economic growth grants, one

sustainability model could be promoting inclusive growth by the establishing of an inclusive business model with a heart, value creation and capital infusion.

Anti-Trafficking in Persons. Sustainability discussions in the ATIP category hinged on the expansion of previously used strategies in battling trafficking in persons. Phil-Am Fund supported activities that added additional dimension to battle-tested strategies like having IEC campaigns that targeted not only the vulnerable children but also the worlds closest to them like their communities, schools, and people that they regularly meet like tricycle and jeepney drivers, porters, and others.

All ATIP grantees integrated IEC campaigns in their overall strategies. Individually however, each grantee contributed lessons that could help sustain and make the battle against trafficking more effective. Bidlisiw's efforts for children displaced by typhoon Yolanda could provide the blueprint for anti-trafficking efforts during disasters. Communities, families and the children themselves were engaged in establishing child protection structures, services, and mechanisms. The Children's Legal Bureau (CLB) also harnessed community participation in rescuing and reintegrating trafficked persons and fostered cooperation for detection and prosecution. FORGE, on the other hand, involved the front liners in the transport and tourism sector since cases of trafficking take place in tourist and transit areas every so often. Through these initiatives, FORGE reached out to porters, *pedi-cabs*, taxi drivers, as well as hotels and resorts.

PREDA through Phil-Am Fund strengthened their community-based preventive education program on children's rights, child abuse prevention, responsible parenting and accountability in responding to child abuse cases, targeted toward parents, teachers, local social workers, village officials and residence personnel. Tambayan Center for Childrens' Rights' implemented a COUNTER/TIPSTER Project that capitalized on community participation to catch traffickers. Tambayan also carried out a participatory action research in six target barangays in the cities of Davao, Digos and General Santos which assessed families' vulnerability to trafficking in persons. These assessments were basis for the livelihood skills training and the incoming generating activities that were held for these communities.

Children's Legal Bureau (CLB) and Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw, Inc. (BALAOD Mindanaw) intensified their Awareness Raising and Youth Advocacy campaigns focusing on Grades 9 and 10 who were considered as the most vulnerable age group of children to trafficking. Preparation and distribution of IEC materials, organization of special events, and promoting awareness through social media, training and education were done to raise awareness and strengthen advocacy on ATIP. BALAOD Mindanaw organized educational caravans and paralegal training in select public high schools. It also sponsored a separate IEC campaign among hearing impaired students.

While most interventions were not new, Phil-Am Fund's support affirmed the effectiveness and appropriateness of the activities implemented by ATIP partners. These activities demonstrated strategies that could provide the foundations for a more effective and comprehensive anti-trafficking interventions. And in cases of those who have already been victimized, the Phil-Am Fund grantees also showed the way in providing life-nurturing care and services. One of the

most significant value added of Phil-Am Fund was its role in facilitating linkages with USAID and other CSOs in the same thematic priority, coordination, and the synergy with Phil-Am Fund ATIP grantees that brought more depth, wider reach, and increased resources for ATIP. The consortium established by ATIP grantees in Cebu did not only enhance ATIP interventions in the province but also provided inspiration and strength to the organizations themselves, affirming their niche in their chosen field and encouraging them to battle on.

Economic Growth. Economic growth grantees demonstrated that business groups could "leverage their unique position in a locality or within their industry to contribute solutions to issues of local economic growth." OROCHAMBER strengthened the institutional capacities of its community and local indigenous people partners and used its knowledge of the needs of its industry to broker partnerships with those that can fulfill those needs. TDFI and PinoyME worked with individuals and local organizations respectively. Both organizations assisted their partners in the areas of product development, marketing, and eventually in linking them to broader markets. Like Oro Chamber, TDFI and PinoyME acted as "advocate and honest broker", through a business model that promotes "inclusive business" for "inclusive growth"."

"The model also showed the possibility that indigenous structures and institutions can be starting points rather than constraints for promoting entrepreneurship and business. In an ancestral domain setting, indigenous people communities can be integrated into and actively participate in the local economy. Here, development assistance enabled them to grow their self-awareness of their capacity to become active entrepreneurs, but consistent with their identity and culture and faithful to their principle of responsible stewardship of their land."

The continuing search and efforts at creating new values from old locally-found resources proved profitable for RFI and its partner communities. Strategic capital infusion stimulated unprecedented growth for PARFUND and TAMACO. PinoyME enhanced farm productions of its local partners through inclusive value chains where community participation became an integral element.

Overall, economic growth grants effectively demonstrated that the confluence of business organizations with a heart, appropriate linkages, creating new values and strategic capital infusion, and integration of local players in business value chains could trigger potential sustainability of economic activities in the country.

Biodiversity Conservation. Sustaining biodiversity projects is one of the more challenging concerns of Phil-Am Fund. Understanding that current investments on biodiversity focus more on direct conservation actions rather than providing short-term income or incentives. In the Development Pathways written for the Facility, the authors acknowledge that ignoring the basic needs of conservation workers threaten the very resources that they intend to protect. In the Philippines, conservation work almost always relies on local communities for implementation and sustainability. The problem is that the same communities commonly live in impoverished areas and are heavily dependent on resource extraction for their well-being. One promising intervention as the Development Pathways document explicitly mentioned is the inclusion of Conservation Enterprises as a key project component.

The principles behind including conservation enterprises is that the enterprises could potentially ease pressures on natural resources thereby promoting growth and regeneration, it provides incentives for local communities to contribute to conservation efforts, and promotes an awareness on the value of intact ecosystems and in sustaining their ecosystems services.

Phil-Am Fund's Biodiversity Component supported the most number of grantees in the project and the types of conservation enterprises and other livelihood activities were as diverse as the partner CSOs implementing them and the number of communities they worked with. The Development Pathways noted: Some programs have short-term return on investments (e.g. handicraft making, beekeeping by-products) while some have long-term (e.g. fruit bearing trees, raising of chickens and pigs).

The other cases also illustrated having more than one type of livelihood programs to the community. In the case of TLDFI, aside from abaca production, the project also offers alternative crops (e.g. coffee, fruit bearing trees) to protect and grow with a provision of a maintenance fee for every tree they grow which serves as their source of income while waiting for their main crops to be harvested. CANDIS offers tourism-based services such as forest and mangrove trekking, bird watching and even eco-camping. C3PH's livelihood on handicrafts, on the other hand, offered a community-wide livelihood program known as Busuanga WEAVE (Women Entrepreneurs and Valuing the Environment).

Notable also were the benefit sharing schemes supported by Phil-Am Fund. The case of PATH Foundation where the organization signed an agreement allocating thirty percent of the profit gained from the enterprise to cover the maintenance cost of the marine protected area (MPA), of CANDIS allocating bigger portion of proceeds from community-based tourism services to sea turtles and MPA initiatives, and of SPIADFI allowing a fifty-fifty sharing of income from their salabat (ginger ale) production are some outstanding models of benefit sharing that could contribute to the discussion of sustainability. For the grantees, the importance and sustainability of their work relies on intergenerational equity where the desire is to make the resources, choices, and opportunities available to their children and grandchildren and the generations after them.

Education. Meeting an urgent need is one of the preconditions of sustainability. The education grants contributed to the efforts at addressing last mile challenges to education by responding to urgent needs of local communities and the educators as well. The education grants aligned significantly with the efforts of the government to reach out to as many learners as possible through technology, innovative contents and approaches.

The Conrado and Ladislawa Alcantara Foundation, Inc. (CLAFI), pushed for the integration of the Blaan language in the DepEd Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) curriculum, addressing 'last mile' learning challenges in far flung areas and hard to reach indigenous communities. Other than helping around 15,298 Blaan children to read, write and express themselves, CLAFI's efforts also ensured that an indigenous tradition, such as Flalok, to

endure in the face of technology and modernization. In fact, Flalok became a learning tool that could now aid learning of the Blaan communities.

The Integrated Mindanaoans Association for Natives, Inc. (IMAN), reached out to another hard to reach sector – children in situations of armed conflict – through its project called Innovations for Rural Education Advancement (iREAd) Project for Moro Children in Mindanao. Using technology, IMAN's iREAd project went head on in addressing the effects of conflict and violence on the lives of children and their families relative to their need for education. The iREAd project implemented in-school and off-school interventions the aid of technology including the use of portable computer tablets and other audio-visual equipment such as laptops and projectors for instruction, supported with the necessary infrastructure for electricity needs.

Another Phil-Am Fund grantee, the Resources for the Blind, Inc. (RBI) launched a two-year project to improve Braille Literacy among adults. The project weighed in on efforts to address "reduction of the quality of life, social dependency, and economic loss" caused by visual impairments in more than 2 million people in the country. RBI produced Braille literacy assessment tools to measure current and future results of adult Braille literacy courses. They also acquired modern Braille technology and printing facility and developed an Adult Braille Literacy Instruction Module. This module was designed to focus on learner motivation given their assessment findings. The Foundation for Information Technology Education Development, Inc. (FIT-ED), on the other hand, digitized a DepEd instruction on Early Languary, Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) and translated it into a 10-day training to a self-instructional interactive multimedia courseware stored in a CD format which can be used any time during the school year. FIT-ED's project directly responded to DepEd's need to train 600,000 teachers for its K-12 Program (DepEd Order no. 35).

Phil-Am Fund Education grantees recognized an urgent need and responded accordingly. The projects were both highly relevant and strategic, contributing directly to DepEd and other government agency's budgeted programs. And other than broader acceptance within government institutions, they have touched the lives of individuals, uniquely affecting personal, social, and even economic needs of those were involved in the projects. With impacts happening at the context for which the projects were developed and with acceptance and recognition coming from those who hold the resources like government agencies, sustainability is no longer a remote possibility for Phil-Am Fund Education grantees.

Governance. Phil-Am Fund grantees in sustainability maybe viewed not only in terms of having a continued funding on what the projects originally intended to do. Another perspective is the internalization of governance principles at the organizational and personal levels. The Development Pathways noted that "the governance initiatives that USAID's Philippine-American Fund supported all have this characteristic: building people's capacity to participate in effecting good governance."

The cross-cutting element of the governance grants was to build capacity to know, learn, understand, internalize governance principles and consequently practice them at the personal and organizational levels. It was developing a new perspective with which to view how individuals

and organizations, theirs and their target partners like local government units, make and eventually execute decisions. As the Development Pathways mentioned - For the Jaime V. Ongpin Foundation, Inc. (JVOFI) it was the active participation of Indigenous People's in protecting the Amburayan river basin and watershed. The Young Public Servants' (YPS) Youth Vote Philippines (YVP) initiative was all about political participation of the youth in securing clean elections and securing their future by electing good officials. The Naga City People's Council (NCPC) was for empowered people's organizations to participate in local governance. The Antique Federation of Non-Government Organizations (AFON) turned citizens to project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) experts at the local level. The Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) used a customized ASEAN Corporate Governance Scorecard (ACGS) and information education and communications (IEC) materials to improve the capacity and performance of Philippine corporations in the context of ASEAN standards.

As the Development Pathways aptly documented, the governance projects supported by the Phil-Am Fund recognized the importance of strengthening people's participation to achieve their development outcomes. Whether it is to increase political participation in the exercise of the vote or in government decision-making processes, in making the government more accountability through M&E activities, and in becoming partners to protect natural resources, participation and enabling effective participation became valuable in seeing results. Strengthening is a key and the most important prerequisite to effective participation. Strengthening took various forms in Phil-Am Fund grants but the intent was the same – to capacitate local partners, citizens and individuals to actively and effectively participate in governance.

Knowledge and skills from the governance projects were both organizational and personal. Sustaining them would then be a function of organizational and personal decisions. At the organizational level, the knowledge and skills could be mainstreamed into organizational practices and culture. They could be used as additional organizational competency as they conduct their business. For individuals, the measure could be the application of the practical skills and knowledge in the area of governance through continued participation in activities ensuring the rule of law, transparency and accountability, and the efficiency and effectiveness of community or government-initiated projects.

7.0 Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Along with the variety of the grantees and the range of benefits derived from the project. The lessons and recommendations also vary with the different stakeholders of the Facility.

1. Retail approach in grant-making can extensively expand USAID's local partnership base, allowing it to work with small local organizations that may have been challenging to work with within the context of regular business processes of USAID. Most Phil-Am Fund grantees recommend for another cycle of Phil-Am Fund type grant-making facility to support more local initiatives addressing local development challenges

2. Phil-Am Fund levelled the playing field between major traditional USAID contractors and local CSOs. In fact, it even switched the advantage to local CSOs for their understanding of the local context in development. USAID should consider doing more grant making projects like Phil-Am Fund to promote capacity-building and self-reliance of local CSOs.

3. Phil-Am Fund showed how grants can be a powerful tool in stimulating self-driven capacity-development among its grantees. What initially was simple compliance turned to strong desires for improvements in organizational capacity given USAID and GRF's sustained support and the healthy competition among grantees to enhance their NUPAS standing. Aside from continuing the Facility, grantees also recommend that USAID or GRF provide referrals or linkages with other grant facilities.

4. Development interventions could be more effective if they proceed from awareness, to learning, to action. Technical assistance projects can focus inadvertently on the technical or technology transfer aspects and miss out on other critical dimensions that would make the technology or solution work more effectively. Recommendation is to sustain the approach of combining technical assistance with awareness raising, capacity building and then moving on to action. Phil-Am Fund demonstrated that this path can generate effective buy-in and commitment from the critical stakeholders in the grantees' activities.

5. It is crucial to understand the larger system or the larger context where the intervention is situated. Across thematic areas, the importance of seeing the larger system or the bigger context was highlighted. The awareness and recognition of the larger environment was crucial in the participants' understanding of the activities, and their consequent actions and decisions. For more strategic interventions, the targeted groups should be made aware of the value chain for their product, or the market system where they need to determine the most effective way of participating and optimizing the opportunities that are present. This made it possible for the community and the groups to actively participate and enhance their position or exert influence in the processes involved in the value chain.

6. Non-state institutions can broker the needed partnerships, collaboration, and network building. Non-state organizations could serve as catalysts to build networks and link

institutions, organizations, or groups to address a common development challenge. Drawing from their strengths and networking skills, they can create networks where there is none, or link players that otherwise would not have been linked. GRF can build on its already existing network through Phil-Am Fund while USAID may consider the Phil-Am Fund strategy in building partnerships.

7. Non-state initiatives could provide proofs of concept, stimulate local government interest, and generate institutional commitment. Initiatives by non-state actors, such as the grantees under the Phil-Am Fund, can assist local governments in various ways. The initiatives could provide proofs of concept, enable local governments to link with other critical stakeholders, strengthen existing local government initiatives, or serve as entry points for local governments to take up the initiatives and adopt decisions to sustain them after the Phil-Am Fund support has been completed.

8. Strategic financing, like venture capital, could bring innovation to work. Phil-Am Fund could be considered as strategic financing, as it leveraged the availability of financing to enable capable partners to explore solutions drawn from and focused on the community to address defined development problems. Three (3) critical elements appear to have worked for the Phil-Am Fund: (1) a feasible and defined scope of the development issues to be targeted; (2) a partnership with capable non-state organizations whose expertise and networking potentials were made evident in their proposals and in the implementation of the interventions; and (3) ideas or approaches that respond to the scope of development issues earlier identified.

At the end, the importance of Phil-Am Fund is summarized in the Pathways to Development: "USAID, through the Phil-Am Fund, recognized the fundamental role of civil society organizations in making development more broad-based and inclusive. Experience from the field shows that the "Journey to Self-reliance", which USAID is committed to pursue, starts at the community level. They are better informed of their local context and are best positioned to address challenges faced by fellow community members. The experience and interventions shared in this publication show how initiatives that strengthen capacity of local groups and organizations pave effective pathways for development and self-reliance."

Annex A

Phil-Am Fund Grantee Factsheets

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND
ANTI-TRAFFICKING GRANT

The Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative: Integrating the Human Rights Framework in Educating High School Students on Anti-Human Trafficking Project

As one of the major economic and transport hubs in Mindanao, Cagayan de Oro has become a prime trafficking hotspot. The city has a well-developed harbor, an international airport and an extensive road network, making it a convenient destination and transit point for human trafficking activities.

The lack of awareness on trafficking in persons increases risks especially for children in vulnerable communities. According to the City Social Welfare and Development Office, most trafficked children end up sexually exploited in bars and cybersex dens within Cagayan de Oro.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw (BALAOD Mindanaw) in addressing the increasing cases of trafficking in Cagayan de Oro City. Project activities aim to build a strong awareness and prevention campaign which involves students, teachers and parents. BALAOD conducts these campaigns in high schools to encourage teenage students to share information on human trafficking with their own families and communities. BALAOD also forms a network of paralegal youths and provides them with appropriate skills training and workshops. These activities enable paralegal youths to protect themselves and other potential victims from traffickers.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To increase awareness of high school students on children's rights and human trafficking

TARGET AREAS
Cagayan de Oro City and Misamis Oriental province

GRANTEE
Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw (BALAOD Mindanaw)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
July 2016 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

BALAOD
Nolasco Ritz Lee Santos III
Executive Director
balaodmindanaw@gmail.com

PROJECT UPDATES

BALAOD works with 34 public high schools in Cagayan de Oro City and neighboring municipalities in its awareness-raising campaigns. These activities will heighten the awareness of at least 12,000 high school students on human rights and human trafficking issues.

As of March 2018, BALAOD conducted school-based campaigns reaching a total of 13,590 individuals, 53 percent of whom are women. These campaigns are designed to prevent human trafficking by increasing the knowledge of students, teachers and parents on human rights, laws on human trafficking, forms of trafficking and child abuse.

During the quarter, the Cagayan de Oro City legislative council approved the proposed amendments to the city children's welfare code during the third reading. The amendments included the regulation of child entry in temporary residences, prohibition of minors in adult entertainment businesses and additional requirements for travelling with minors in ports and terminals. The amendments were submitted to the office of the city mayor for approval. Upon approval, the city will continue with the drafting of the implementing rules and regulations for the new policies.

On Mar. 8, 2018, around 2,000 people coming from the cities of Cagayan de Oro and El Salvador and nearby municipalities attended an advocacy concert at the Limketkai Center. In celebration of the International Women's Day, BALAOD organized the concert dubbed as Stop Trafficking of Persons (STOP) to popularize the advocacy of the organization. The concert featured performances from Ooberfuse, an English human rights and anti-trafficking songwriting duo, and Ebe Dancel whose songs urged the audience to participate more in activities that fight human trafficking.

As part of BALAOD's project sustainability mechanisms, a total of 11 partner schools formulated a referral system for child abuse and trafficking cases reported to teachers or the school's guidance counselor. Upon approval of the district supervisor, these mechanisms will be presented to respective barangays for the issuance of a corresponding resolution that will institutionalize this referral process.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND ANTI-TRAFFICKING GRANT

Withdrawing and Preventing Children and Young People from Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation in a Post-Disaster (Typhoon Yolanda) Area Project

On Nov. 8, 2013, Super Typhoon Yolanda (internationally named Haiyan), one of the strongest typhoons to make landfall in recorded history, struck the Visayas region of the Philippines. Typhoon Yolanda caused close to 6,000 deaths and displaced over 4 million people. The vast economic and social damage of this typhoon heightened the susceptibility of affected communities to trafficking, especially children. The Department of Social Welfare and Development reported increased cases of unaccompanied and separated children in Typhoon Yolanda-stricken areas, resulting in increased vulnerabilities to child trafficking.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, worked with Bidlisiw Foundation to combat trafficking in persons in a post-calamity area by conducting educational, healing and recovery activities, as well as providing reintegration services for trafficking survivors and their families. Bidlisiw partnered with local organizations to prevent trafficking in several municipalities in Northern Iloilo, one of the areas hardest hit by Typhoon Yolanda.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Build awareness on the risks and consequences of trafficking
- Establish protection mechanisms for trafficked children

TARGET AREA

Northern Iloilo

GRANTEE

Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

August 2015 to March 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

Bidlisiw
Lolita Go Ganapin
Executive Director
lolits@bidlisiwfoundation.org

PROJECT RESULTS

Despite being rural in nature, many areas in Northern Iloilo exhibited bustling economic activities with the presence of several entertainment establishments, lodging houses and merchants. In addition, since these municipalities were close to tourist spots such as Sicogon and Gigantes Islands, resorts and travel packages were also a booming business in the region. Number of tourists increased over time. Children and teenagers were seen around these areas during late hours in the evening. These indicators showed that the region was prone to human trafficking activities.

Through their years of work in these communities, Bidlisiw has observed the lack of strong outreach services to directly identify and rescue victims of trafficking in persons as well as a provision of a comprehensive after-care services. This was due to the lack of manpower and capability to manage the cases at the Social Welfare Office.

Bidlisiw's project used a community-based approach in identifying trafficking victims and conducting healing and reintegration activities for them. The Child and Family Healing, Recovery and Re-integration framework of intervention was used to provide comprehensive services to victims of trafficking and commercially sexually exploited children together with their families in the covered areas.

Project sites covered nine of the Fifth District municipalities namely: Barotac Viejo, Ajuy, Sara, San Dionisio, Batad, Balasan, Carles, Concepcion, and Estancia. These areas were also known as the "Yolanda Hi-way" since they were the most affected by Typhoon Yolanda.

Bidlisiw has conducted a series of community awareness-raising sessions, reaching a total of 3,459 individuals, 63 percent of whom are women, coming from these municipalities. Informative sessions have augmented their understanding about trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children.

A total of 1,110 children and young people vulnerable to trafficking were provided with necessary information to prevent and protect themselves and others from becoming victims. These informative sessions were provided through a one-on-one community outreach education and learning activities.

After undergoing the training, these children and young advocates were able to identify and report trafficking incidents where some cases were forwarded to proper authorities such as the Philippine National Police, Regional Inter Agency Council Against Trafficking (RIACAT), either for apprehension or surveillance.

After three years of implementing the project, Bidlisiw was able to reach a total of 1,149 Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC), 41 percent of whom are girls, who were encouraged to undergo comprehensive interventions such as therapeutic sessions, diversion exercises like cooking and acting, and family development activities.

Community watch groups (CWG) were also trained on how to detect, report and assist child protection cases like trafficking in persons and child abuse in their areas. The CWG and other community volunteers involved in the project were linked with the respective Municipal Social Welfare Development Office, so they can work together in the provision of services to victims of trafficking.

Aside from the direct services provided to victims and vulnerable groups of trafficking in persons, five of the project sites were able to pass policies which were responsive to the issue of trafficking in persons in their own locality. These policies included the re-activation of their local council against trafficking, establishment of port help desks, appointment of personnel for the said help desks and approval of their two-year strategic plans. These plans were shared with the RIACAT and the Provincial Committee on Anti-Trafficking for continuous implementation and monitoring in the local government units.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND ANTI-TRAFFICKING GRANT

Empowering Communities and Building Partnerships for Anti-Trafficking in Persons Project

Cebu, the center of shipping and tourism in Central Visayas, is identified as a trafficking hotspot. There are alarming reports of trafficking for child cyber pornography and prostitution in three sites in Cebu. In December 2015, two individuals were charged with trafficking and child exploitation after the U.S. Department of Homeland Security tipped off local authorities.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports the Children's Legal Bureau (CLB) in protecting vulnerable groups from trafficking and other forms of exploitation by raising stakeholders' awareness, strengthening local referral networks and prosecuting traffickers. CLB trains frontline responders from local governments and other watch groups to detect and prevent trafficking, as well as protect victims.

The organization also provides skills training and psycho-social counseling services to reintegrate rescued victims to their families and communities. They also engage local officials to pass counter-trafficking laws and coordinate in investigations and rescue operations.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Rescue and reintegrate trafficked persons
- Foster cooperation to improve detection and prosecution

TARGET AREAS

Talisay City, Bogo City and Municipality of Cordova, Cebu Province

GRANTEE

Children's Legal Bureau (CLB)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

July 2014 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

CLB
Joan Dymphna G. Saniel
Executive Director
joan.saniel@clbph.org

PROJECT RESULTS

The project facilitated the setting up of mechanisms from the Municipal and City Levels down to the Barangay and Community levels to respond to cases of TIP from prevention and protection, to law enforcement and prosecution.

At the Municipal and City level, the Local Councils for the Protection of Children (LCAT) were established in the three target areas of Cordova, Talisay City and Danao City. Under the LCAT, the Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) was organized that composed of the agencies directly handling the victims of TIP like the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Philippine National Police (PNP).

At the barangay level, the 41 Barangay Councils for the Welfare of Children (BCPCs) were strengthened and ATIP Committee or Barangay Council against Trafficking (BCAT) was organized under the BCPC where 570 volunteers from 41 barangays were also organized as Community Watch Groups tasked to report and monitor cases of TIP and possible cases of TIP. From the BCPC and CWGs, paralegals and para-social workers were trained to assist the victims from case filing up to reintegration.

With these mechanisms in place, information dissemination activities reached more than 19,000 people. This resulted in 26 incidents of TIP reported to the MDT and 91 victims assisted.

To improve the capacity of local government units (LGUs) and other community leaders to prevent and advocate against trafficking, the project facilitated the passing of 41 barangay ordinances authorizing 41 BCPCs to implement programs to prevent TIP in the three areas.

A City Ordinance on ATIP was passed in Bogo City, the City Ordinance on ATIP of Talisay City was updated and amended and a Municipal Ordinance on ATIP was passed in Cordova. These ordinances formalized the creation of LCAT and appropriated P200,000 in Bogo and Cordova and P1Million for Talisay City for ATIP Programs. Out of the 26 incidents reported to LCAT, 20 came from BCPC and CWG. Out of the 26 incidents, 14 ended up in case filing with 12 traffickers arrested. For some, more than 1 case was filed for each incident as most trafficking cases include elements of Child Pornography and Child Abuse.

To improve the capacity and sustainability of CLB as an advocate for ATIP, a network of civil society organizations (CSOs) for ATIP in the Visayas composed of 49 CSOs, with 28 based in Cebu Province and 21 based in Leyte, Samar, Iloilo, Bohol, and Negros, was created during the Visayas CSO Summit.

Representatives from each region were chosen to compose the core group to plan for future activities. The network is a venue for sharing of IEC materials, researches, good practices, information, and referrals for trafficking cases.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND ANTI-TRAFFICKING GRANT

Anti-Child Trafficking Initiatives at Source Communities in Cebu Province (ACT@Source) Project

The 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report of the U.S. Department of State identified Cebu as one of the leading destinations of sex trafficking victims. Cebu was also tagged as a pedophilia hotspot where the highest rate of child sex tourism in the country was recorded. Recruiting teenage girls from poor areas in the city, as well as from remote islands in the province continues to be rampant. The number of traffickers trading and pimping children for cybersex and prostitution is increasing in various transit areas around the province such as island resorts, ports and bus terminals.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports the Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors (FORGE) in strengthening anti-trafficking in persons (ATIP) advocacies in different source communities by mobilizing them as first-line responders and prevention officers. FORGE accomplishes this goal by partnering with barangay-level front liners, as well as women and youth organizations, transport, tourism and other community-based groups.

FORGE operates the Teen Dreamers' Home, a haven for teenage girl survivors and the FORGE Boys' Home for teenage boy survivors. Teen Dreamers' Home and Boys' Home are residential care facilities for commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC) and sex trafficking survivors who voluntarily sought help to free themselves from abusive situations.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Mobilize communities for the prevention of human trafficking
- Strengthen community response mechanisms

TARGET AREA

Cebu Province

GRANTEE

Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors (FORGE)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

July 2016 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

FORGE
Atty. Ruth Restauro
Executive Director
forge_cebu@yahoo.com

PROJECT UPDATES

FORGE, through the Regional Inter-Agency Council on Anti-Trafficking (RIACAT), strengthens coordination of duty bearers to improve victim referral systems and trafficking case management. FORGE also works with local governments in passing policies to counter trafficking.

As of June 2018, supplementary psycho-social intervention has been provided to 50 teenage and children survivors, 78 percent of whom are girls. At the Teen Dreamers' Home, study sessions focused on human development and coping with emotions and stress. Girls distinguished the difference between healthy and unhealthy expression of emotions and identified negative behaviors that can be prevented by controlling emotions. Meanwhile, at the Boys' Home, study sessions included topics on reproductive health and sexual hygiene and how to manage sexual urges.

Awareness and capacity-building activities reached a total of 283 adults (86 percent of whom are women) who are part of the Community Child Protection Volunteers (CCPV) and 348 youths (61 percent of whom are girls) who are volunteers of the Kabataan Batok sa Trapiking ug Abuso (KABATA) or Youth Against Child Trafficking and Abuse. The project has also reached 382 members (51 percent of whom are women) of the Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPCs). They showed their commitment by actively participating in different meetings, capacity-building and mobilization activities in their communities.

All eight target barangays of the project developed their referral and reporting flow in responding to TIP and child abuse cases. During the activity, BCPC members clarified the tasks and functions of duty bearers based on the reporting flow process. The BCPC members also cited unreported and unrecorded child abuses and child trafficking cases in the barangays due to the absence of a referral and reporting system. These incidents prevent duty bearers from responding properly. At the end of the sessions, BCPC members agreed to propose the issuance of a barangay ordinance for the adoption and institutionalization of the process flows. Once approved, the referral and reporting flow will be posted in conspicuous areas in the barangays to inform the public on the process of reporting cases. CCPV and KABATA members will also conduct community orientations to raise public awareness on the referral system. A total of 229 participants (68 percent of whom are female) attended the sessions.

During the quarter, a year-end partners' assembly was conducted on May 22-23, 2018 in Cordova which was participated by members of KABATA and CCPV, and representatives of the barangay government from all target barangays.

The assembly was designed to facilitate sharing of accomplishments, best practices and learnings in ATIP interventions, and to assess project implementation. Accomplishments reported include: (1) education sessions on ATIP and children's rights; (2) recruitment of new members to CCPV and KABATA; (3) formation and reactivation of barangay councils for the protection of children; and (4) appointment of GAD focal for Barangay Sta. Rosa, Lapu-lapu City and Barangay Poblacion, San Remigio. For the evaluation, the average rating given by the participants was between good to excellent. Participants recommended that FORGE leave a more tangible and doable strategy in organizing communities to ensure continuity. A total of 88 individuals (73 percent of whom are female) attended the activity.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND ANTI-TRAFFICKING GRANT

Rescuing Girls and Boys from Trafficking and Providing Healing, Education and Legal Assistance to Victims Project

The 2016 U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report cited Metro Manila, Central and Northern Luzon as among the top destination areas for human trafficking in the Philippines. The report noted that people from low income and displaced communities are trafficked into domestic servitude, forced begging, forced labor and sex.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, contributed to the operations of People's Recovery Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation's (PREDA) two shelter houses located in Olongapo City, a tourist hub reputed to be a hotspot for trafficking. PREDA worked with members of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children, local Social Welfare Development Offices, Violence against Women and their Children desks and Regional Trial Courts in rescue operations. They also assisted victims by giving legal advice to prepare them for court hearings. The organization also reached out to schools and tourism business owners in creating awareness and preventing trafficking.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Assist in trafficking detection and prosecution
- Support shelter operations and victim reintegration
- Build awareness on the risks and consequences of trafficking

TARGET AREAS

National Capital Region, Central, Northern, and Southern Luzon

GRANTEE

People's Recovery Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation (PREDA)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

June 2014 to December 2017

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

PREDA
Francis B. Bermido Jr.
Executive Director
francisbermido@preda.org

PROJECT RESULTS

PREDA has been operating therapeutic homes in Olongapo City for more than four decades. This is where they assist victims by providing them shelter support, as well as healing sessions given by trained facilitators.

In these therapeutic homes, the children are safe from their abusers and they receive comprehensive and integrated direct services. The program is based on positive reinforcement by building up their self-esteem, educating them on their rights and restoring their sense of dignity. PREDA provides direct services including medical assistance, counseling sessions, formal and non-formal education, skills training, as well as psychological and family therapy. Sports and other recreational activities are also being provided.

Emotional Expression Therapy, which is unique to PREDA, allows children to freely express their pain and anger. They find comfort and support from the therapist or facilitator. Once the abuse they experienced is revealed and the children are emotionally free, they are capable to speak to the public and media with conviction and credibility, as well as feel empowered to further seek justice.

The pursuit of justice is an integral part of the children's healing process as it is only when they feel they have attained justice can they truly recover from the exploitation or abuse they have experienced.

Family therapy is also essential especially when a parent or relative has been involved in the trafficking of the child. When the children have recovered and when there is no more threat to their safety in the community, they are reintegrated with their families where they continue to receive aftercare services such as regular monitoring of their situation, legal assistance, if necessary, and educational assistance.

The project employed a holistic approach in tackling issues on child trafficking for sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation. The approach involved implementing community-based preventive education programs, rescuing, protecting and rehabilitating victims, as well as advocating for justice through the implementation of child protection laws.

It was designed to protect children who are most vulnerable against trafficking. It also aimed to ensure that victims were

healed and encouraged to seek justice and gradually rebuild their lives.

Community-based preventive education seminars were conducted in various towns in Zambales and nearby provinces, where communities were not fully aware about children's rights and the services available to child trafficking victims.

The increased number of children housed in the therapeutic homes was a result of the strengthened public awareness activities and improved accountability of duty bearers (parents, village officials, teachers, guidance counselors, police and social workers) in the community. PREDA was able to reach a total of 18,103 people by the end of the three-year project implementation. They have also focused on different types of information, education and communication (IEC) materials like brochures, pamphlets, posters and stickers which were distributed to the above-mentioned duty bearers or were posted in public places in the project's target communities.

Importantly, there were 12,713 parents (91 percent of whom are female) who were provided with information about child abuse prevention and responsible parenting. PREDA was also able to reach 3,899 village officials (55 percent of whom are female) who participated in different orientation and seminars, as well as 1,491 school personnel, hoteliers, and residential staff (77 percent of whom are female) who became more aware of these realities and helped improve accountability in responding to child abuse cases in their respective areas.

While the project committed to aid 40 children, PREDA was able to extend assistance to 172 victims of various forms of abuses from homes, exploitation areas and street prostitution and sex trafficking. Most of the children underwent different therapy sessions and types of interventions. Moreover, other children in the community were still given assistance even if they were not housed in PREDA's therapeutic homes. They were considered as Outreach Clients or became After-Care clients because they have been reunited with their families and relatives.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND ANTI-TRAFFICKING GRANT

Countering Trafficking-in-Persons by Sharing Information, Advocacy, Training, Education and Responsive Local Governance (COUNTER/TIPSTER) Project

The cities of Davao, Digos and General Santos are among the thriving economic centers in Mindanao and are known to receive domestic migrants and tourists. These cities are also likely destinations of displaced persons from conflict-affected areas in Central Mindanao. In 2014, 39 percent of human trafficking cases reported in the Philippines occurred in Region XI which includes Davao and Digos cities. Neighboring General Santos City in Saranggani province reported 29 cases of trafficking-in-persons in the same year. The air, sea and land transport hubs in the said areas are strategic entry and exit points for trafficked persons.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports Tambayan Center for Children's Rights in increasing awareness of target communities to become more vigilant in reporting trafficking cases and protecting victims or survivors in the three target cities. USAID also assists Tambayan in strengthening their partnership with local law enforcement authorities to prosecute trafficking offenders.

Tambayan works with local government offices, civil society organizations and business groups in raising awareness on trafficking and increasing support systems for trafficked people. They are developing infomercials to build awareness and vigilance in air, sea and land transportation terminals in the cities of Davao, Digos, and General Santos.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen mechanisms for prevention, protection and provision of support to trafficking survivors/victims
- Expand local networks to fight trafficking in persons

TARGET AREAS

Davao del Sur and Saranggani provinces

GRANTEE

Tambayan Center for Children's Rights

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

August 2015 to May 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

TAMBAYAN
Richard Atamosa
Executive Director
tambayan2009@gmail.com

PROJECT UPDATES

Tambayan closely coordinates with local groups in selected areas located in Davao and Saranggani provinces to establish a service protocol that will improve how they manage trafficking cases.

As of March 2018, Tambayan has assisted a total of 84) victims, 23 percent of whom are female. Tambayan also continued the technical assistance provided to the Barangay Anti-Trafficking Task Force (BAT-TF) in all six target barangays.

During the quarter, BAT-TF continued to invite Tambayan to attend their meetings and give updates on trafficking-in-persons in their community. One of the areas, Barangay 76-A, invited Tambayan representatives to serve as resource persons on the discussion about Anti-Child Pornography in relation to Child Trafficking. The same barangay also informed Tambayan regarding the rescue operation they did to the 8 students who were victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

One key milestone of the project this quarter is the production of a short film titled "Ginapos", a tale of a 13-year-old boy who was a survivor of human trafficking ring based in Cebu City. He left his home in Digos City and took his chances for a better life as a banana vendor in Cebu. Instead of a better life, he found himself involved in a trafficking ring syndicate and was made to peddle drugs with banana selling as front. There he met a girl, who was a victim of sex trafficking and together they plotted to escape from the syndicate. The film ended with the boy reunited with his family and reintegrated into society.

TAMBAYAN's community outreach activities reached 9,065 people, 72 percent of whom are female. They continue to conduct roadshows, street plays, various orientation sessions and awareness-raising campaigns in Saranggani and General Santos areas. They implemented these activities in partnership with the Catholic Church, Saranggani Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office, the Salvation Army Foundation and Calumpang National High School.

C3MC / USAID PHIL-AM FUND

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

Biodiversity Conservation in Puerto Princesa's Northwest Area and its Attached Interconnected Ecosystems Project

The whole province of Palawan is a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). Three mountain ranges, namely, Bacungan, Napsan-Simpucan Salakot, and Irawan, are home to endangered wildlife species such as the hornbill, peacock pheasant and horn toad. These mountain ranges are also connected to seascapes in Honda Bay and Green Island Bay, which provide shelter to sea turtles categorized as critically-endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Despite the province's declaration as KBA, poaching of wildlife and unsustainable harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products are still prevalent in these sites.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, works with Candis 3 Marketing Cooperative (C3MC) in implementing a landscape approach to biodiversity conservation in Puerto Princesa. The approach links biodiversity management with existing beliefs and practices of communities living within the protected areas to ensure local stewardship of resources. C3MC achieves this goal through habitat protection for keystone species, landscape-wide terrestrial ecosystem management, coastal resource management, sea turtle conservation and community strengthening and institutional development.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To improve the natural resource management of Puerto Princesa's Northwest Area and its attached ecosystems

TARGET AREA
Puerto Princesa, Palawan

GRANTEE
Candis 3 Marketing Cooperative (C3MC)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
June 2014 to May 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

C3MC
Bonifacio Tobias
Program Manager
tobiasbonifacio@yahoo.com

PROJECT UPDATES

C3MC mobilizes communities living in Puerto Princesa's KBAs to protect endangered species like sea turtles. They also focus on enriching the biodiversity of their project sites. Their enrichment activities are based on inventory and assessment of existing flora and fauna.

As of March 2018, the project facilitated the release and imprinting of a total of 17,853 juvenile hatchlings from in-situ and ex-situ sites, 1,686 of which were released during the quarter. There were also 3,804 sea turtle eggs found during this period which were recovered and transferred to offsite hatcheries in eight different areas in Western Palawan.

A total of 380 hectares of forests have already been covered by enrichment planting (using endemic and fruit bearing trees) to improve the habitats and sources of food for wildlife.

During the quarter, C3MC conducted a sustainability planning workshop through group discussions and key informant interviews. This involved representatives from the six peoples' organization for sea turtle conservation as institutional partners, six monitoring teams for marine protected areas and forest enrichment as implementing partners and barangay officials as policy and enforcement partners.

During the discussions and interviews, community members developed sustainability plans specifying activities and mechanisms that will be implemented beyond the project. These plans will be consolidated and presented to a technical working group in the next quarter.

To sustain the commitment of these organizations, C3MC is working on their registration with the Department of Labor and Employment for them to acquire juridical benefits.

MARILYN SANTIAGO / USAID PHIL-AM FUND

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

Protecting the Dugongs (*Dugong Dugon*) and Busuanga's Marine Habitats Project

The dugong (*dugong dugon*) is one of the Philippines' most threatened marine mammals. Dugongs once populated many islands of the country. Today, the only remaining habitats for dugongs are in Calauit Island, Barangay Buluang, and New Quezon in Busuanga, Palawan. Busuanga is considered as one of the dugongs' final stronghold in the Philippines, the only area most promising for the survival of this species. While the law prohibits people from capturing dugongs, there are still incidents where dugongs are hunted for their meat, mostly using nets and dynamite. The most significant threat to the survival of the species, however, is their unintended catch, called "bycatch", in fishing nets, followed by the degradation of seagrass beds which is their main source of food.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports Community-Centered Conservation Philippines' (C3PH) commitment to protect the dugongs in Busuanga and its surrounding islands. The project invests in research on the dugongs' current population, their habitat, food requirements and life patterns. Gathered information is used as advocacy materials for the local government units and communities. The goal is to create a haven for dugongs, which is possible if Busuanga waters will be declared as a critical habitat for the mammals. Since fishing is the major livelihood in the area, the project involves local communities in various advocacy sessions, which encourages them to prevent the hunting and capturing of dugongs. C3PH also works with fisher folk, seaweed and pearl farm owners in the 39 barangays in Busuanga. They undergo trainings on industry best practices that prevent dugong bycatch, as well as procedures for reporting and safe release in case of a bycatch.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Promote community participation in dugong habitat protection
- Improve conservation enterprise for involved communities

TARGET AREAS

All coastal barangays of Busuanga, Palawan

GRANTEE

Community-Centered Conservation Philippines (C3PH)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

October 2016 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

C3-Philippines
Reynante Ramilo
Program Director
rey@c-3.org.uk

PROJECT UPDATES

As C3PH's project moves forward on the protection of dugongs, its seagrass habitat and the surrounding coastal and marine environment, threats were managed and mitigated through continuous education campaign, awareness building activities and empowerment of fisher folks in Busuanga.

As of March 2018, 11 areas along Calawit Island covering 8.25 hectares were assessed by the survey team composed of the C3PH staff, intern students and community volunteers. Two additional sites were identified during the quarter. These sites were selected based on the presence of seagrass and regular dugong sightings. The result of these habitat assessment activities will form part of the recommendations for the formulation of the Dugong Conservation Area (DCA).

A total of 10 proposed core zones of DCA, covering at least 173 hectares, were initially mapped based on the completed assessments.

During the quarter, a total of 52 dugong sighting forms in six barangays were collected and submitted by the Bantay Dugong Team from identified point persons per barangay. The forms were encoded in a database and analyzed to develop a map of dugong hotspots. The sighting form will be enhanced to include a map where fishermen can determine the approximate location of the sighting.

A Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping session was conducted on Jan. 19-20, 2018 at Sitio Calawit, Brgy. Buluang. The second set of maps was presented for validation to the council of elders and Calawit Nurunutan officials on Mar. 11, 2018 at Sitio Calawit.

The draft resolution for declaring Calawit Island as a DCA was presented to the council of elders and Calawit Nurunutan officials. The council decided to wait for the presentation and approval of the critical habitat map, with zones and restricted activities before making their next move.

ALAIN PASCUA / USAID PHIL-AM FUND

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

Strengthening Capacity of Local Conservation Actors in Managing the Sub-Watersheds of Naujan Lake National Park Project

Naujan Lake, the fifth largest in the Philippines, was recognized as a Wetland of International Importance as it provides home to the Philippine Duck which is listed vulnerable in the International Union for Conservation of Nature red list. The sub-watersheds of the Naujan Lake National Park (NLNP) are also inhabited by endangered and critically endangered biodiversity species including the Philippine Teak, Philippine Warty Pig and the Tamaraw.

The major threat in the area is the ongoing loss of forest cover that averages 557 hectares per year due to the limited capacities of communities to participate in conservation work, lack of coordinated support for biodiversity conservation and very limited options for alternative livelihood.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports Haribon Foundation in strengthening capacities of local conservation actors for the protection of sub-watershed areas in the NLNP. Local government efforts and law enforcement initiatives are being harmonized to improve natural resource management of the key biodiversity area. Communities are also being mobilized to engage in biodiversity-friendly livelihood and agricultural practices.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To harmonize natural resource management initiatives in watershed areas through capacity building and community engagement

TARGET AREAS
Municipalities of Naujan, Victoria, Socorro and Pola, Oriental Mindoro

GRANTEE
Haribon Foundation

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
July 2016 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

Haribon
Ma. Belinda E. de la Paz
Chief Operating Officer
coo@haribon.org.ph

PROJECT UPDATES

Partner local government units (LGUs), Naujan and Victoria, issued their respective executive orders for the creation of the Forest Land Use Plan-Technical Working Group (FLUP-TWG) that will spearhead FLUP formulation. Series of planning workshops to draft the FLUP have already been conducted. To validate biophysical information of Naujan and Victoria, field surveys are currently undertaken by the project's research and survey team within the sub-watersheds of the two partner municipalities.

As of March 2018, FLUPs were already drafted for the municipalities of Victoria and Naujan. The plans incorporated the local ecological profile and the results of the biophysical survey. Around 16 thematic and overlay maps were produced for the effective management of forest resources in the two municipalities.

Meanwhile, all modules designed for the Biodiversity Fellows Program (BFP) have been completed, which produced 12 BFPs from the four partner municipalities. Experiences of these biodiversity fellows in the implementation of their individual conservation programs were documented during the quarter. These stories will be shared to other groups and institutions who were interested to replicate the program and to inspire other communities to commit to nature conservation.

During the quarter, a total of 50 Bantay Gubat members and other community residents (30 percent of whom are female) were trained on the basic principles in using the status, pressure, response methodology in biodiversity monitoring. Participants were also oriented on the use of the mobile app, LAWIN, in monitoring threats in local conservation areas. The workshop was implemented in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the LGUs of Naujan, Victoria, Pola and Socorro.

Community feedback and validation sessions on the biophysical survey of existing flora and fauna were conducted in Barangay Balite, Naujan and Villa Cerveza, Victoria. Representatives from DENR, local planning and environmental offices, barangay officials, community residents and indigenous leaders participated in these events.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

Promoting Participatory Island Development Strategy for Culion, Palawan Project

Culion, a former leprosarium, is part of the Calamianes group of islands in Northern Palawan. The Culion Sea is teeming with fish species including commercially important fish like *lapu-lapu* (Groupers) and *dalagang bukid* (Blue and Gold Fusiliers). Three ecosystems sustain the rich marine life of Culion: mangroves, seagrass, and corals. About 60 percent of mangrove, seagrass, and coral species found in the Philippines are present in Culion.

On March 2015, the Institute of Social Order (ISO) facilitated a community consultation on coastal resource management to identify urgent issues that threaten the island's ecosystems and biodiversity resources. The consultations revealed the following threats: degradation of coastal and marine resources due to mismanagement of rapidly growing tourism and economic activities; weak law enforcement and natural resource governance; and limited participation of local communities in coastal resource management.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports the ISO and its partners in adopting a community-based natural resource management system that ensures the sustainability of Culion's natural resource base. This management system is designed with more adaptive conservation strategies and will support mechanisms for strong community involvement. The project engages with local communities in coastal, marine and mangrove protection and conservation by instilling the values of responsible stewardship among them.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Introduce alternative livelihood focusing mainly on heritage and ecotourism
- Foster network building and policy advocacy

TARGET AREA

Culion, Palawan

GRANTEE

Institute of Social Order (ISO)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

October 2016 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

ISO
Liza L. Lim
Executive Director
iso@admu.edu.ph

PROJECT UPDATES

ISO engages with the local people in Culion and provides them with opportunities to be involved in the preservation and protection of Culion's natural legacy.

As of March 2018, to complete the 60 hectares which the team committed to map under the project, ISO employed aerial mapping and remote sensing of the mangrove reforestation areas in Culion using Google Satellite Images and Maps and open-source cross-platform Quantum Geographic Information System (QGIS) software. ISO was able to identify 66 hectares of potential mangrove reforestation sites. The identified areas will be the target of future out-planting activities. A total of nine barangays are now included as possible sites for the mangrove planting activities.

The coral reef assessment report and technical descriptions for the four marine protected areas (MPA) and fish sanctuaries were completed and finalized by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Region IV-B. The coral reef assessment was conducted on May 22-26, 2018 by the Culion local research team with BFAR IV-B in the municipal waters of Barangays Libis, Binudac, and Galoc covering 401 hectares.

During the quarter, ISO completed the procurement of the patrol boat for use of the Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (MFARMC) and Bantay Dagat. The boat was also used for other project-related transportation, i.e., transport of participants during the Participatory Coastal Resource and Ecological Assessment (PCREA) feedback session, coral reef assessment and hauling of propagules from nurseries to reforestation sites.

Mangrove reforestation activities were also implemented during this period. The four mangrove nurseries established last quarter were stocked with seedlings and propagules mostly of the Rhizophora species, which is dominant in Culion. Reforestation sites were also mapped and surveyed. Around 18 hectares of sparse mangrove forest were reforested with a total of 44,000 seedlings, recording a 90-percent survival rate. Community and people's organization members participated in the out-planting activities in four barangays.

MFI / USAID PHIL-AM FUND

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park (NSMNP): "Ating Buhay-Ilang, Ating Gubat, Ating Bahay" (Our Wildlife, Our Forest, Our Home) Project

The 360,000-hectare Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park (NSMNP) in northeast Luzon is one of the largest and most diverse protected areas in the Philippines. Forty-two globally threatened species in the International Union for Conservation of Nature red list have been recorded in the park, including the critically-endangered Philippine eagle, Isabela Oriole, Philippine crocodile, and Hawksbill Turtle (Van Weerd, 2014). The NSMNP has been identified as an Important Bird Area, a Conservation Priority Area and a Key Biodiversity Area (CI, DENR, & Haribon, 2006). Threats include illegal logging, agricultural encroachment, poaching, hunting and use of destructive fishing practices. The illegal resource extraction activities are partly driven by poverty of upland communities, but are largely the result of a lack of community organization, law enforcement and knowledge. For local communities, the NSMNP remains abstract and irrelevant due to inadequate understanding of biodiversity and its benefits. The local government units (LGUs), on the other hand, have limited knowledge and capacity to significantly contribute to the park's management.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports Mabuwaya Foundation, Inc. (MFI) in protecting nine flagship species and their habitat in areas covered by the NSMNP. The project trains local communities for the conservation of identified species supported by strong advocacy, research and proper management. It also strengthens sharing of information on the NSMNP, its biodiversity resources and its supporting management plan. MFI brings conservation work closer to the hearts of the communities through familiarity with the species and emphasizing their strong relationship with the latter through the project slogan: "Ating Buhay-Ilang, Ating Gubat, Ating Bahay" (Our Wildlife, Our Forest, Our Home).

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To protect biodiversity and natural resources in the NSMNP by effectively engaging local communities in protected area management

TARGET AREAS
9 municipalities in Isabela Province

GRANTEE
Mabuwaya Foundation, Inc. (MFI)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
August 2015 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

MFI
Merlijn van Weerd
Chief Executive Officer
mabuwaya@yahoo.com

PROJECT UPDATES

The project builds on a species-specific conservation program that engages local communities and LGUs for the protection of the NSMNP and its habitat as manifested by accessible research materials in the NSMNP library, local ordinances and community programs.

As of March 2018, the Flying Fox sanctuary in Divilacan and Dinapigue were demarcated with concrete monuments in coordination with the staff of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and members of the communities near the sanctuaries. The sanctuary, which covers an area of approximately 4,660 hectares, was established based on the bio surveys and conducted LGU workshops. Protected Areas Management Board Inc. (PAMBI) resolutions were also issued supporting the establishment if the sanctuary.

Maps of the approved and proposed sanctuaries were transmitted to the PAMBI for inclusion in the updated management plan of the NSMNP. The sanctuaries include the Flying Fox sanctuaries of Divilacan and Dinapique, the proposed sea turtle sanctuaries in Dinapique, Palanan, Divilacan and Maconacon, and the Ilagan Virgin Forest Sanctuary.

During the quarter, results of the biodiversity survey in Dinapigue were presented to the municipal council. The presentation aims to orient LGU officials on High Conservation Value Areas in the municipality and to present special species that need immediate conservation actions. During the presentation, an area in Catambunan was proposed to become a sea turtle sanctuary. The council agreed to review the documents for the proposed sea turtle sanctuary and committed to protect the area.

For its information campaign, the project produced a total of 5,448 copies of the storybook about the NSMNP and its flagship species. Storybook copies will be distributed to all schools in the nine municipalities surrounding the national park.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

Improved Biodiversity Conservation through Effective Local Governance Project

The Ligawasan Marsh, with an area of around 43,000 hectares, is home to important species like the Philippine Tarsier, Philippine Crocodile, white-bellied sea eagle, and native fishes. The marsh is part of the Cotabato River Basin, with an area of 288,000 hectares, comprising of three marshes, the biggest of which is the Ligawasan. The Ligawasan wetland also shelters at least 37 migratory birds and is a haven to endangered and vulnerable avian, reptile and aquatic species, some of which are threatened with extinction. The marsh provides various ecosystem-based goods and services that benefit fisher folk and farmers in the provinces of Maguindanao and North Cotabato. The primary threat to Ligawasan Marsh ecosystem is the degradation of wildlife (faunal) habitat which affects the natural spawning of fishes and terrestrial organisms. The second threat is the unregulated fish catching practices using electricity-operated devices and small-eyed fish nets that trap and destroy fish fingerlings and other small aquatic animals. These threats, if not addressed immediately, will decrease the variety, volume and quality of the natural resources in the area.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports the Maguindanaon Development Foundation, Inc. (MDFI) in increasing and improving the biodiversity of wetland habitats through effective local governance. Strategies involve rehabilitating heavily degraded swamps through assisted natural regeneration of open swamp forests, herbaceous swamps and water ways easements. This intervention should have immediate effects on critical habitats, increasing and improving biodiversity with the support of environment-directed local government policies and programs. This also requires enhancing capacities of local governments to issue ordinances for biodiversity conservation.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To restore wetland habitats through biodiversity conservation, rehabilitation and improved governance in selected Ligawasan Marsh sites

TARGET AREAS
Municipalities of Tulunan, M'lang, and Kabacan, North Cotabato province

GRANTEE
Maguindanaon Development Foundation, Inc. (MDFI)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
August 2015 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

MDFI
Dausay S. Daulog
Executive Director
mdfi24@yahoo.com.ph

PROJECT UPDATES

MDFI has been exerting efforts to facilitate the regeneration of lost and damaged habitats of various fauna in four barangays within and adjacent to the Ligawasan Marsh, areas that are part of the Cotabato Province.

As of March 2018, the planting phase of the rehabilitation efforts covering 80 hectares under the expansion activities was completed. These lands were planted with native grass and native forest trees such as *libi* and *bangkal*. A total of 3,637 *nipa* and *libi* trees and 11,715 *bangkal* were planted. An additional 35 hectares were planted with 2,218 hills of *libi* and 4,400 hills of *bangkal* trees during the quarter. The expansion areas are contiguous to the original target sites.

A total of 1,500 bamboos and 500 *molave* trees were planted along the M'lang River in Brgy. Dungoan spanning 7.5 kilometers. This completes the planting phase of the riverbank rehabilitation initiative under the expansion program.

During the quarter, a biodiversity conservation ordinance was issued by the local legislative council of M'lang, Cotabato, declaring the banks of all rivers and stream as reforestation areas for endemic bamboo groves. The ordinance also declared portions of Brgy. Dungoan and Gaunan in M'lang as a special biodiversity conservation protected area.

A similar ordinance was issued by the local council of Tulunan, Cotabato in February 2018. The ordinance provided the declaration of specific sites in Barangay Dungos as special biodiversity conservation and protection areas.

Partner barangays committed to continue the implementation of policies against illegal and destructive fishing, monitoring of native palms, trees and grasses, and replacing plant mortality. Barangay officials and other members of the Project Implementation Team (PIT) expressed these commitments during the sustainability planning conducted on Mar. 20-21, 2018 in Kidapawan City. A total of 40 barangay officials, PIT members, Bantay Pawas and land owners (3 female) participated in the planning session.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

Strengthening the Role of Indigenous People in Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Governance Project

The province of Palawan is known as the Philippines' "last ecological frontier". Based on the International Union for Conservation of Nature classification, it has 105 out of the 475 threatened species in the Philippines. Of the 105 threatened species, 67 are endemic to the Philippines, while 42 of the 67 Philippine endemics are Palawan endemics. Its coastal and marine ecosystems include coral reef, seagrass meadow and mangrove that serve as habitats to freshwater fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, migratory birds and terrestrial mammals. Despite its high conservation value, the forest is threatened by human activities like logging, encroachment of migrant settlers, poaching and illegal wildlife trade. Significantly, these sites are also considered the ancestral domain of the Tagbanua tribe, which comprise about 51 percent of the local population. They have been working towards conservation and sustainable utilization of these resources, employing traditional ecological indigenous knowledge, skills and practices.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, works with the Nagkakaisang mga Tribu ng Palawan (NATRIPAL) in promoting viable conservation enterprises through sustainable harvesting of wild honey and almaciga resin. Building on the experiences of the Tagbanua Tribe, the project addresses threats through biodiversity mapping and inventory, enrichment planting, community-based monitoring, support to ancestral domain documentation, training of forest and biodiversity stewards and conservation enterprise development. The provision of alternative livelihood opportunities will also strengthen the communities' role as forest stewards.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Protect remaining cultural and biological diversity in target ancestral domains
- Maintain a healthy flow of ecosystem services for the well-being of the community

TARGET AREA

Aborlan, Palawan

GRANTEE

Nagkakaisang mga Tribu ng Palawan (NATRIPAL)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

August 2015 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

NATRIPAL
Johnmart M. Salunday
President
natripalkatutubo@yahoo.com

PROJECT UPDATES

NATRIPAL engages with the Tagbanua Indigenous Peoples community in Palawan by directly partnering with them and involving them in the project's conservation activities like creating biodiversity-based enterprises and conducting biodiversity mapping and enhancement.

As of March 2018, a total of 25,500 seedlings of endemic trees were planted in 50 hectares identified as "rainforestation" sites in the target communities. Agreements were made with the indigenous people's organizations and the barangay officials for the unified management and care of these planted seedlings. Aside from endemic trees, the community has also planted 370 seedlings of almaciga tree and 4,510 bamboo suckers.

The project continues to monitor these areas for the newly planted seedlings in the expansion sites and coordinated with community leaders of Barangays Cabigaan and Barake for geo-tagging, mapping and clearing of reforestation sites. Based on the monitoring activities conducted, the project team discovered that the reforestation area in Cabigaan is composed of 79.3 hectares, exceeding the 30-hectare project target.

During the quarter, a total of 35 community members (46 percent of whom are female) in Barangay Isaub conducted a tree planting activity using 5,000 seedlings of indigenous and fruit-bearing trees. The involvement of the community in the planting of forest and fruit bearing trees, and establishment of nursery enabled them to realize the importance of managing the reforestation site. As a result, the community decided to form an association and recently conducted an oath-taking ceremony for the new set of officers. For Barangay Iraan, 16 community leaders (one of whom is female) planted 2,500 seedlings of various indigenous trees.

One of the key milestones of the project this quarter is the official launching of the NATRIPAL trading center in Aborlan, Palawan. Launched on Mar. 2, 2018, the event was graced by USAID Mission Director Lawrence Hardy II and representatives from the local government unit, the Department of Trade and Industry and NATRIPAL community partners. Displayed products included honey, cashew, banana chips, turmeric and ginger tea, as well as non-food products such as soft broom, split rattan and woven bags. These products were crafted and produced by the indigenous people community.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

SEAnergy Project

Oriental Mindoro is one of the five provinces situated in the Verde Island Passage (VIP) marine Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). VIP is recognized as the world's "center of the center" of marine shore fish biodiversity and is categorized as an extremely high priority for conservation. Marine resources and fish sanctuaries are, however, endangered due to overfishing and tourism activities. Limited economic alternatives for the communities residing within the KBA add pressure to natural resources due to extractive livelihood activities.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports PATH Foundation Philippines in harmonizing local government initiatives and synergizing community efforts for the effective management of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the VIP.

PATH assists the local government units (LGUs) of Calapan City, Baco, San Teodoro, Puerto Galera and Naujan in strengthening MPA management, providing social incentives for communities to support biodiversity conservation work, building up policymakers' support for integrated coastal management and increasing community awareness and support for biodiversity conservation.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To enhance capacities of LGUs and community partners in biodiversity management of protected areas in the Verde Island Passage

TARGET AREAS
Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Oriental Mindoro

GRANTEE
PATH Foundation Philippines

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
July 2016 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

PATH
Dr. Joan Regina L. Castro
Executive Vice President
info@pfpi.org

PROJECT UPDATES

PATH continues to forge cross-sectoral collaboration and apply multidisciplinary interventions to address the identified threats to VIP's fragile ecosystems and the marine species that depend on them.

As of March 2018, a total of 10 conservation agreements had been finalized, which formalized the commitment of people's organizations and the communities to participate in initiatives that promote marine resource conservation and management as they perform their livelihood activities like fishing and seaweed farming.

In building awareness and participation for marine conservation, over 35,000 people were reached through project orientations, community assemblies, information and education campaign materials and community-based mobilizations. The project continues to work towards its goal and monitors progress through regular stakeholder consultations, convergence meetings and on-site participatory monitoring visits.

Using the management effectiveness assessment tool for the 10 marine protected areas covered by the project, PATH continues to monitor the improvements made in the management of these coastal areas. Assessment results revealed an improvement in management priorities which upgraded the effectiveness level of all MPAs from Level 1 to Level 2. These findings were disseminated to the MPA management council, communities, local coastal resource management offices and other concerned agencies to facilitate joint actions needed to improve MPA management.

During the quarter, the project conducted a training on protected area monitoring which was attended by 55 participants, comprised of barangay officials, MPA management council and other community members. The training equipped participants with the technical knowledge in coastal resource management and data gathering methodologies during monitoring. Participants also developed barangay resource maps specifying available environmental resources in the barangay, estimated location of habitats and identified threats to the environment.

A training on evidence gathering, processing and protocols was conducted for all covered MPA communities. This workshop, which was attended by 105 participants (27 percent of whom are female), was designed to help them participate in effective fishery law enforcement, understand protocols in patrolling and apprehension processes and familiarize with available remedies in cases of violations. A resource person from Tanggol Kalikasan, Inc. (TKI), another Phil-Am Fund grantee, was invited to facilitate the training.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation in the Negros Island Regional Development Agenda Project

Negros Island ranks among the world's most ecologically threatened areas. A total of 41 globally-endangered species are in Negros. Despite this, information on biodiversity is still limited. Updated biodiversity data are localized in areas with existing projects. Scientific information is confined to checklists of threatened species which still need to be translated into practical terms to bring in support for environmental governance. Enforcement strategies were mostly directed towards illegal logging, neglecting the role and value of wildlife. Identified threats to wildlife were limited to poaching of exotic wildlife species. Although communities are active in forest patrolling, environmental cases filed were seldom won in courts. A few local enforcement groups were even sued for miscalculated legal procedures. Local management plans cover environmental protection, however, biodiversity conservation is rarely reflected nor integrated in the development plans of local government units (LGUs).

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, works with the Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PBCFI) in creating a unified management plan for the three protected areas in Negros Island. By translating scientific information into laypersons' terms, PBCFI will assist LGUs in developing effective conservation activities. The project enables communities to participate in wildlife monitoring and advocacy programs to heighten awareness and appreciation of biodiversity conservation in Negros Island. Informed stakeholders can also provide support for biodiversity-friendly investments in the three protected areas in Negros namely Northern Negros Natural Park (NNNP), Mount Kanlaon Natural Park (MKNP) and the Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Natural Park (BTLNP).

PBCFI / USAID PHIL-AM FUND

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Establish permanent monitoring stations in the three protected areas in Negros Island
- Hold "legal clinics" or interaction between the legal support group and community volunteers for biodiversity protection and law enforcement
- Develop biodiversity investment portfolios in selected LGUs

TARGET AREA

Negros Island

GRANTEE

Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PBCFI)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

October 2016 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

PBCFI
Errol A. Gatumbato
Vice President
info@pbcfi.org.ph

PROJECT UPDATES

PBCFI has been conducting habitat monitoring and providing local communities with basic scientific knowledge that can aid community biodiversity conservation work.

As of March 2018, a total of 138 citizen scientists were trained in conducting biodiversity monitoring surveys (BMS) and synchronized hornbill counting. Of this number, 55 participants from the different Department of Environment and Natural Resources offices, local farmers' association, local department heads, academe and community volunteers were engaged during the quarter. An actual field survey was included as part of the program. The five restricted-range species were recorded, including the critically-endangered Rufous-headed Hornbill and Negros Bleeding Heart Pigeon.

During the quarter, the project presented the preliminary results of the flora and fauna assessment to the BTLNP Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) on Jan. 31, 2018. The new mistletoe species and the new record of plants discovered in the BTLNP area were also presented to the board.

PBCFI also presented the results of the project to the Negros Oriental provincial council during a legislative session on Feb. 26, 2018. The presentation included the results of key program activities such as BMS training and monitoring, beekeeping enterprise, legal clinics and flora and fauna survey conducted in BTLNP. Provincial Governor Roel Degamo attended the presentation which aims to engage provincial officials in the project implementation.

PEF / USAID PHIL-AM FUND

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation within the Unprotected Region of the Mt. Apo Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) Project

Mt. Apo is one of the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in Mindanao known to host four pairs of the International Union for Conservation of Nature critically-endangered Philippine Eagle and other equally important biodiversity. However, out of the 99,000 hectares in the KBA, only two-thirds is legally protected. Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) engages local communities in expanding protected area management of the Mt. Apo KBA. The direct threats to biodiversity targets at the Apo KBA are (a) agriculture (farms, swidden plots, and plantations), (b) biological resource use (logging, wood harvesting, wildlife hunting, killing, trapping, poaching and accidental trapping), (c) human intrusions and disturbances (farming too close to breeding sites), and (d) natural system modification (e.g. fires).

Key biodiversity attributes continue to get 'stressed' by habitat loss and degradation. Outside the natural park, PEF reported that nearly 10 hectares of forests were felled and cleared for farming in 2013. Ancestral domains were also sold due to poverty of communities residing within. According to PEF, such "distress" land sales are rampant in Mt. Apo and are a result of poor law enforcement. This clearly links upland poverty to loss of biodiversity and natural resources.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, assists PEF in addressing biodiversity threats by using the Philippine Eagle and other focal species as flagships for biodiversity conservation. Simultaneously, PEF strives to improve the quality of life of local communities living in the unprotected areas of Mt. Apo.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Manage unprotected forests as local conservation areas (LCAs)
- Promote sustainability through conservation financing and knowledge management

TARGET AREAS

Davao City and the municipalities of Arakan and Magpet in North Cotabato

GRANTEE

Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

August 2015 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

PEF
Dennis I. Salvador
Executive Director
djisalvador@gmail.com

PROJECT UPDATES

PEF reached out to four sites in an effort to expand and strengthen protection and management within the Mt. Apo KBA. The addition of these sites contributes to the target 36,000 hectares of locally-managed conservation areas.

As of March 2018, the project has exceeded its target by improving the natural resource management of approximately 37,670 hectares of forest domain and watershed. The covered sites were declared as *Pusaka* or sacred by the Manuv'u Tinonanon of Arakan through the signing of a Limlimluwan Declaration – a binding indigenous conservation agreement. A community development plan was also completed for all sites.

During the quarter, five forest guards of Sitio Macati, Barangay Ganatan, Arakan conducted monitoring and patrolling in Mamag and Tinanan on Feb. 14-17, 2018. Of the four trigger species identified under the project, two Almaciga trees were located and a pair of Rufous hornbill was heard within the transects or paths located within a habitat. No notable threats like animal traps were observed. The forest guards also collected data from camera traps and transferred them to new location points within the newly established transects.

The Pusaka Council of Davao City performed a *Pamaas* on Feb. 17, 2018 for ten offenders from Barangay Tambobong, Davao City. The *Pamaas* is the Obu Manuvu's cultural practice in resolving issues and disputes among community members. The offenders were cited for performing illegal farming and logging activities within the Pusaka, an indigenous declaration of Mt. Apo as sacred to the community's culture. After the ritual, offenders were oriented on the provision of the Pusaka declaration and were made to sign an agreement (oath) not to violate the declaration.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

Improved Management of the Siargao Islands Protected Landscapes and Seascapes (SIPLAS) Key Biodiversity Conservation Areas for Sustainable Communities Project

SIPLAS was proclaimed in 1996 as a protected region covering 23 percent terrestrial and 77 percent marine areas. SIPLAS also serves as a sanctuary for several rare and endangered wildlife such as the golden crown flying fox, hawksbill turtle, and the rare Philippine ironwood (*mancono*), the hardest known species of wood. Current threats to SIPLAS stem from increasing socioeconomic demands of communities from inside and outside the area. Rampant illegal cutting of trees for fuel, charcoal-making and housing materials shrink both terrestrial and mangrove areas, thus threatening the remaining watersheds in the island. The conversion of mangroves and forests into agricultural lands results in biodiversity losses and inappropriate development directions. Despite having a SIPLAS Management Plan, low income of communities, poor access to basic social services, lack of livelihood alternatives, coupled with lack of environmental awareness and weak law enforcement continue to endanger these valuable seascapes and landscapes.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports Surigao Economic Development and Microfinance Foundation, Inc. (SEDMFI) in expanding the coverage of conservation initiatives of the local government units (LGUs) in SIPLAS by strengthening partnership with people's organizations (POs) and other stakeholders. SEDMFI contributes to the installation of an effective management system based on the SIPLAS Management Plan to ensure the sustainability of the area and promote community partnerships. The project works towards proper management, strengthened protection activities, effective law enforcement and the establishment of community conservation livelihood activities and initiatives.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Establish protected areas (30 has. fish sanctuaries and 30 has. watersheds)
- Strengthen multi-stakeholders' cooperation and participation in the management of SIPLAS

TARGET AREAS

SIPLAS Municipalities of Sta. Monica and Pilar, Surigao del Norte

GRANTEE

Surigao Economic Development and Microfinance Foundation, Inc. (SEDMFI)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

June 2017 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

SEDMFI
Imelda C. Wines
Executive Director
sedfi85@yahoo.com

PROJECT UPDATES

SEDMFI conducts project presentation, consultations and negotiations with LGU partners as well as operational coordination meetings with the local technical officers and people's organizations (POs).

As of March 2018, SEDMFI has successfully installed the project operation structures and local partnership mechanism for the establishment of protected sites in the reef and ridge areas. It had completed the actual establishment of three marine protected areas (MPAs) covering approximately 140 hectares, as well as the establishment of two community watersheds comprised of approximately 80 hectares.

Management Plans for the MPAs and fish sanctuaries in Sta. Monica and Pilar were formally approved by the LGUs on Mar. 21 and Mar. 5, 2018, respectively. The project received copies of the approved municipal ordinances for the MPA declaration and the legislative resolutions for the declaration of the community watersheds. These pieces of legislation will be endorsed to the SIPLAS protected area supervisor of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The management plans were developed during a MPA participatory management planning conducted for the two municipalities on Jan. 25-26, 2018. The plan outlines the technical, financial and operational activities for the management of the MPAs. The MPA management structure was also formulated during a separate consultation meeting on Jan. 12, 2018.

During the quarter, a two-day policy dialogue on the management of the MPAs and watersheds was conducted for the two municipalities. During the dialogues, provisions of various national laws, existing local ordinances and management standards of government agencies were discussed with the local officials and the local department heads.

The project has completed the procurement of three patrol boats for the use of Bantay Dagat teams. These boats were turned over to them on Jan. 26, 2018. The boats will be managed by partner POs in the area. A memorandum of agreement was made between the project and the POs to govern the use and maintenance of the patrol boats. In addition, the project also facilitated the provision of equipment and uniforms for the Bangtay Dagat teams.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

Securing Biodiversity in High Conservation Value Areas (HCVA) in the Mt. Nacolod Landscape Project

Mt. Nacolod is an 18,688-hectare mountain range in Southern Leyte and is one of the biologically diverse areas in the Philippines. In 2001, it was recognized as a habitat of highly threatened bird endemics including the Philippine cockatoo, Visayas wattled-broadbill, and the forest specialist Walden's hornbill. Biodiversity resources and the forest cover of Mt. Nacolod, however, are being threatened by unlawful collection of timber products and poaching of wildlife. Due to limited livelihood opportunities, forest areas are being used for planting food crops as well as wood gathering for fuel and construction. The unclear land tenure situation of the mountain range allows open access of people to timber products in the forest.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports South Pacific Integrated Area Development Foundation, Inc. (SPIADFI) in harmonizing local government units' (LGUs) efforts for the protection and management of High Conservation Value Areas (HCVAs) in the Mt. Nacolod mountain range. SPIADFI expands HCVA research and uses the information to mobilize LGUs and local communities in protecting the mountain range and the wealth of biodiversity that it hosts. In areas already declared as HCVAs, stronger governance mechanisms and community involvement are being promoted. Alternative regenerative economic activities are also being explored and tested.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To protect and manage HCVAs in Mt. Nacolod through mobilization of the LGUs and the community

TARGET AREAS
18,640 hectares of Mt. Nacolod mountain range in Southern Leyte

GRANTEE
South Pacific Integrated Area Development Foundation, Inc. (SPIADFI)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
July 2016 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

SPIADFI
Beverly C. Capeña
Executive Director
spiadfi_sleyte@yahoo.com.ph

PROJECT UPDATES

SPIADFI highlights the importance of HCVAs in sustaining a flourishing biodiversity that directly impact communities in Southern Leyte.

As of March 2018, the project was able to cover 260 hectares (65 hectares per area in four sites) of the Mt. Nacolod mountain range through HCVA research activities and full characterization of selected study areas.

Enrichment planting and assisted natural regeneration were completed in four reforestation sites. Plant mortality was determined at 15 percent of the 26,000 or 4,000 seedlings. These were replaced with new seedlings from the established nurseries.

A resource inventory was also developed in the target barangays for the identification of possible enterprises and livelihood for the selected communities. The inventory also mapped the current livelihood of selected barangays and identifies training interventions needed by the communities for possible livelihood options.

The inventory was conducted on Jan. 11-16, 2018 for 16 barangays. The activity involved collection of primary data through field visits and focus group discussion with the local communities. A total of 236 community members (37 percent of whom are female) were consulted.

During the quarter, the project conducted an environmental forum on women empowerment on Mar. 9, 2018 in Hinundayan, Southern Leyte. The forum aimed to encourage women to participate in environmental and natural resource governance by raising their awareness on their role in biodiversity conservation and the provisions of the Magna Carta of Women related to biodiversity conservation. A total of 63 community members (94 percent of whom are female) from 16 barangays participated in the forum.

SPIADFI also organized a basic paralegal training on forestry and other related laws. The training was conducted in two batches, one on Jan. 17-18 and another on Feb. 15-16. The activity was designed to provide basic knowledge on the forestry code and other relevant laws, provide knowledge and information to encourage community participation in natural resource management, and equip participants with knowledge on basic procedures in apprehension, investigation and prosecution of violators of forestry laws. A total of 262 barangay officials and Bantay Gubat members (50 percent of whom are female) attended the training.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

Strengthening Governance, Biodiversity Conservation and Protection and Information Systems in Central Cebu Protected Landscape (CCPL) Project

The Central Cebu Protected Landscape (CCPL), consisting of 48 barangays, encompasses five protected areas that are in five municipalities and three cities in central Cebu province. The reserve is a key biodiversity area (KBA) where forest fragments remain, the most significant of which is the Tabunan Forest, home to bird species like the Black Shama, the Cebu Flower Pecker, and the Cebu Hawk Owl.

Ecosystems and biodiversity resources are threatened due to hunting and gathering activities within the landscape. Limited livelihood opportunities within the KBA and in neighboring areas make residents rely on extractive activities like charcoal production and timber poaching. Some landscape areas were also converted into agricultural lands and human settlements.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports the Soil and Water Conservation Foundation, Inc. (SWCFI) in enabling stakeholders in managing protected areas for the conservation of the CCPL. Local conservation actors are being trained by SWCFI in biodiversity protection and monitoring. The project also aims to improve community participation in protecting biodiversity resources within the landscape.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To enhance capacities and mobilize local stakeholders in protected areas for the management and conservation of the CCPL

TARGET AREAS
14,861 hectares of Central Cebu Protected Landscape (CCPL)

GRANTEE
Soil and Water Conservation Foundation, Inc. (SWCFI)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
July 2016 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

SWCFI
William G. Granert
Executive Director
swcf.cebu@yahoo.com.ph

PROJECT UPDATES

SWCFI continues to develop information materials and delivery systems to improve participatory management of the CCPL and enhance biodiversity conservation and protection activities.

As of March 2018, SWCF was able to cover 29 hectares of the CCPL with improved biophysical conditions. The project was also able to establish 15 transects in CCPL with a total of 163 Biodiversity Monitoring Survey stations. Total area of biodiversity assessed is 14.67 hectares with a total length of transect of approximately 30 km. It was conducted with residents participating in the survey which lead to an increase in monitoring activities for CCPL.

A total of 10 hectares for assisted natural regeneration (ANR) and three hectares for "rainforestation" were established as pilot areas for forest restoration. Seven people's organizations (POs) entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with SWCFI for the 13-hectare pilot area. Most of the POs have already completed the initial activities including area validation, staking, ring weeding for ANR and wildling collection for rain forestation.

During the quarter, the project conducted the biodiversity monitoring system (BMS) to establish monitoring points for identifying species of birds, gathering data on flora and fauna, and transferring biodiversity knowledge to communities. The BMS data will be used to develop the list of species residing in CCPL. The data will also help in establishing the baseline status of biodiversity in the protected landscape. Extensive data on the status of biodiversity will help in developing policies for the conservation of the protected landscape.

Also done during the quarter, the project mapped nine caves for the inventory of biodiversity in caves located in the headwaters of the protected landscape. Cave maps were also developed to determine their status and condition in the watershed. The results of the cave mapping will be incorporated in the karst (terrain) management plan.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

Reducing Threats and Improving Sustainable Management of Biodiversity in Tayabas and Pagbilao Bay Project

Pagbilao and Tayabas Bays are important fishing grounds in Southern Luzon that cover approximately 287,332 hectares. The two bays are fed by two important watersheds and protected areas, and a biodiversity-rich mangrove forest in Pagbilao. The bays provide natural breeding grounds for a wide variety of fish, shellfish and other aquatic organisms of economic value. Studies indicated that marine species in the Verde Island Passage Marine Corridor are nursed along Pagbilao Bay because of the abundant supply of plankton in the latter. The bays and the surrounding mangrove forest are endangered by illegal human activities like dynamite and cyanide fishing, wildlife hunting and mangrove cutting. Due to weak law enforcement, commercial fishing vessels also encroach into areas of municipal waters which affects the regenerative capacity of the fish population. Resource and social assessments conducted in 2005 reveal that hard coral cover is down to about 32 percent because of continued siltation, destructive fishing practices and storm waves. Fish population was reduced to 11.44 mt/sq.km. Biomass and a dramatic decline in fish catch rate was observed due to the increase in the use of illegal fishing gear.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports Tanggol Kalikasan, Inc. (TKI) in eliminating illegal fishing in Tayabas and Pagbilao bays by strengthening capacities of stakeholders for the protection of coastal zones and municipal waters. TKI mobilizes communities as social fences to protect their marine resources and habitats. Local conservation actors are also being trained in environmental law enforcement and governance for a strict implementation of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 as amended by Republic Act No. 10654 and Wildlife Act.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To strengthen capacities of local conservation actors in environmental law enforcement and protection of coastal zone and municipal waters

TARGET AREAS
50,030 hectares along Tayabas and Pagbilao Bays in Quezon Province

GRANTEE
Tanggol Kalikasan Inc. (TKI)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
July 2016 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

TKI
Atty. Maria Generosa T. Mislang
Executive Director
tanggolkalikasan@yahoo.com

PROJECT UPDATES

TKI has been working on increasing the avenues for stakeholders' participation, renewed public education and the creation of opportunities to reduce pressure on marine resources, as well as the adjacent watersheds and mangrove forests.

As of March 2018, the Wildlife, Forestry and Fishery Indicator Spatial Hub (WiForFISH) Management Information System (MIS) have been developed and is now undergoing pilot testing as a tool for monitoring and violations assessment in the coastal and marine areas of Sariaya, Pagbilao and Lucena City. The system was developed using the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) while its hand-held mobile device counterpart for collecting data has also been developed with the CyberTracker Software. WiForFISH is a mobile application and database developed in partnership with the Center for Conservation Innovation Philippines, Southern Luzon State University and information technology experts from the Dalubhasaan ng Lungsod ng Lucena.

WiForFISH-MIS for partner local government units and academic institutions was launched during the quarter. The system will be used by community law enforcers and the municipal agriculture office in the protection and conservation of Tayabas and Pagbilao Bays. Regular follow through meetings and environmental law enforcement (ELE) assessment were conducted to mentor data managers in operating the system and in updating the result of patrolling and cases filed in court.

During the quarter, the project conducted a patroller's training on the use of the WiForFish in their mobile phones and tablet computers. The participants were familiarized with their mobile device, settings, battery power saving and the mobile application prototype. Data managers were also oriented on the menu selections and categories, the concept of "saving" waypoints and capturing areas of mangrove stands or clearing. A total of 44 deputized community enforcers (77 percent of whom are female) attended the training.

Meanwhile, the review and assessment of the law enforcement for Taal Volcano Protected Landscape (TVPL) was also conducted during this period. The activity marked the re-organization and strengthening of the TVPL law enforcement task force for a renewed protection and management of the TVPL. The review resulted in the drafting of a law enforcement operations plan.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND BIODIVERSITY GRANT

Sustaining a Viable Environment in the Allah Valley Watershed Forest Reserve (SAVE Allah Valley) Project

Despite having been declared as a protected area by virtue of Presidential Decree 2455 in 1985, the Allah Valley Watershed Forest Reserve (AVWFR) in South Cotabato is slowly being destroyed by the combined pressures from large scale agricultural plantations, slash-and-burn farming, illegal logging, and mining. Intentional forest fires are common during summer. These have resulted in massive deforestation, flash floods and an increasing rate of siltation.

These problems – compounded by inadequate enforcement of environmental laws, lack of awareness among local officials on the importance of preserving the ecological balance of the watershed, insufficient government services and the economic deprivation of the residents – resulted in unsustainable use of the forests, continued clearing of critical portions of the AVWFR and eventual loss of its biodiversity.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports the Tribal Leaders Development Foundation, Inc. (TLDFI) in addressing the loss of biodiversity by improving natural resource management in the AVWFR and providing economic opportunities for Indigenous People's (IP) communities within the area. TLDFI also helps in securing protected lands in the AVWFR and controlling human activities in buffer areas.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To protect the biodiversity resources in the Allah Valley, primarily the Philippine Eagle as its keystone species

TARGET AREAS
South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat

GRANTEE
Tribal Leaders Development Foundation, Inc. (TLDFI)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
July 2014 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

TLDFI
Dennis A. Librado
Executive Director
tldfi_org@yahoo.com

PROJECT UPDATES

TLDFI has been employing conservation strategies that include the trade-off approach, organizing of forest and wildlife patrol teams, self-help groups for women, and resource leveraging.

As of March 2018, a total of 5,000 hills of rattan seedlings and 30,000 abaca corms were distributed to 111 beneficiaries in Lake Sebu and T'boli. Another batch consisting of 1,580 hills of fruit trees, 3,000 hills of coconut seedlings and 40,000 hills of coffee were distributed to the 136 beneficiaries from Lake Sebu, T'boli, and Surallah. The replanting activities was part of the project's initiative to provide project beneficiaries with alternative livelihood support and incentive not to trespass in the identified protected zone.

Meanwhile, the T'boli local government issued a municipal resolution in February 2018 demarcating 5,000 hectares within Lake Holon and Mt. Parker as conservation and eco-tourism areas. An executive order was subsequently issued to create the technical survey team who will be tasked to conduct the demarcation activities.

During the quarter, ten wildlife enforcer officers (WEO) conducted forest patrols in the Patom sub-watershed of Surallah, South Cotabato. The team also assisted in the planting of coconut seedlings and fruit trees in the area during the tree planting activity initiated by Surallah Water District.

A series of workshops was conducted to review the Ancestral Domain Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP) of the T'boli. A total of four workshops were conducted during the quarter involving 133 participants, 29 percent of whom are female. The workshops were designed to identify areas for improvement in the 2012-2016 ADSDPP. The new plan also adopts a new mechanism and management structure empowering indigenous communities to manage their ancestral domain. These workshops were participated by representatives from the Kuludatus of indigenous people structure, youth and women sector, Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative (IPMR), tribal chieftains, National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP), municipal planning and development officer, local legislative representatives, and the municipal disaster and risk reduction officer.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND ECONOMIC GROWTH GRANT

Program Support for the Chamber's Promotion of "Inclusive Growth through Inclusive Business"

International economic development institutions such as the World Economic Forum, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank promote "Inclusive Growth through Inclusive Businesses". This mantra was embraced by the Cagayan de Oro Chamber of Commerce and Industry Foundation, Inc. (Oro Chamber) in 2015. The chamber then directed their vision into becoming a broadly representative organization spearheading inclusive growth for the sustainable economic development of Cagayan de Oro City and its influence areas. One of the city's influence areas is the Cagayan de Oro River Basin, covering key communities including indigenous peoples, as well as communities in the adjoining province of Bukidnon. One of the major strategies for inclusive growth in the CDO River Basin is enhanced reforestation using High Value Tree Crops to alleviate destructive flooding like the one brought by Typhoon Sendong in 2011. It simultaneously addresses prevalent poverty issues by carrying out Indigenous community agro-forestry projects in partnerships with High Value Commercial Crop Corporations (HVCCCs). This project will demonstrate the benefits of Inclusive Business by engaging the "Bottom of the Pyramid in the Core Business of Business" through the supply of raw materials to meet industry needs. This will create livelihood opportunities for communities leading to poverty reduction and the improvement of peace and order.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports Oro Chamber in promoting inclusive growth through the production of high value commercial crops by local communities living near the CDO River Basin. Oro Chamber partners with private companies for technical assistance, provision of quality planting materials, assured markets and transparent pricing. Project benefits and best practices in inclusive growth will be communicated to a wider audience through an information campaign.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To initiate an understanding and popularization of "Inclusive Growth through Inclusive Business" through the CDO River Basin initiative

INITIAL TARGET AREAS
Bukidnon Province and communities surrounding Cagayan de Oro City

GRANTEE
Cagayan de Oro Chamber of Commerce and Industry Foundation (Oro Chamber)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
January 2017 to March 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

Oro Chamber
Roberto W. Ansaldo
Director, Inc. Business Initiatives
orochamber@gmail.com

PROJECT UPDATES

Oro Chamber involves community representatives and tribal leaders living within the vicinity of the CDO River Basin in promoting inclusive growth.

As of March 2018, Oro Chamber was able to engage with two indigenous communities for its inclusive business project: the Bukidnon-Tagoloanon Tribe and the Odino Clan-Higaonon Tribe. Both tribes are Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title or CADT holders.

The project also facilitated the registration of two community cooperatives at the Cooperative Development Authority Bukidnon Office. These coops are Bukidnon Tagoloanon Mulahay Ha Kabukalagan Agriculture Cooperative and the Kibalabag Matanus Agriculture Cooperative (KMAC).

After a series of community consultations conducted together with both tribes, the project team initiated business planning workshops to assist them in developing business plans for their chosen crop.

Empowered by the series of trainings they have undergone, the Bukidnon Tagoloanon Tribe was also able to draft a Marketing Agreement together with Kennemer Foods International (KFI), a Philippine agribusiness company, which will be the coop's institutional market for their cacao products.

During the quarter, the memorandum of agreement between KFI and the Bukidnon-Tagoloanon tribe was signed. The signing ceremony was witnessed by Department of Finance Assistant Secretary Ma. Editha Z. Tan, KFI Managing Director Simon Bakker, Ambassador Jesus Tambunting, Bishop's Businesses Conference Representative Meneleo Carlos and representatives from the Land Bank of the Philippines.

Also accomplished during the quarter, the loan application for KMAC was submitted to the Development Bank of the Philippines Bukidnon Branch. The loan application was for the management of an expanded abaca plantation in Barangay Kibalabag. KMAC is the cooperative organized through the project for the Odino Clan.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND ECONOMIC GROWTH GRANT

Economic Recovery and Growth for Small Farmers in the Typhoon Yolanda-affected Areas of North Cebu Project

Typhoon Yolanda destroyed a large part of central Philippines, including Bogo City and the municipalities of Medellin and Daanbantayan in Cebu province. Rehabilitation activities were continuing for affected families, helping them to gradually recover and get back on their feet. Even before Typhoon Yolanda, 80 percent of this project's target beneficiaries were already subsistence farmers with an average area of 0.25 hectares planted with corn and vegetables and a few areas allotted for raising free range chicken. Some of the farmers are agrarian reform beneficiaries engaged in sugar cane production as a monocrop. Livelihoods suffered due to a limited access to technical assistance or financing of production inputs.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, assists Pagtambayayong Foundation in accelerating the economic recovery of 800 Typhoon Yolanda-affected families through a sustainable farming system. The project provides technical and financial assistance which improves the productivity of small farmers, as well as increases their income by combining main crops like corn and sugarcane with vegetables, cash crops and organically grown hogs.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Improve the quality of life of farmers in Typhoon Yolanda-affected areas in North Cebu
- Implement an organic and natural hog-raising technology

TARGET AREAS

Bogo City, Municipalities of Daanbantayan and Medellin in Cebu Province

GRANTEE

Pagtambayayong – A Foundation for Mutual Aid, Inc.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

August 2015 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

Pagtambayayong
Paula Fernandez
Executive Director
pagtamba@yahoo.com

PROJECT UPDATES

Pagtambayayong trains farmers affected by Typhoon Yolanda to use a sustainable hog-raising system and bring about long-term improvement in their livelihood.

As of March 2018, Pagtambayayong provided production support to a total of 346 beneficiaries (76 percent of whom are female), 62 of whom were supported by the project during the quarter. Of the total number, 286 operate under a loan support from the Land Bank of the Philippines.

The project facilitated the release of production loans to these beneficiaries for the establishment of pig pens and the procurement of piglets.

During the quarter, a total of 45 beneficiaries (69 percent of whom are female) harvested matured hogs. Of the 45 beneficiaries, 41 generated a combined net income worth PhP386,762. The highest net income earned by a single beneficiary was PhP32,999, while the biggest loss recorded was PhP8,250. Harvested hogs were sold to Bogo meat shop, Prince Warehouse Club Daanbantayan, Kandaya Resort, and other PFI partners in Metro Cebu.

The project continues to conduct training sessions on organic hog raising which provided farmers with skills in natural hog raising. These learning sessions include site visits to successful, mediocre and unsuccessful farmers to learn the "do's" and "don'ts" in hog raising. A total of 116 farmers (84 percent of whom are female) participated in the trainings conducted during this quarter.

PARFUND / USAID PHIL-AM FUND

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND ECONOMIC GROWTH GRANT

Duck Enterprise for Employment Generation and Growth (DUCK EGG) in Mindanao Project

There is a need to communicate and demonstrate that agribusiness in the Philippines can be profitable and its growth can be inclusive. Farmers and agricultural workers need to learn about agri-based opportunities and gain market-ready skills to participate and benefit more from the growth of the Philippine agricultural sector. They also need to realize that commercial and environmental objectives can co-exist.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supported the Philippine Agrarian Reform Foundation for National Development (PARFUND) in transforming farmers and other agricultural workers in select provinces in Mindanao into agri-entrepreneurs. PARFUND, as a leading expert and practitioner of duck raising technology in the Philippines, accomplished this goal by exposing farmers to different practical and hands-on experiences in duck-related businesses. The organization's experience and business models in the duck industry value chain were used to train potential agri-entrepreneurs.

The project generated employment by improving the performance of enterprises along the value-chain and enhancing the skills of interested entrepreneurs in business development, management and marketing.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To create employment opportunities by enhancing the performance of the duck industry

TARGET AREAS
Agusan del Sur and Bukidnon

GRANTEE
Philippine Agrarian Reform Foundation for National Development (PARFUND)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
June 2014 to August 2017

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

PARFUND
Jose T. Deles
Executive Director
parfund@yahoo.com

PROJECT RESULTS

The Duck Enterprise for Employment Generation and Growth (DUCK EGG) in Mindanao Project targeted the heart of rural poverty in the Philippines, particularly in Mindanao, and was designed to transform farmers and other agricultural workers in select provinces into agri-entrepreneurs through practical and hands-on experience. Businesses that the project supported will be able to provide families and communities with the incentives, opportunities and a sound environment to live and work in.

DUCK EGG opened six business opportunities to aspiring "agripreneurs": duck layer farm, duck hatchery, duck growing, alternative duck feeds production, duck meat processing, and duck products retailing.

During its three-year project implementation, PARFUND was able to train a total of 505 farmers (52 percent of whom are female) and provided them with knowledge on the Duck Industry Value Chain. This resulted in the establishment of 317 enterprises: 191 in Bukidnon and 126 in Agusan del Sur. Of the total number of enterprises, 34 have already expanded their businesses either through upscaling or diversification to other enterprises within the duck industry value chain.

Among the six enterprises, the ready-to-lay (RTL) growing enterprise had the fastest payback period (five months) and posted the highest return on investment (92 percent). Some of the RTL growers have used their earnings to expand their business and build up their assets.

PARFUND also engaged the assistance of government agencies, rural banks and other financing institutions in the project sites to provide entrepreneurs with access to credit.

In Bukidnon, Bukidnon Cooperative Bank (BCB) and Oro Integrated Cooperative (OIC) expressed their willingness to allocate funds for entrepreneurs who will expand their business and/or engage in Duck Industry Value Chain enterprises. A draft agreement was developed between PARFUND and the two parties for the mobilization of this portfolio.

In Agusan del Sur, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) expressed their willingness to help the existing entrepreneurs in expanding their businesses. Master lists of the entrepreneurs were provided to the DTI for possible inclusion in their agency budget. The King Cooperative of San Francisco, Agusan del Sur will also provide loans for expanding and upscaling duck-related businesses in the region.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND ECONOMIC GROWTH GRANT

Reducing Rural Poverty through Agro-entrepreneurship Project

PinoyME works with three partner non-government organizations (NGOs), namely, the Diocesan Social Action Center (DSAC), KAANIB Foundation, and PASALI Philippines Foundation, in scaling up the enterprises of their farmer beneficiaries. Even with their training in agro-entrepreneurship, farmers still need more preparation before engaging in commercial scale operations. Without further assistance, they may return to their old practice of dealing with traders from a weak negotiating position as individuals instead of as a strong, united group. Their capacity to develop commercial markets and financing linkages still needs to be improved. Partner NGOs themselves need to be strengthened to develop their business systems, finance and administrative capacities to assist the farmers.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports PinoyME Foundation in building a successful model of production clustering where farmers can consolidate bigger volumes, penetrate the value-chain and sell these products directly to bigger markets. This project sustains marketing efforts so farmers can earn larger revenues from their product and become part of the mainstream market instead of serving as mere suppliers for traders.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Increase the income of marginalized farmers
- Form production clusters and connect them to the formal market economy

TARGET AREAS

Bukidnon, Saranggani and Sultan Kudarat provinces

GRANTEE

PinoyME Foundation

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

April 2015 to April 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

PinoyME
Danilo A. Songco
President and CEO
dan.songco@pinoyme.com

PROJECT UPDATES

PinoyME facilitates a quarterly Project Management Meeting with their implementing NGO partners and regularly conduct site visits in their respective partner people's organizations (PO) areas to evaluate their activities and plans in operating the PO's businesses. The project team also conducts consultative sessions with selected POs about their business operations and practices.

As of March 2018, PinoyME and its partner NGOs were able to assist a total of 12 POs in the provinces of Bukidnon, Saranggani and Sultan Kudarat.

The Agro-entrepreneurship Project directed its efforts to provide stability in the management of the POs. This includes refining the PO's books of accounts, strengthening of policies, systems and procedures, and intensifying membership recruitment efforts.

During the quarter, the project facilitated coaching sessions to develop the business manual for Coffee Industry Development Council (COINDECO) and Lebak Coffee Growers Association (LCGA) in Sultan Kudarat. The manual will prepare them in operating their business in time for the Green Coffee Bean (GCBs) harvest season and coffee trading. As a result, the POs were able to improve their business systems, secured an external financier for coffee trading, and obtained monitoring support from the local Department of Agriculture–High Value Crop Development Program (DA-HVCDP).

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND ECONOMIC GROWTH GRANT

Turning a New Leaf: Threads and Weaving from Sugarcane Project

Sugarcane farmers are seasonal workers who usually earn an income for only six months in a year: during sugarcane harvest and sugar production. The rest of the year, they are left to fend for themselves. Barangay Reparo in the Province of Batangas has a total population of 2,047 consisting of 447 households. As an agricultural barangay, majority of the working population do not have regular jobs and depend on sugarcane farming as their source of income. Out of 447 households, 345 have working members of the family while 102 are unemployed. Out of the working population, only 40 have regular jobs, while the remaining 305 are irregular or seasonal workers (Brgy. Reparo Socio-Economic Profile, 2014).

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, assists the Roxas Foundation, Inc. (RFI) in helping marginalized sugarcane farmers earn a year-round income. RFI extracts fiber from waste sugarcane stalks (bagasse) and combines it with cotton and fiber from midribs of sugarcane leaves. These materials are then used for weaving and textile production. The project trains community members in fiber extraction, yarn production, designing and weaving. It also helps the community through a waste disposal campaign and provides them with additional livelihood by selling sugarcane leaves and stalks.

The project also opens new job opportunities and businesses in leaves and stalks collection, fiber extraction and thread production, weaving and textile production, marketing and other services needed in the value chain.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To open opportunities for sugarcane farmers by promoting sugarcane threads as an alternative in the textile industry

TARGET AREA
Barangay Reparo in Nasugbu, Batangas

GRANTEE
Roxas Foundation, Inc. (RFI)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
August 2015 to April 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

RFI
Beatriz O. Roxas
President
bea.roxas@roxasfoundation.org

PROJECT UPDATES

RFI uses an existing technology that produces sugarcane threads. These threads are then used to produce various products. RFI trains their beneficiaries in using this technology. They also provide different training programs that will enhance their skills which in turn help them create business opportunities using sugarcane threads.

As of March 2018, a total of 150 beneficiaries completed the different skills development training programs. Part of the training is to allow the participants to explore the actual processes of fiber production, degumming, spinning and sewing-weaving. Of the 150 beneficiaries, 85 passed the assessment and were tapped for textile production. Remaining participants will act as reserve, in case volume demand increases.

The procurement of the degumming equipment, additional over-edging and high-speed sewing machines, additional big handlooms and spinning machines were completed during the quarter. The use of the additional equipment facilitated the production of 30 kilos of sugarcane bagasse-based threads and fabrics which were manufactured into bags, placemats and pouches.

Purchase orders based on product samples were also recorded during the quarter. To supply the orders, the weavers produced 47 pieces of Lala placemats, 71 pieces of flower placemats and 72 meters of fabrics, while the sewers produced 8 bags, 100 fan drops, 100 coin purses, and 36 pouches.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND ECONOMIC GROWTH GRANT

Poverty Alleviation through Intensification of Salt Farms Productivity and Capacity Building Project

In the Philippines, the province of Occidental Mindoro contributes 40 percent of the country's total salt production, 80 percent of which is produced by the Tamaraw Salt Producers Cooperative (TAMACO). However, the country remains dependent on salt imports. Around 80 percent of salt products in the Philippines is being imported and distribution is controlled by three large traders. These traders dictate salt prices since producers are dependent on them for financing and marketing. Further, there is no government body that regulates salt production and marketing.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports TAMACO in improving the salt industry in Mindoro. The project increases the capacity and productivity of salt producers using a salt washing and centrifuge machine. This machine will help TAMACO in producing quality salt which they can market with a competitive price. It will also pave the way for their salt products to be introduced to new markets. Salt producers also go through continuous training programs and learning visits to upgrade their knowledge, working skills and use of technology.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Improve the quality and quantity of Mindoro's salt farm
- Increase local market share and income of salt farm workers

TARGET AREAS

3 municipalities in Occidental Mindoro

GRANTEE

Tamaraw Salt Producers Cooperative (TAMACO)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

June 2014 to March 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

TAMACO
Carlos Magsino
Board Member
magsino.jombet@gmail.com

PROJECT UPDATES

The project introduces the country's first washing and centrifuge salt processing machine. This salt processing technology will accelerate production, increase productivity, improve the quality of salt products and most importantly increase the income of salt farmers by as much as 50 percent.

As of March 2018, the installation of the salt washery machine by Shriraam's Engineering Team is almost completed. The last batch of shipment to complete the installation of the salt washery machine arrived at the plant site during the quarter. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources already issued the Environmental Compliance Certificate for the salt washery machine operations.

The project also completed its obligation under a supply contract with the Philippine Coconut Authority to deliver Agricultural-Grade Salt Fertilizer to Regions IVA and I – IVB.

During the quarter, two training sessions for salt farmworkers and their families were conducted. These include one session on financial management training participated by 15 salt farm workers (60 percent of whom are female) and two sessions on accounting for non-accountants participated by 40 salt farm workers and their families, 70 percent of whom are female). These sessions prepared the beneficiaries in managing their household income and maximize their income potential once the salt washery machine becomes fully operational.

TDFI / USAID PHIL-AM FUND

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND ECONOMIC GROWTH GRANT

Davao Gulf Business Incubator Facility for Start-up Businesses Project

Like most provinces in Mindanao, Davao del Norte has abundant natural resources and pockets of high commercial activity such as plantations and tourist areas. However, a large percentage of the population remains poor and cannot participate in the province's economic activities. This situation creates social tensions that have a negative impact on investments, limiting the potential for inclusive economic growth and development in the province.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports Tuason Development Foundation, Inc. (TDFI) in harnessing the creativity, energy and potential of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Davao by offering a self-sustaining facility for start-ups and struggling entrepreneurs. TDFI achieves this goal by establishing the Davao Gulf Business Incubator (DGBI).

The Business Incubator project is designed to support less privileged farmers and fisherfolk, as well as other members of the local community living along the Davao Gulf regions. It provides a series of trainings on entrepreneurship and offers financial support to start or expand the businesses of selected entrepreneurs or incubatees.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To establish a business incubator facility that will harness the creativity, energy and potential of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Davao del Norte

TARGET AREAS
Davao del Norte province

GRANTEE
Tuason Development Foundation, Inc. (TDFI)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
July 2014 to December 2017

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

TDFI
Rosanna T. Fores
President
tdfi@hijoresources.net

PROJECT RESULTS

The Davao Gulf Business Incubator (DGBI) was designed to support less privileged yet creative farmers, women and MSMEs living along the Davao Gulf regions. The project provided them with various assistance and training on entrepreneurship.

Specifically, TDFI assisted their DGBI beneficiaries in registering their businesses, mentored them on how to properly record their finances, improved their product in terms of branding, provided production and office spaces, and adopted a distribution and marketing mechanism to promote their products. DGBI also funded small businesses that showcased a very high potential and strong market acceptability.

After implementing DGBI for three years, TDFI accommodated proponents in three batches and was able to fund and assist a total of 45 new small enterprises around Davao del Norte.

Among these businesses supported by DGBI, two were noted as very high-performing incubatees in terms of income generation and fund repayment: *balut* production and *hito* fingerlings production.

At the start of the project, TDFI received several interested proponents for the DGBI. Potential incubatees were invited to attend the Entrepreneurial Seminar Workshop where they get to learn more about financial literacy, operations and management to prepare them for DGBI Project. One of the main factors for an enterprise to receive financial support from DGBI was their business plan which is an output produced from these Entrepreneurial Workshops.

Funding for selected businesses was awarded in tranches. First tranche was for setting-up the organization or business registration to attain their legal personality in operating their business. Once their businesses have been registered, another fund will follow as start-up capital.

TDFI also assisted their incubatees in promoting their products. They focused their intervention in participating in trade fairs and malls shows which tapped a varied market. This initiative attracted potential customers and buyers for their products.

TDFI has sponsored more than 10 trade fairs including mall showcases that helped incubatees in promoting their products, tapping and expanding their markets. This method helped them increase their sales and establish their presence with their customers.

To ensure that the business implementation runs accordingly, periodic review, assessment and planning was conducted by TDFI regularly based on the log-frame.

The DGBI Project has provided livelihood opportunities not only to farmers and fishermen, but to other grass root sectors as well. They include the Moro, youth, elders and women. As a result of the intervention, TDFI observed an increased in willingness of different communities to avail of the opportunities presented to them. Several queries were received regarding the alternative income generating project. A change has been noticed where community folks were starting to show interest on managing a business than focusing on farming or fishing alone.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND EDUCATION GRANT

Flalok Project: Reviving the B'laan Art of Storytelling to Improve Literacy and Develop a Community of Readers in South Central Mindanao

The current version of the mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTBMLE) prescribed by the Department of Education (DepEd) identifies only 19 major mother tongues. The B'laan dialect is not included in the list. Schools in B'laan communities, where most learners are monolingual, were compelled to use Hiligaynon or Cebuano as their alternative language.

In a study on Indigenous Knowledge, Systems, and Practices of selected indigenous groups conducted by DepEd Regional Office in Saranggani, the B'laans have the highest population of roughly 1.5 million, even extending beyond the province. The Conrado and Ladislawa Alcantara Foundation, Inc. (CLAFI) also reported low literacy rates among B'laan students.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports CLAFI in increasing early-grade literacy outcomes in Indigenous Peoples' (IP) communities using quality mother tongue-based modules and reading materials. CLAFI also aims to raise awareness on the importance of early grade literacy among B'laan communities.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Increase adult and early graders' literacy among B'laan communities by promoting a culture of reading using Flalok storytelling
- Develop and produce B'laan reading materials

TARGET AREAS

Saranggani, South Cotabato, Koronadal City and General Santos City

GRANTEE

Conrado and Ladislawa Alcantara Foundation, Inc. (CLAFI)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

August 2015 to June 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

CLAFI
Richlie Lyndon L. Magtulis
Executive Director
rlyndonmagtulis@yahoo.com

PROJECT UPDATES

The project has developed Flalok Big Books which they use as their main learning material in increasing literacy among B'laan children. Flalok is the B'laan tradition of storytelling.

As of March 2018, the project has developed 72 Flalok Big Books containing authentic B'laan stories. Teacher Guides and Learner Materials for Grades 1 and 2 were also developed to implement B'laan MTBMLE. This was done with the help of B'laan teacher-writers, leaders of the B'laan Indigenous Cultural Communities (BICCs), and DepEd Supervisors and Coordinators.

A B'laan Dictionary and Compendium of Flalok Stories and supplemental reading materials for Alternative Learning System (ALS) B'laan learners were also developed. All these materials have undergone a series of thorough validation and evaluation processes.

A total of 17,353 books and other teaching and learning materials, such as big books and charts, were distributed to108 partner B'laan schools in Region XII. This has reached a total of 14, 218 students (49 percent of whom are girls) from Grade 1 and 2, as well as learners under the ALS.

During the quarter, CLAFI presented the Flalok Project as a public-private partnership model in curriculum contextualization and indigenization during the first Regional Indigenous People's Education (IPED) Summit held on Feb. 2, 2018 in General Santos City. The summit was attended by 500 participants (60 percent of whom are female) from different parts of the region.

A total of 1,588 additional B'laan materials were reproduced and donated to B'laan schools this quarter. Former Saranggani Governor Miguel Dominguez donated two complete sets of Flalok big books to Pait Integrated School and Pongoleel Integrated School in Alabel, Saranggani, while the Saranggani Energy Corporation donated two sets of Flalok Big Books to Mangalen Integrated School in Maasim, Saranggani. Meanwhile, DepEd Tacurong reproduced 300 copies of B'laan dictionaries for B'laan learners and IP coordinators in the project sites, while the local government of General Santos City sponsored the reproduction of 1,000 Flalok Big Books for B'laan schools in their city. These donations were results of CLAFI's project sustainability efforts.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND EDUCATION GRANT

Technology-Supported Elementary School Teacher Professional Development Project

The present face-to-face and cascade training method for in-service of teachers can accommodate around 4,000 teachers per year and is only being done during the school breaks. The Department of Education (DepEd) currently lists 193,364 K-3 teachers nationwide who require basic literacy training (DepEd, 2014). With this method, it will DepEd take 50 years to train all K-3 teachers.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supports the Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development (FIT-ED) in its partnership with DepEd to develop technology-based courseware to equip primary educators in teaching basic literacy. The multimedia content is based on the modules of DepEd's basic course for K-3 teachers, which covers 14 domains of language and literacy. The project mobilizes the school-based Learning Action Cells (LACs) composed of public school teachers to effectively deliver, continually assess, and improve training content and methods.

Unlike the present face-to-face and cascade method, this training technology can be used any convenient time during the school year. More users can access it and can even reduce the cost for the delivery of teacher trainings in basic education.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To accelerate professional development of K-3 teachers on early literacy

TARGET AREAS
Elementary Schools in 13 Regions Nationwide

GRANTEE
Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development (FIT-ED)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
August 2015 to October 2017

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

FIT-ED
Victoria L. Tinio
Executive Director
vltinio@fit-ed.org

PROJECT RESULTS

The project developed a blended teacher development program (TPD) on early literacy for K-3 teachers, with two components: (1) interactive, multimedia courseware designed for self-study; and (2) collaborative learning in school-based Learning Action Cells (LACs).

The TPD program, called ELLN Digital, was able to reach a total of 4,030 K-3 teachers in 240 schools in 31 divisions nationwide who had not participated in DepEd's teacher training programs on literacy instruction, nor the 10-day face-to-face Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) training program.

Participating schools were given the interactive, self-study ELLN Digital courseware and five storybooks. Participants were also guided in organizing LACs. A total of 42 learning facilitators and regional monitors (76 percent of whom are women) were trained in mentoring LACs through webinars and were provided with needed equipment like computer tablets to communicate with LACs on a regular basis.

The courseware paved way for flexible learning. Most teachers could study the content at their own pace and practice what they learned through exercises and practical assignments. These LAC sessions increased teachers' motivation to learn, as well as gave them peer feedback and support necessary to improve practice and develop a sense of belonging in a professional learning community. Thus, the ELLN Digital course provided a good practice model for LACs, which DepEd has put forward in a recent policy statement (Department Order No. 35-2016) as a mechanism for school-based continuing professional development for teachers to improve teaching practice and learning outcomes.

To determine the effectiveness of the TPD program in improving teachers' knowledge and skills in early literacy instruction, two tests were administered to a randomly selected sample of 434 pilot K-3 teachers before the start of the course (pre-test) and at the end of the course (post-test). One was a test of content and pedagogical knowledge (CPK) and the other a Teacher's Needs and Strengths Assessment (TSNA) in early literacy and numeracy. The results showed a significant improvement in the teachers' CPK and TSNA scores at the end of the TPD program. The results of the post-test indicated an overwhelmingly positive response to the ELLN Digital course among the participants.

To sustain these milestones, the DepEd and FIT-ED are in continuous coordination to discuss further steps which

include units for curriculum development, licensing requirements on the use of the ELLN Digital courseware for national scale-up, and the development of additional ELLN Digital support materials for DepEd.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND EDUCATION GRANT

Innovations for Rural Education Advancement (iREAd) Project for Moro Children in Mindanao Project

In 2014, the Integrated Mindanaoans Association for Natives (IMAN) observed that most students graduating in Grade 6 in Maguindanao and North Cotabato could hardly read and write due to a high rate of absenteeism. Based on IMAN's years of community work, they concluded that such rate of absenteeism was due to forced evacuation of families during armed conflict situations. Recurring power outages in these areas worsened the situation with frequent suspension of classes. Despite absenteeism, the zero drop-out policy of local schools compels teachers to pass students in order to meet their target. On top of it, school facilities are also limited. Students must share desks or bring their own chairs when attending classes.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supported IMAN in improving literacy, numeracy and essential life skills of Moro children in conflict-affected Bangsamoro communities. The project complemented efforts of the Department of Education (DepEd) in improving access to quality education in selected areas affected by armed conflict. The main project approach included strategic support to school and teacher development programs using technology-based instructional tools. Under the program, communities and other local stakeholders were also mobilized to support community learning centers. These centers were located off-school and utilized alternative delivery modes (ADM) of teaching instruction for displaced Moro children in rural and conflict-affected areas.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To improve the quality of education for Moro children in conflict-affected Bangsamoro communities

TARGET AREAS
Maguindanao and North Cotabato

GRANTEE
Integrated Mindanaoans Association for Natives (IMAN)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
August 2015 to December 2017

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

IMAN
Mike P. Alon
Executive Director
mikealon_iman@yahoo.com

PROJECT RESULTS

The Innovation for Rural Education Advancement (iREAD) Project for Bangsamoro Children in Mindanao contributed to the improvement of their quality of education particularly in their reading ability. Project interventions were classified into two components: (1) in-school learning for students who were studying in formal school settings and (2) off-school learning for children who were attending classes in community learning centers.

The program directed efforts in reaching out to students from five elementary schools and out-of-school children from five barangays in Maguindanao and North Cotabato.

IN-SCHOOL LEARNING

The in-school program component focused on students whose reading skills needed more attention. They were taught to improve their reading skills using computer tablets. Under iREAD, a total of 303 in-school students coming from the five target elementary schools learned how to easily identify sounding letters using these tablets. Sounding letters is very important as this is one of the foundations of reading.

Aside from the improvement in their reading skills, the eagerness of these children to attend their classes also increased. Students were more encouraged and motivated because of the digital tools used by their teacher. They have become more participative in their classes and learned faster.

OFF-SCHOOL LEARNING

The project provided out-of-school children the opportunity to access informal education with the help of 30 community facilitators. Classes were conducted in community learning centers in the barangay like *madrassas* (Arabic school) and in barangay halls or *puroks*. There were six learning facilitators assigned in each of the five learning sites. They conduct a one-day alternative delivery mode (ADM) class per week, for one year. One-on-one mentoring was also provided to children needing extra attention.

A total of 299 out-of-school children were able to attend and complete these ADM classes. They were evaluated on their reading proficiency at the end of the program. Evaluation results showed that the community-based literacy program for out-of-school children has significantly contributed to the increased literacy in Bangsamoro communities.

This was quite a feat considering that most of the children started with very weak reading skills and some could not even read at all. The program has displayed great improvement in the literacy and numeracy skills of out-of-school learners that several them eventually enrolled into formal schools.

IMAN also initiated the development of technology-based modules, mentoring and coaching Grade 4 to 6 students through the audio-visual adaptation of the RESPECT method of teaching.

During the program implementation, a total of 41 teachers and 42 community facilitators were trained on the RESPECT Methodology. The RESPECT Education Model is a weekly literacy and numeracy remedial classes which uses multiple intelligence and adaptive learning methodologies for slow learners for them to catch up with learning standards.

iREAD project activities also included a provision of solar-powered audio-visual equipment to the five target elementary schools, establishment of an e-library using computer tablets, skills enhancement for teachers, and reproduction of school instructional materials.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND EDUCATION GRANT

Improved Braille Literacy among Adults with Visual Impairment Project

Resources for the Blind (RBI) promotes braille literacy among blind adults in Mindanao consistent with the international consensus that braille literacy provides better education and employment opportunities. Based on the assessment of the previous braille literacy modules developed by RBI, most of their students fail to be fully educated with the braille writing system due to learners' low motivation and teachers' lack of experience in teaching adult braille. There is no standardized assessment tool and adult braille literacy curriculum for teachers. Although instructors have learned braille, none have had formal training in teaching adult braille literacy or access to new technology which could greatly enhance braille learning. The same challenges are faced by other adult braille literacy teachers nationwide mostly based in local government units' (LGUs) Persons with Disabilities Affairs Offices (PDAO) and Department of Education's (DepEd) Bureau of Alternative Learning Systems (BALS).

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supported RBI in producing braille literacy assessment tools to measure current and future results of adult braille literacy courses. USAID also supported RBI in acquiring modern braille technology and printing facility, and in developing an adult braille literacy module. Selected Department of Social Welfare and Development - Vocational Rehabilitation Centers (DSWD-VRCs) served as pilot sites for this module. Project activities included producing braille literacy programs, training of trainers, setting up of hardware and software tools for curriculum development and providing equipment needed to implement the module. RBI used these braille teaching modules to remove cultural, structural or physical barriers experienced by blind adults with learning disabilities.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To promote braille literacy and facilitate better employment options for blind adults in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao

TARGET AREAS
Cagayan de Oro City, Cotabato City, Lanao del Norte, Bukidnon and Zamboanga City

GRANTEE
Resources for the Blind, Inc. (RBI)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
August 2015 to December 2017

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

RBI
Arminia Mojica
Deputy Director
amy@blind.org.ph

PROJECT RESULTS

RBI initiated the adult braille literacy project to address the needs of blind adults in Mindanao who were not acquainted with braille literacy. These blind adults were composed of those who were not able to attend formal schooling or those who were newly-blinded. This population has not been served well in terms of education and employment opportunities. With this, RBI then drew on their previous successes in promoting education to blind children and channeled these in providing greater opportunities for blind adults.

The project improved the braille literacy levels of blind adults who were either enrolled in partner vocational centers or registered in DepEd's Alternative Learning System (ALS) program under the PDAO of LGUs in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao. RBI has accomplished this by providing the needed equipment like braille typewriters, braille displays for computers, braille translation software and braille embosser. These tools improved instruction by giving teachers the means to print their teaching materials in braille. The project has also provided VRCs with assessment tools, instructional materials and necessary training sessions for braille instructors.

RBI was able to engage with five learning centers across Mindanao. These centers include the ALS at the Municipality of Kapatagan in Lanao del Norte, ALS in Cagayan de Oro City, Center for the Handicapped in Cotabato City, Bukidnon Visually Impaired Entrepreneur Incorporated (BVIE) in Valencia City in Bukidnon, and DSWD Area Vocational Rehabilitation Center (AVRC) in Zamboanga City.

The project engaged with a total of 202 blind adult learners from these sites who received braille reading interventions. Of the number, 80 blind adult learners completed the end-line assessment. These learners had the highest improvement in letter name identification from baseline to end-line in both Filipino and English languages using the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) tool. Learners ages 30 and below had significantly different gains than learners above 30 when it comes to the letter sound identification and reading comprehension.

After the basic literacy program, some of the blind adults were able to continue their studies under DepEd's ALS. This helped them with their preparation to take the acceleration and equivalency test which will allow them to finish their studies in just a short period of time. Others continued their education in the tertiary level with confidence, knowing that there's a bright future waiting for them now that they are more literate in braille.

One of the project's milestones was organizing the Philippine Braille-Accessibility Network (PBAN) as its sustainability mechanism. PBAN is composed of individuals, mostly blind professionals, who are also members of other organizations such as the Philippine Blind Union (PBU), Center of Advocacy, Learning and Livelihood (CALL) Foundation, Vision Impairment Society Towards Advancement (VISTA), Resources for the Blind, Inc. and the Philippine Chamber Massage Industry for Visually Impaired.

The network's main task is to promote braille and assistive technology as tools for literacy, information, and communication of people with visual impairment. The organization is now registered under the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND GOVERNANCE GRANT

People-Led Monitoring and Evaluation System (PLMES) Project

Antique Federation of Non-Government Organizations (AFON) has been proactively implementing programs for the engagement of the civil society and non-state organizations in the government's development activities since 2004. They have engaged in projects covering various industries such as health, peace and security and local economic development. Their years of groundwork lead them to observing challenges in the budgeting and implementing process that still exist in local government units (LGUs) and national agencies. There is still a need to harness the energy, dedication and experience of civil society organizations (CSOs) in practicing transparency and accountability.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, enabled AFON to replicate its experience in implementing their Social Accountability Project in nine municipalities in Antique. It utilized a participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) scheme, dubbed as the People-Led Monitoring and Evaluation System (PLMES), to allow the community to understand better and participate more in government projects and activities. These M&E tools were used to assess a project's performance based on approved plans, as well as monitor the status of its implementation.

PLMES enhanced the capacities of CSO Monitors in government budgeting processes. This allowed them to properly monitor the entire procurement activity of government agencies involved. Partner CSOs participated in Bids and Awards Committee meetings and in monitoring project implementation.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Build local capacity, promote greater community participation in the monitoring and evaluation process
- Facilitate interface meeting of partners to assess project status and formulate action plan
- Document the learnings, insights, and best practices to guide future projects

TARGET AREAS

9 Municipalities in Antique Province

GRANTEE

Antique Federation of Non-Government Organizations (AFON)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

June 2014 to July 2017

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

AFON
Jeoffrey Pagunaling
Executive Director
afon.antique@gmail.com

PROJECT RESULTS

AFON, through the roll out of the PLMES in nine municipalities in the province of Antique, was able to cover and monitor a total of 225 community projects since the project began in 2014. These projects mainly focused on infrastructure, livelihood and disaster risk reduction.

One of the key strengths of the PLMES was its mechanism to engage partners, most especially the government, in a constructive manner. By avoiding the investigation and fault-finding nature of similar initiatives, it has built and fostered stronger partnerships between the government, CSOs and the communities.

The baseline study conducted at the beginning of the project cites that aside from the limited CSO impact in terms of influencing projects or programs of local governments, involvement in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and expenditure tracking were also limited.

Apart from the weak to non-existent avenues available in the LGUs, CSOs themselves attested during focused group discussions that majority of them lack the knowledge and capacity to conduct M&E on their own.

The capacity development of CSO Monitors included a training on the salient features of the Local Government Code of 1991, social accountability, the planning and budgeting cycle (including Bottom-Up Planning and Budgeting, or BuB), the government procurement process and project M&E. These trainings provided CSOs with the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct monitoring activities.

With their increased capacity, government partners became more transparent and accountable in implementing their projects. They were aware of the community's efforts in closely monitoring their project performance, especially how budgets were utilized.

Monitoring billboards and other means of publicly posting important project information were also key in promoting transparency and accountability. These boards allowed a wider audience to have access to relevant and updated information. The People's Monitoring Boards (PMBs), which were placed in strategic areas in target barangays, allowed the project to highlight relevant data, issues and interventions from different partners.

A total of 270 PMBs were distributed to 270 barangays within the covered municipalities of the PLMES project. The boards were utilized and maintained by the recipient barangay to display information on publicly funded projects in order to promote transparency within the local community.

The nine municipalities which used the PLMES included Anini-y, Tobias Fornier, San Jose, Sibalom, Belison, Sebaste, Pandan, Libertad, and Caluya.

ICD / USAID PHIL-AM FUND

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND GOVERNANCE GRANT

ASEAN Corporate Governance Scorecard (ACGS) for Philippine Publicly Listed Companies (PLCs) Project

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) integration was agreed upon in 2015 and the Philippines has encouraged its economic and sociocultural sectors to be at par with the other member-nations. One of the areas that still needs to be addressed is compliance with the current corporate governance standards in the ASEAN Corporate Governance Scorecard (ACGS). The ACGS was introduced in 2012 to improve corporate governance practices of ASEAN Publicly Listed Companies or PLCs.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, assisted the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) in improving the performance of Philippine PLCs to achieve ASEAN standards. ICD accomplished this by customizing the scorecards to suit the needs of sectors without diluting the concept of having an objective measurement. ICD recommends measures to strengthen areas of weak governance and formulate regulatory reforms that would serve to institutionalize improved corporate governance standards.

ICD also encouraged national government oversight agencies to adopt these standards and include them in the regular performance monitoring of PLCs and Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations. They also worked with academic institutions in integrating the ACGS in their business courses.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVES

- Improve the performance of Philippine Publicly Listed Companies (PLCs) and enable them to be at par with ASEAN standards
- Strengthen areas in governance and formulate regulatory reforms

TARGET AREAS

Nationwide

GRANTEE

Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

June 2014 to September 2017

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

ICD
Ricardo Nicanor N. Jacinto
President and CEO
communications@icdceg.org

PROJECT RESULTS

ACGS, a corporate governance rating and ranking system based on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Principles of Corporate Governance, is applied to PLCs across ASEAN (i.e., Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar/Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) with oversight from the ASEAN Capital Market Forum (ACMF). The aim of the scorecard are as follows: to raise corporate governance standards and practices of ASEAN PLCs, to showcase and enhance the visibility as well as investment attractiveness of well-governed ASEAN PLCs internationally, and to complement the other ACMF initiatives and promote ASEAN as an asset class. These are all in preparation for ASEAN economic integration.

In the Philippines, ICD was appointed as the country's domestic ranking body to promote good corporate governance and conduct the ACGS assessment for Philippine PLCs. In its first trial assessment in 2012, the results revealed the amount of work still needed in the Philippines, where implementing good corporate governance practices is still widely considered costly and of low priority. There was an urgent need to promote the value of good corporate governance.

ICD worked with government regulating agencies such as the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) in conducting the assessment. The ACGS assessment identifies lapses in internal control mechanisms of private companies and provides corresponding means of intervention to strengthen corporate governance. ICD also worked with the Institute of Internal Auditors Philippines (IIA-P) and Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA).

Through the project, the assessment was expanded to include insurance companies, Mutual Benefit Associations (MBAIs), government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), and commercial banks. ICD worked with the Insurance Commission (IC) to popularize the use of the ACGS for insurance companies and MBAIs. The ACGS scorecard was also reviewed with IC to customize the assessment guide to insurance companies. The same process was applied to GOCCs through collaborative meetings with the Governance Commission for GOCCs (GCG), includes yearly stakeholder consultations and exit conferences discussing results of the assessment. For the banking industry, majority of universal and commercial banks were publicly-listed and were covered by the assessment done on PLCs. Thus, only the domestic-owned commercial banks were assessed as provided by the BSP.

Since the project began in 2014, ICD was able to assess a total of 482 companies: 254 PLCs, 104 GOCCs, and 124 insurance companies. The improved performance of Philippine PLCs against its regional counterparts is evident based on the annual local and peer assessment done.

Before the implementation of the project, no company from the Philippines was in the ASEAN TOP 50 PLCs. During the second year of the project, seven Philippine companies joined the Top 5, while 11 Philippine companies qualified in the third year.

The project promoted good corporate governance practices in PLCs and other targeted sectors. The results of the assessment were presented to government regulators and companies which served as a platform to promote the adoption of recommended international corporate governance best practices. ICD has represented the Philippines in the ASEAN Corporate Governance Experts (ACGE) meetings abroad. They contribute to enhancing the ACGS scorecard and encouraged necessary support from the Philippine government.

PLCs with good corporate governance practices are considered resilient to financial crises, according to investment firms in the region. As such, top-ranking PLCs were showcased annually in the ASEAN Top 50 PLC awards.

Through ICD, the ACGS scorecard was popularized and executives and directors were trained on good corporate governance practices. At the end of the project, 11 were included in the ASEAN top 50 PLCs for 2017, meeting its target of getting in at least 10 Philippine PLCs in the ASEAN TOP 50.

JVOFI / USAID PHIL-AM FUND

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND GOVERNANCE GRANT

Protecting and Defending the Amburayan River Basin and Watershed through Good Governance and Active Indigenous People's Participation Project

The Amburayan River is a critical water resource that winds through three provinces and fifteen municipalities in Northern Luzon. There are competing demands and interests in the river, including a recent proposal from a private company to build a hydro-electric dam. Already, conflicts over the shared water resource have arisen and "turfing" problems beset the development and rehabilitation of the river system.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supported Jaime V. Ongpin Foundation, Inc. (JVOFI) in bringing together various stakeholders in the management of the Amburayan River Basin and Watershed, and institutionalize a collaboration and resource generation that would ensure the protection of Indigenous People's rights as well as the interests of all stakeholders.

The project focused on supporting the first CSO-led initiative for the designation of the Amburayan River as a Water Quality Management Area (WQMA). An interim Governing Board for the Lower Amburayan River System (LARS) and a Multi-sectoral Team for Upper Amburayan River System (UARS) were formed. A 10-year WQMA Plan was crafted separately by LARS and UARS to address important issues and concerns in the river system.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To establish the Amburayan River Council that will govern the extraction and utilization of water and watershed resources

TARGET AREAS
Benguet, Ilocos Sur and La Union provinces

GRANTEE
Jaime V. Ongpin Foundation, Inc. (JVOFI)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
June 2014 to June 2017

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

JVOFI
Maria Rosario R. Lopez
Executive Director
info@jvofi.org

PROJECT RESULTS

JVOFI formed a technical working group (TWG) that included 15 local government units (LGUs) and other stakeholders to provide a governance mechanism for the protection of the Amburayan Watershed.

An inter-regional core TWG meeting formulated the Amburayan River Project work and financial plan which identifies among others, sustainability mechanisms to jointly protect Amburayan.

In support of this sustainability plan were commitments from partner agencies like the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region I, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Region I and Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) and PLGU-Ilocos Sur to host quarterly meetings of the stakeholders even after the project ended.

Separate sustainability planning workshops were conducted for Regions I and CAR to draft the five-year LGU compliance scheme based on the draft 10-year WQMA plans for LARS and UARS.

In the monitoring of the 59,300 assorted seedlings planted in 2015 and 2016, 59 percent survived and were being nurtured by the communities where these were planted. Around 250 sacks of compost were provided to selected communities to improve the status of these trees.

A total of 74 sets of forest firefighting tools composed of axe, pick, shovel, fire swatter, back pack sprayer, rake, hand gloves, hard hats, boots and raincoats were provided to 26 Peoples' Organizations.

Moreover, three new nurseries were established with selected communities in Palina, Kibungan; Duplas and Bulalaan, Sudipen; and Banga, Sugpon. Two school nurseries in Atok and Bakun, Benguet were provided nets, planting materials and seeds. A total of 78 Deputy Environment and Natural Resources Officers (DENROs) were each provided with one set of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) consisting of rain boots, rain coats, rechargeable flashlights and hard hats.

A booklet on Best Practices was printed as reference for similar projects. The project impact evaluation emphasized the uniqueness of JVOFI's project as the first CSO-initiated WQMA designation which traverses two regions and three provinces with different ethno-cultural backgrounds.

It also underlined the ability of the project to convene various stakeholders, as well as the importance of documenting lessons learned and the added value of shared responsibility in protecting the Amburayan River.

JVOFI also organized stakeholder sustainability events in Vigan City and Baguio City that led to the approval of the LARS and UARS 10-year WQMA Plans.

These series of activities have paved the way to create a stakeholders' resolution for an annual joint meeting of the LARS and UARS Governing Boards that was included in the DENR Administrative Orders.

In January 2018, six months after JVOFI's project ended, DENR officially designated the Upper Amburayan River System in Benguet Province and the Lower Amburayan River Systems in Ilocos Sur and La Union provinces as Water Quality Management Areas (WQMAs).

The designation was the result of the project activities, especially the Sustainability Memorandum of Agreement signed by the DENR, EMB, and the PLGUs of Benguet, La Union, and Ilocos Sur on June 27, 2017 that will ensure the continuing protection of the Amburayan River.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND GOVERNANCE GRANT

Advancing and Instituting Greater Accountability and Transparency through Expanded Civic Engagement in Metro Naga Project

The Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act No. 7160) provided sectoral representation of marginalized sectors in local legislative bodies. However, the implementing rules of the policy on sectoral representation was not drafted by the assigned agency. The selection of the last seat for these representatives was left to the decision of the local government units (LGUs). Where there is such representation, civil society organizations (CSOs) and people's organizations (POs) often do not fully understand their role or have the capacity to fulfill their responsibilities.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supported Naga City People's Council (NCPC) in organizing and institutionalizing people's councils in each of the target municipalities. The people's council served as the representative of marginalized sectors in local legislative bodies and special bodies. The councils promote participatory governance and bring the agenda of the marginalized sector at the forefront of development plans and programs of the LGUs. It replicated the same efforts done in Naga City in creating and empowering the NCPC. The project also conducted a series of training programs for CSOs to improve their understanding of the government system and processes, especially in development planning and budgeting.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To promote participatory governance and bring the agenda of the marginalized sector to the forefront of development plans and programs of the local government units

TARGET AREAS
7 municipalities in Camarines Sur

GRANTEE
Naga City People's Council (NCPC)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
June 2014 to September 2016

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

NCPC
Johann P. De La Rosa
Executive Director
dadadelarosa@yahoo.com

PROJECT RESULTS

NCPC was able to organize seven people's councils in municipalities surrounding Naga City. One council was established in each of the municipalities of Minalabac, Pamplona, Pasacao, Calabanga, Camaligan, San Fernando, and Ocampo in Camarines Sur province.

The people's council expanded the civic participation of people's organizations and non-government organizations (NGOs), from just being watchdogs of the government to partners of LGUs in identifying and implementing programs for the marginalized sectors.

NCPC united people's organizations, NGOs and other local stakeholders to form the people's councils and encouraged them to partner with their respective LGUs in bringing governance closer to the people. The partnership between the council and the LGU provided avenues for marginalized sectors to participate in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of government programs, as well as the proper delivery of public services.

Council partners lauded the training programs conducted by the council, especially in Bottom-up Budgeting (BUB) monitoring and project development. The training programs equipped people's council members in identifying common lapses in government project implementation. NCPC was able to train a total of 367 people's council members in the topics of local governance, civic participation in local government projects, monitoring BUB projects, and procurement monitoring.

People's council representatives participated in the local development group and other special bodies i.e. school boards, health boards, and peace and order council. They were accredited by the local legislative bodies to participate in local governance and were consulted on the different issues of concerned sectors. Programs needed at the grassroots level were identified by the LGUs together with the people's councils.

In implementing projects, people's councils provided additional manpower to accelerate the mobilization of government programs. In the municipality of Minalabac, the people's council assisted in the establishment of the municipality's evacuation center in 2015, through the KALAHI-CIDSS program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). This was the first occasion that DSWD awarded the program to a non-state institution.

In recognition of their best practice, the people's council was also awarded projects by the Millennium Challenge Corporation. All councils were assigned portions of the social services budget to implement programs that responds to the needs of the marginalized sectors. A total of 26 local government programs were implemented in partnership with the seven people's councils.

In monitoring and evaluating projects, all councils participated in the checking of BUB programs of their respective LGUs. Most councils

also participated in designing and monitoring the Local Poverty Reduction Action Team (LPRAT) programs.

In Camaligan, the Municipal Administrator expressed that the creation of the people's council served as an "eye-opener" for the LGU. Aside from monitoring programs, the council also worked with the local government to improve programs of the municipality, making them more responsive.

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND GOVERNANCE GRANT

Democratic Citizenship and Good Governance for Change: Enhanced Political Participation among the Filipino Youth Project

National elective politics is still dominated by traditional patronage politics. Educating the youth and consistently providing them with information and motivation for political engagement can develop a new generation of political movers. Recent programs and reform movements such as Youth Vote Philippines (YVP) and the Movement for Good Governance, where Young Public Servants (YPS) played a major role in developing, helped increase awareness on the need to move away from traditional politics. Though the recent elections produced many young representatives in the Congress or in the local government, many of them are still part of political dynasties seeking to maintain their positions of power.

ACTIVITIES

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supported YPS' involvement in electoral reform through its Democratic Citizenship programs and its youth engagement through the YVP. A program in YPS called Social Conversations served as a venue for gathering knowledge and insights from the youth. These interactions determined a continuing need for collaboration and education in political involvement and reform.

YPS Governance and Democratic Citizenship programs provided various platforms and venues for partnership, knowledge and education on citizen participation in democracy and enhanced political engagement among the Filipino youth.

SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE
To enhance political participation of the Filipino youth by providing platforms for discussion on citizen participation in democracy, governance, and politics

TARGET AREAS
Nationwide

GRANTEE
Young Public Servants (YPS)

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD
July 2014 to August 2017

CONTACT INFORMATION

USAID/Philippines
Maria Teresa S. Robielos
Contracting Officer's Representative, USAID
mrobielos@usaid.gov

USAID Phil-Am Fund
Eugenio M. Gonzales
Chief of Party
usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

YPS
Natalie Christine V. Jarge
Chairperson
chingjorge@gmail.com

PROJECT RESULTS

Youth vote is crucial in Philippine elections. In 2016, almost half of registered voters belong to the 18-to-30 age bracket. Several political experts say that investing in the votes of the youth can win the presidency. As such, having no proper knowledge of the factors to consider in choosing the best candidates, young voters are easy prey for traditional politicians, not to mention vote-buying.

YPS aimed to increase political participation of the Filipino youth by introducing avenues for them to be more aware of the current issues and be more knowledgeable of the electoral process. Through the Youth Vote initiative, YPS delved into educating people on good governance and strengthening their understanding of political engagement.

In 2015, YPS partnered with the National Youth Commission (NYC) and local government units to bring voters' education campaigns and good governance initiatives to localities rarely reached by these programs.

Social Conversations, YPS' trademark program, served as an initial step to ignite the interest of young people on political matters and civic activities. Twenty-four (24) Social Conversations were conducted in the National Capital Region (NCR) and in 34 other provinces. These sessions provided young people with the chance to freely talk about the concerns in their communities. They exchanged ideas and shared first-hand stories on governance without fear of prejudice.

As observed in most of the Social Conversations facilitated by the YPS, even indifferent ones were encouraged to speak and offer their fair share in the discussions. Opinions on what transpires on the ground were verified and affirmed by these young people, which was important in developing the national youth agenda.

In each Social Conversation, participants were encouraged to establish their own Youth Vote Philippines (YVP) Local Chapters, making opportunities for engagement available to young people in the communities.

Since the project began in 2014, YPS established 15 YVP chapters all over the Philippines. Through these YVP chapters, YPS convened ten post-election roundtable discussions nationwide to monitor the post-election progress of the youth agenda in the target areas and provide an opportunity for community engagement.

During these sessions, participants recommended measures to help solve identified concerns in their communities. They also appreciated this gathering with fellow Filipino youths to discuss community issues and brainstorm for possible solutions. The more people affirm and validate their experience, the more they became interested to take part in nation building activities. Through these campaigns, YPS engaged a total of 17,580 Filipino youths nationwide.

YPS also partnered with gaming companies, realizing that most young people of voting age were into online gaming. In partnership with Mineski Events Team and Gariath Concepts, YPS set up booths, called Photovote, during national gaming festivals and summits. The Photovote aimed to address young people's queries on voter registration.

Recognizing YPS' role as an electoral-reform advocate, major TV networks, ABS-CBN and GMA7, partnered with YPS in their 2016 national elections campaign coverage. YPS served as resource persons for millennials' perspective in polls and in election-related newscasts. YPS participation in the election coverage of these networks also popularized its advocacy, as validated by its project partners.

In partnership with the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), YPS also developed the Voter's Election Toolkit and CHANGE Scorecard, a tool to assess an electoral candidate for the youth.

Annex B

Transformations: Stories of Interest

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

TRANSFORMATIONS

Stories of Interest

TRANSFORMATIONS

Stories of Interest

Disclaimer:
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124 List of Acronyms

In the archipelagic Philippines, permeable borders leave the country vulnerable to smuggling — not only of goods, but of people. Six projects supported by USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, implemented activities across the three pillars of USAID's counter-trafficking strategy— Prevention, Protection of victims and Prosecution.

BALAOD Mindanaw and Tambayan Children's Center reduced vulnerabilities through targeted awareness-building programs while PREDA, Bidlisiw and FORGE supported recovery and healing of victims through their therapeutic homes and community re-integration strategies. In partnership with local governments and law enforcement agencies, CLB helped identify victims and assisted them in seeking justice against perpetrators.

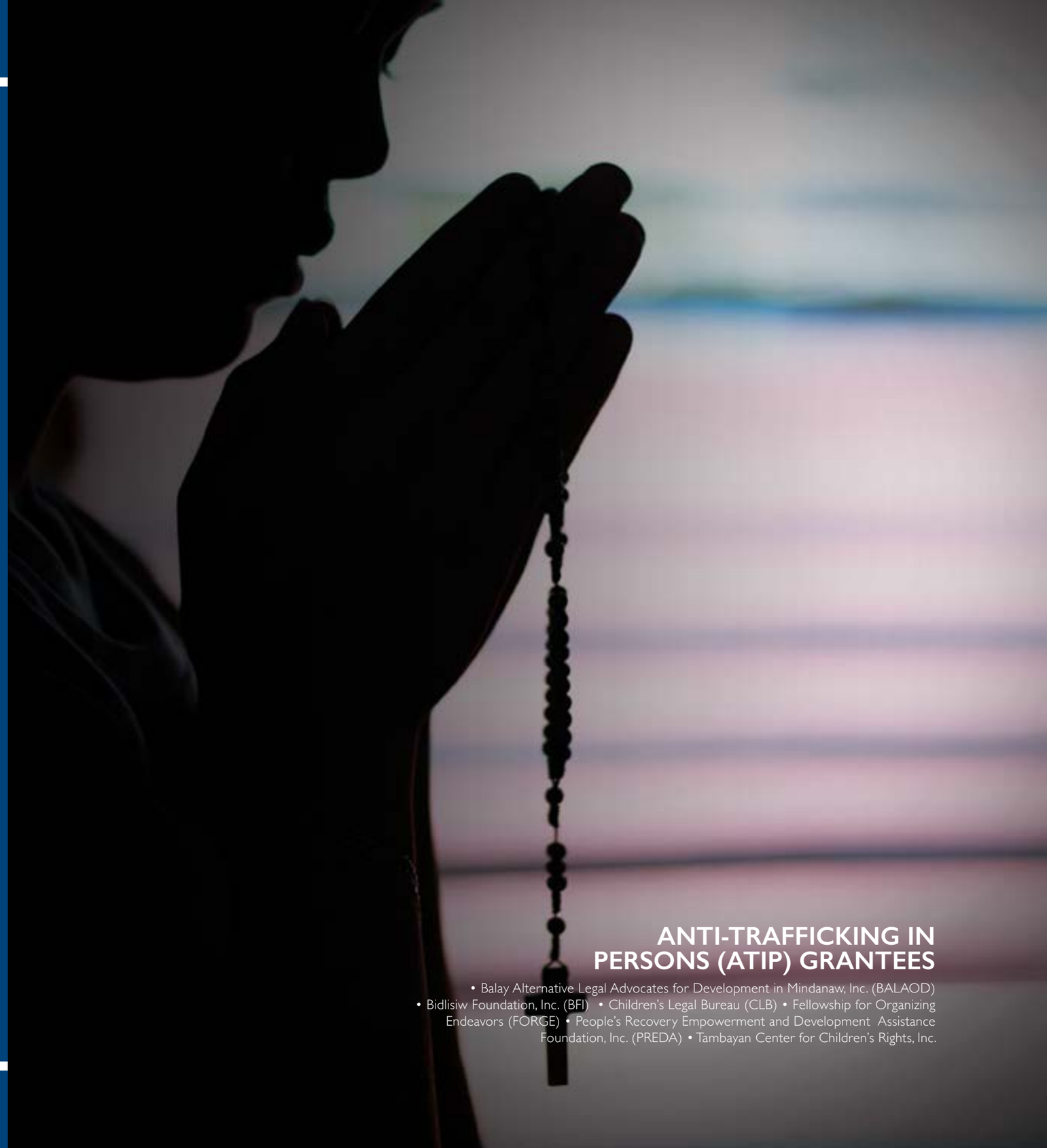
Collectively, grants supported activities that have resulted in the education and awareness of more than 17,000 people. Counseling services and therapeutic sessions led to the healing and protection of around 750 trafficking victims. A total of 188 child victim survivors were also assisted in seeking justice.

All six grantees went on a six-day peer-to-peer exchange to meet non-government organization (NGO) counterparts in Cambodia, which faced similar issues – online and commercial sexual exploitation of children, sex tourism, and other trafficking related issues. Participants learned about their best practices and program strategies especially in the aspects response mechanisms to cyber-pornography, comprehensive social service delivery for vulnerable families, and social enterprise efforts to sustain child protection services.

Cebu-based organizations — Bidlisiw, CLB and FORGE— formed a consortium of what came to be known as the Advocates for the Protection and the Prevention of Abuse and Exploitation of Children (APPROACH). The three NGOs complemented each other's expertise, with Bidlisiw taking on community integration and networking; CLB providing legal aid; and FORGE organizing outreach work and maintaining shelters for trafficking victims.

"We have always aimed for collective action to fight trafficking," shared Pamela Uy of Bidlisiw. She further underlined that a series of trainings have given APPROACH a clear direction and a strengthened capacity to work with other NGOs. "We put our hearts into this initiative, in the name of working together to achieve a society free from human trafficking."

Project initiatives also paved way for two grantees to operate new shelters for vulnerable children—FORGE piloted the Boys' Home in Cebu and PREDA launched the Victoria Children's Home in Zambales.



ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (ATIP) GRANTEES

• Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw, Inc. (BALAOD) • Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc. (BFI) • Children's Legal Bureau (CLB) • Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors (FORGE) • People's Recovery Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation, Inc. (PREDA) • Tambayan Center for Children's Rights, Inc.

Photo by BALAOD

"The seminar made me appreciate the importance of being socially conscious, and learn that being so will not only benefit me, but also my family and other people from my community"

Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw, Inc.

STUDENTS IN CAGAYAN DE ORO STAND UP AGAINST TRAFFICKING

The Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative: Integrating the Human Rights Framework in Educating High School Students on Anti-Human Trafficking Project

Jessie James Gorre was in the ninth grade when he accepted his class adviser's invitation to attend a gathering of school student leaders and teachers from the different national high schools in Cagayan de Oro and nearby municipalities. A regular student from Camaman-an National High School, Jessie James was not particularly interested in sociopolitical issues.

"It was not really of much value to me," he recalled. "My involvement was limited to the fact that I just need to know these issues so I can state my opinions. Nothing more and nothing less."

To Jessie James' surprise, the gathering he attended was a paralegal training on anti-human trafficking. The topic, he recounted, was "quite new to me."

Talks about human rights and the existing trafficking cases in his community got his attention. Speakers introduced them the idea that even as students, they can do something to help prevent it from happening to someone they know. Series of trainings prepared them to become school-based paralegals. Soon, he was motivated to take on the fight against human trafficking.

Organized by Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw (BALAOD Mindanaw), gatherings and seminars involving students form part of the Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative: Integrating the Human Rights Framework in Educating High School Students on Anti-Human Trafficking Project. The initiative sought to educate high school students in human rights amid a growing trafficking problem in the region.

As a flourishing economic and tourist hub in Mindanao, the port city of Cagayan de Oro — which also boasts an international airport and extensive road networks — has become a trafficking hotspot. According to its City Social Welfare and Development Office, most trafficked children end up sexually exploited in bars and cybersex dens within the city.

"The seminar made me appreciate the importance of being socially conscious, and learn that being so will not only benefit me, but also my family and other people from my community," said Jessie James. "My participation in the training ignited the willingness in me to assist other students and children to engage and act against trafficking in persons."

BALAOD's campaign activities are not only limited to paralegal trainings. After implementing the project for two years, the project was able to organize school caravans and media activities that reached more than 13,000 individuals, 10,000 of them are Grade 9 and 10 students just like Jessie.

Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw, Inc.

TEACHERS TAPPED AS ATIP ADVOCATES

Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw (BALAOD Mindanaw) addresses the increasing trafficking concerns in the Cagayan de Oro region by building a strong awareness and prevention campaign tapping on specific sectors like high schools and conducts extensive advocacy activities that involves students, their parents and their teachers.

One active teacher-advocate is Nancy Cairel from Agusan National High School who attended a paralegal training on anti-human trafficking. Her advocacy to protect children was so deeply rooted that it became so natural for her to be there for the students.

"I care for my students. That is why it is important for us teachers to be part of this campaign," shared Teacher Nancy. "BALAOD's trainings have imparted vital information about human rights and human trafficking which I did not know before. It enabled us teachers to pass on this knowledge to our students and their parents so they too, can contribute in our fight against trafficking."

Paralegal trainings for teachers are part of BALAOD's Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative. Teacher Nancy's school is just one of the 34 public high schools in Cagayan de Oro City and Misamis Oriental province that partnered with BALAOD.

One remarkable advocacy activity conducted by BALAOD, in collaboration with USAID and other community members like Teacher Nancy, was the Stop Trafficking of Persons (STOP) Concert held last March 08, 2018. Attended by partner schools and other sectors, the STOP Concert featured performances from Ooberfuse, an English human rights and anti-trafficking songwriting duo, and Ebe Dancel whose songs urged the audience to participate more in activities that fight human trafficking.

"Before, there were limited groups who work to stop human trafficking in our communities. Now, because of our school-based advocacy campaigns and activities like the STOP Concert, more people like students, teachers and parents are now aware about trafficking and how to prevent it," shares BALAOD Executive Director Ritz Lee B. Santos III.

Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc.

SELF-AWAKENING: A TRAFFICKED VICTIM'S ROAD TO RECOVERY

Withdrawing and Preventing Children and Young People from Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation in a Post-Disaster (Yolanda) Area Project

Sixteen year-old Trina* and her family were devastated when Super Typhoon Yolanda hit her town in Estancia, Northern Iloilo in 2013. To make ends meet, her mother worked as an appliance agent while her father opted to become an overseas Filipino worker.

Trina was always a curious girl. However, this curiosity led her to a series of events that changed her life forever. Her parents were occupied in making a living for their family that they took little notice when Trina quit school, left home, and sought refuge with shady people. Soon, she found herself trafficked for sex. Terrified and penniless, she lived this way for months until she was approached by Gilay, an Outreach Worker at the Bidlisiw Foundation, an organization that helps disadvantaged children in vulnerable areas.

Gilay is trained by Bidlisiw to visit hangouts like resorts and parks and identify potential trafficked victims like Trina. Gilay found Trina in one of the hangouts and shared how the organization can help girls like her through an Outreach Education. At first, Trina was hesitant to believe her but after a few more talks, she agreed to undergo psycho-social counselling activities with Bidlisiw.

Under the Withdrawing and Preventing Children and Young People from Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation in a Post-Disaster (Yolanda) Area Project, Trina and her mother enrolled in Bidlisiw's Family Development Program where they work together for Trina's recovery from her traumatic experiences.

One year after Bidlisiw rescued her, Trina is back to school to finish her studies. "I'm very thankful because I was given a chance to change my life," Trina shares. "I want to become a teacher when I finish school so I can also inspire others."

After three years of implementing the project, Bidlisiw was able to reach more than 1,000 highly vulnerable children and young people, where about 160 were commercially sexually exploited children like Trina. They were encouraged to undergo comprehensive interventions such as therapeutic sessions, re-enrollment to school, "diversion" exercises like cooking and acting, and development activities together with their families.

**not her real name*

Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc.

THE RISE OF A COMMUNITY CHAMPION

In 1998, while looking for greener pastures, Paquito Bacaling, Jr., fondly called Nong Kits by his friends, applied for work in another country as a security guard. The recruiter asked him to pay a registration fee for a job placement while he was in Manila. After a week of waiting, he went to the office address of the agency and found an empty space. The so-called recruiter could no longer be reached and was nowhere to be found. Frustrated, Nong Kits went home ashamed and penniless, as his family had only borrowed his registration fee. To make ends meet, Nong Kits started working as a tricycle driver.

Bidlisiw Foundation combats human trafficking in select municipalities of Northern Iloilo, one of the areas hardest hit by Typhoon Yolanda in late 2013. In 2015, they implemented the project entitled **Withdrawing and Preventing Children and Young People from Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation in a Post-Disaster (Yolanda) Area Project**. Bidlisiw conducted education, healing, recovery and reintegration activities for affected communities made more vulnerable by poverty brought about by the vast economic and social damage of the typhoon.

"Because of this experience from the illegal recruiter, I learned a lot and I now know that I should be cautious when it comes to trusting people," shared Nong Kits. But this did not stop him from becoming a volunteer outreach worker for Bidlisiw.

Bidlisiw's presence in his communities were consistent because of the advocacy activities that they regularly conduct. After determining that it was a legitimate and registered organization committed to help trafficked survivors and their families, Nong Kits became a part of Bidlisiw's community volunteers and was active in the campaign against illegal recruitment and trafficking in persons. He was particularly concerned about the youth and women in his community who are at a high risk of being exploited. Through the project, he became a member of Barangay Council for the Protection of Children so that he could officially serve as the "eyes and ears" for vulnerable youth and women in his community.

Nong Kits is one of 20 community volunteers engaged by Bidlisiw to work with families of child victims of trafficking. Nong Kits and his fellow volunteers have assisted a total of 172 families of trafficking survivors who have enrolled in Bidlisiw's development activities and were integrated back to their community through the project.

Children's Legal Bureau

LOCAL EFFORTS SAVE CHILD FROM TRAFFICKING

Empowering Communities and Building Partnerships for Anti-Trafficking in Persons Project

Emily Juanillo, Barangay Captain of Barangay Odlot in Bogo City, Cebu, was instrumental in the arrest of a foreign national residing in the barangay, who was apprehended for cohabiting with a minor. This was in violation of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act in the Philippines.

Barangay Odlot is one of the ten pilot barangays of the Empowering Communities and Building Partnerships on Anti-Trafficking in Persons in Cebu Project of the Children's Legal Bureau (CLB). The project engages with community leaders like Emily to respond to human trafficking and equip them with the proper procedures for assisting trafficked persons. The Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) in Odlot hold monthly meetings. It was during one of the meetings when a member raised the case of a mother bringing her daughter to the foreign man's house. The council immediately invited the mother to validate. She was not responsive to their advice and warnings.

The BCPC then approached CLB for assistance. Further investigation and surveillance activities confirmed the rumors. After three months, a case conference involving the police, social workers, Barangay Captain Emily and CLB lawyers was conducted. This resulted in the filing of a search warrant. The rescue operations that followed led to the arrest of the foreign national and the release of the young girl.

"I had mixed emotions about helping at first, especially since I knew the mother who is an active member of our barangay," expressed Emily. "But in the end, I told myself that I have to conquer my fear because a young girl is in need of my help and as the head of this barangay, I have to do something to prevent other young girls and boys from being victimized".

CLB's three-year project has assisted a total of 91 survivors of trafficking, most of whom are young girls. At their request, 16 girls were provided legal advice in pursuing cases against their perpetrators. Paralegal officers of the organization accompany the victims during trials to provide counseling and avoid re-traumatization. The others decided to either resume their former lives or were referred to shelters managed by partner organizations like Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors' (FORGE) Teen Dreamer's Home.

Photo by CLB

COMMUNITY GROUPS STRENGTHENED TO FIGHT TRAFFICKING IN CEBU

Barangay Councilor Brenda Deiparine, Chairperson of the Women and Children Committee in Talisay City in Cebu, was intently listening to Rudy's* story and saw signs of a possible case of child labor trafficking.

Rudy is a native of the Manobo tribe, one of the ethnic groups in Southern Mindanao. He was only 15 when he was offered to work for a fish storage company in Davao City and eventually in Cebu. He was promised an easy job and a good salary. Believing this opportunity will lift his family from poverty, Rudy immediately accepted the job.

He worked at a fish storage company as a re-packer and hauler starting at eight in the morning. Rudy's health condition gradually deteriorated because of his work schedule and work load.

Rudy and five other boys escaped from their employers after two months. They were assisted by Councilor Brenda in Barangay Lawaan in Talisay City, where the fish company was located. She was hands-on in taking care of Rudy and his group. As she saw signs of child labor trafficking in the situation, Councilor Brenda immediately reported it and coordinated with the City Social Worker.

The City Social Worker in Talisay was able to turn over the six trafficking survivors, including Rudy, to the Municipal Social Worker in Davao where Rudy

Photos by CLB

and the other boys were originally from. Continuous assistance and monitoring were done in coordination with the local social welfare and development office in Davao.

Councilor Brenda learned how to handle potential trafficking cases when she participated in the Anti-Trafficking in Persons (ATIP) Orientation for the Barangay Council organized by the Children's Legal Bureau (CLB). The organization trains frontline responders of local governments and other watch groups to detect and prevent trafficking and protect survivors under the **Empowering Communities and Building Partnerships for Anti-Trafficking in Persons Project**.

"With the knowledge I have gained and as a barangay councilor, I knew that it was my responsibility to act immediately," says Councilor Brenda. She also appreciated how CLB's ATIP awareness-raising activities have helped them improve their capacity to detect trafficking cases and identify their role in assisting and reintegrating survivors.

Brenda is just one of the 570 volunteers who were trained by CLB in paralegal and parasocial work, and later on organized as Community Watch Groups. They come from 41 barangays in Cebu and were tasked to identify potential trafficking cases and report them to the strengthened Barangay Council Against Trafficking.

**not his real name*

FORGE Boys' Home: A facility that houses male trafficking survivors where they undergo pyscho-social interventions that help them regain a positive view of themselves

Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors

DREAMING A NEW DREAM

Anti-Child Trafficking Source Communities in Cebu Province (ACT@Source) Project

Julie*, a resident of Cebu, started working at an early age. She was 12 years old when she was exposed to online prostitution. She only dreams to give her family a good life and this job allowed her to make enough money that could support that dream. That was why she never thought of stopping until she was approached by a Community Outreach Worker from Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors (FORGE).

FORGE introduces the concept of human rights and human exploitation to children like Julie. They also allow these children to observe fun learning sessions and give them the opportunity to undergo the alternative learning system or ALS. Through these activities, Julie soon realized that she was being exploited.

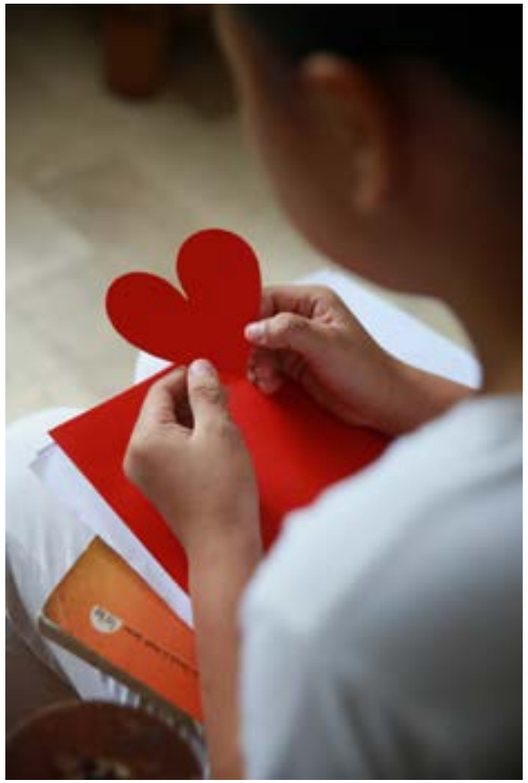
She then agreed to be housed at a residential care facility operated by FORGE, where she underwent study sessions focused on human development. FORGE Facilitators also helped her manage her emotions and stress. With the help of FORGE, she was able to finish her basic education through the ALS. Julie then proceeded to study social work and finished in two years' time. She passed the Social Workers Licensure Examination and is now a registered Social Worker.

Today, Julie is working as an Education Officer for FORGE, rewriting the journey she went through when she was younger. This time to other children who are victims of online and commercial sexual exploitation (CSE). She is one of the active staff at Teen Dreamers Home for Girls, a temporary shelter for female teenage survivors of CSE and sex trafficking.

"Programs like this have a big impact in the lives of children being rescued," says Julie. "I know for sure because I am a survivor of online sexual exploitation. Helping these children cope has become my personal commitment, my passion, my dream."

Through the Anti-Child Trafficking Initiatives at Source Communities in Cebu Province or the ACT@ Source Project, Julie and other FORGE staff members continuously provide supplementary psycho-social intervention to 50 teenage and children survivors who are housed at the shelters they operate namely the Teen Dreamers Home for Girls and FORGE Boys Home.

**not her real name*



"I know for sure because I am a survivor of online sexual exploitation. Helping these children cope has become my personal commitment, my passion, my dream."

Photos By FORGE

Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors

EMPOWERING THE YOUTH OF CEBU

Anti-Child Trafficking Source Communities in Cebu Province (ACT@Source) Project

Jobert, 15, likes playing online games at an internet shop near his home in Barangay Pasil, Cebu City. He thought that because there were a lot of other people in the shop, he would feel safe. That was why he never thought he would feel threatened while doing his favorite after-school activity.

"I experienced being touched inappropriately by a gay person while in an internet café. I was stunned that was why I punched him in the head," Jobert recalled the experience and openly shared it with one of the facilitators during a youth camp organized by the Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors (FORGE).

FORGE implemented the **Anti-Child Trafficking at Source Communities in Cebu Province (ACT@ Source) Project** to build awareness about child protection and anti-trafficking in persons advocacies. FORGE engaged with different groups like barangay and youth representatives in selected communities in Cebu. They invited them to orientation and training activities and molded them into the community's first-line trafficking responders.

FORGE, having worked with the youth of Cebu for years, recognized their essential role in spreading the advocacy to prevent child trafficking. They mobilize these youth volunteers through the group, *Kabataan Batok sa Trapiking ug Abuso* (KABATA) or the Youth Against Trafficking and Abuse.

To make learning about ATIP advocacies and children's rights more fun and engaging, FORGE organized a series of youth-oriented trainings and summer camps. These activities were participated by youth advocates and leaders, ages 12 to 17 years old, in eight target barangays in Cebu Province, including Barangay Pasil where Jobert resides. These potential KABATA leaders undergo a series of formation workshops and orientation seminars on the core principles of children's rights, as well as the Anti-Child Abuse Law of the Philippines.

"My life before I became a KABATA volunteer, I was just a simple person who had the willingness to help people in need especially street children," expressed Jane, 16, from another target area, Barangay Paknaan, and a KABATA President. "I have learned so much and this serves as my drive to do my responsibility to inform vulnerable people in my community and help them in ways I can."

Jobert and Jane are part of 348 youths engaged by FORGE as KABATA volunteers in Cebu Province.

People's Recovery Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation, Inc.

FILIPINO TRAFFICKING SURVIVOR REBUILDS HER LIFE

Rescuing Girls and Boys from Trafficking and Providing Healing, Education and Legal Assistance to Victims Project

Maria* was only 13 when she was trafficked. She now participates in group therapy in Zambales province, north of Manila, to help process her difficult past experiences.

Maria, now 18, and other young survivors of trafficking reside in a shelter run by the People's Recovery Empowerment and Development Assistance (PREDA) Foundation, one of USAID's local partners combatting trafficking in the Philippines. Through the Rescuing Girls and Boys from Trafficking and Providing Healing, Education and Legal Assistance to Victims Project, the organization provides counseling and school scholarships to help children and teenagers overcome their trauma, expand their life skills and reintegrate into their communities.

PREDA also helps survivors who wish to seek justice from human traffickers. This is an optional—but important—part of the process. "Seeking and attaining justice is a requisite to genuine healing and recovery," explains Francis Bermido, PREDA's Executive Director.

Through the vigilance of local social workers, Maria was rescued from her captors and now resides in PREDA's shelter, where she is rebuilding her life. With assistance from USAID and PREDA, Maria went back to school and continued her studies.

"I began to value my life again and am looking forward to a better future," says Maria. Expressing gratitude for her counselors and therapists, she adds, "It is through them that I came to realize my rights and dignity."

Maria has undergone an Emotional Expression Therapy, which is unique to PREDA. It allows children to freely express their pain and anger. They find comfort and support from the therapist or facilitator. Once the abuse they experienced is revealed and the children are emotionally free, they can speak to the public and media with conviction and credibility, as well as feel empowered to further seek justice.

With PREDA's constant guidance, Maria was able to testify in court against her trafficker. Demonstrating tremendous courage, she told her story and stood her ground amidst questioning from the defense lawyer.

Maria is one of 172 victims of various forms of abuses in homes, clubs, bars, and street prostitution, as well as sex trafficking who were assisted by PREDA.

**not her real name*

People's Recovery Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation, Inc.

RECOVERY AND REINTEGRATION

Fourteen-year old Rachel* comes from a poor family living in the slums of Metro Manila. She had never been in school and could not even read or write her own name. Already a victim of domestic and sexual abuse at the age of nine, Rachel became easy prey for human traffickers.

When a friend offered her work as a domestic helper in another city, she readily accepted and ended up working as an "entertainer" at a commercial sex bar. She eventually escaped and asked help from the police. She was brought to a local government-run center where social workers from Peoples Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance (PREDA) Foundation found her.

PREDA is a charitable organization that protects vulnerable children from sexual abuse and commercial exploitation. PREDA also helps victims heal and empowers them to seek justice and rebuild their lives through their therapeutic homes.

When first admitted at the PREDA Center, Rachel refused to talk to anyone. But after several weeks of counseling, she finally shared her story and submitted herself to a medico-legal examination, making it possible for PREDA to pursue justice on her behalf.

Under the **Rescuing Girls and Boys from Trafficking and Providing Healing, Education and Legal Assistance to Victims Project**, Rachel was offered to enroll in a Special Education (SpEd) class in Subic, Olangapo where she learned to read and write, as well as do basic arithmetic. More importantly, she has acquired self-confidence and life skills that will eventually help her become a productive member of her community.

Victoria Children's Home: A therapeutic center where vulnerable children can receive comprehensive care and undergo healing activities

Rachel is one of the 42 residential children at the PREDA Center who agreed to be enrolled in educational programs. Of these, 13 (including Rachel) enlisted at a SpEd school while 29 enrolled in a formal school.

To expand assistance to more children, PREDA launched the Victoria Children's Home in 2017. It is an expanded center for abused girls that can accommodate more than 80 children. It serves as a symbol of PREDA's continuous commitment to uphold and protect the rights of the most vulnerable children.

**not her real name*

Photo by Tambayan Center for Children's Rights, Inc.

Tambayan Center for Children's Rights, Inc.

COORDINATED SUPPORT CHANGES LIFE OF A FILIPINO CHILD

Countering Trafficking-in-Persons by Sharing Information, Advocacy, Training, Education and Responsive Local Governance (Counter-TIPSTER) Project

Tim* belongs to the Blaan Community in Saranggani, an indigenous tribe in Southern Mindanao. He and his older sister were left under the care of their grandmother. Tim reached high school but he was not able to continue with his studies due to poverty. Since then, he worked in a farm. His grandmother was not capable of working anymore so he needed to find a way to provide for their basic needs like food and shelter. That was why even though he was only 17, he accepted a job offered to him by an agent, with the assurance of a good salary, place to stay and financial assistance for his family. He was set to work in a sugar cane plantation along with other boys.

After traveling for three days by land, they finally reached Isabela, a thriving province in Northern Luzon. They were provided with bunk houses which were dirty and not well-ventilated. They worked without enough rest, under the hit of the sun or pouring rain and without gloves or boots to protect themselves. This exposed them to different health risks. Their food was treated as a form of in-kind loan paid through deductions from their pay.

To escape their difficult situation, Tim and the others found a way to contact the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) in Saranggani Province who recognized their situation as a case of human trafficking. The MSWDO then reported their case to Tambayan Center for Children's Rights.

Tim and the other workers were rescued through Tambayan's Counter-TIPSTER project (Countering Trafficking-in-Persons by Sharing Information, Advocacy, Training, Education and Responsive Local Governance). The project uses an inter-agency approach to fight human trafficking.

Law enforcers and social workers from Isabela coordinated with Counter-TIPSTER and the Provincial Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking in Saranggani. These groups managed the rescue process of trafficked men and children through inter-agency coordination protocols.

"Our vision for the COUNTER-TIPSTER Project is to strengthen the Local Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking (IACATs) where all member agencies work together in combating human trafficking," Tambayan Executive Director Richard Atamosa said. "Through project interventions with the local government units, existing mechanisms are being improved, developing better means to protect survivors of trafficking." He emphasized that an effective way to fight trafficking in persons is to expand their network of referral agencies and service providers.

Tim is one of 105 trafficking survivors rescued by the project. Forms of assistance given to them included psychological first aid and stress debriefing. It also opened opportunities for educational support for minors like Tim.

Tambayan strengthened their community outreach activities through roadshows, theater plays and films where they were able to reach more than 9,000 community members. They also strengthened their information campaign through radio and television programs to heighten the awareness of communities and to encourage them to report potential trafficking cases.

**not his real name*

Conservation projects supported by the USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, not only resulted in the communities' heightened awareness of the environment — but also in various biodiversity breakthroughs.

USAID's Office of Forestry and Biodiversity introduced the Theory of Change tool to the grantees in 2016. Since then, these organizations actively tapped locals as partners in the conservation of key biodiversity areas (KBAs). Biodiversity research took place alongside education efforts, to guarantee communities' access and understanding of their value. These initiatives were instrumental in improving the management of 275,962 out of a total of 499,713 hectares of KBAs in the Philippines. These led to the protection of 22 KBAs which include the Central Cebu Protected Landscapes, Mt. Apo in Davao, Negros Island, the Ligawasan Marsh in North Cotabato, Mindoro, Palawan, Siargao Islands, Southern Leyte and the Verde Island Passage, among others.

Biodiversity surveys done by the grantees also paved the way for the discovery of potentially new species in protected areas in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. During expeditions at the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park in Cagayan Valley, the Mabuwaya Foundation team found a spectacular plant with a long erect flower which belongs to the genus *Amorphophallus* which can only be seen during a very short period of the year.

Meanwhile, a team of botanists from PBCFI found a yellow-flowered mistletoe plant at the Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Natural Park in Negros Oriental. It was a new mistletoe species named by her fellow scientists as *Amyema lisae,* after PBCFI's Executive Director Lisa Paguntalan. She said, "This discovery is important because it tells us the kind of wildlife that we have in our locality."

Similarly, two potentially new species of orchids from South Cotabato are being assessed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. The plants were discovered in the Allah Valley Watershed Forest Reserve, a protected area with active conservation efforts by TLDFI.

Apart from these discoveries, TKI's conservation project developed a technological breakthrough: a database and monitoring application on a smartphone called the Wildlife Forestry Fishery Indicator Spatial Hub-Management Information System (WiForFISH-MIS). It is now being used by local governments and sea wardens to monitor their inventory of natural resources in real-time for more effective ecosystems management and law enforcement. Reynaldo Atiga, one of the sea guardians trained to use the tool, said, "WiForFISH really helps a lot in our patrolling activities because it has a cybertracker and we can easily record photos and videos as part of our evidence and documentation."

BIODIVERSITY GRANTEES

• C3 Philippines, Inc. • Candis 3 Marketing Cooperative (CANDIS) • Haribon Foundation, Inc. (HFI) • Institute of Social Order (ISO) • Mabuwaya Foundation, Inc. (MFI) • Maguindanao Development Foundation, Inc. (MDFI) • Nagkakaisang mga Tribu ng Palawan, Inc. (NATRIPAL) • PATH Foundation, Philippines, Inc. (PFPI) • Philippine Biodiversity Coservation Foundation, Inc. (PBCFI) • Philippine Eagle Foundation, Inc. (PEF) • Soil and Water Conservation Foundation, Inc. (SWCFI) • South Pacific Integrated Area Development Foundation, Inc. (SPIADFI) • Surigao Economic Development and Microfinance Foundation, Inc. (SEDMFI) • Tanggol Kalikasan, Inc. (TKI) • Tribal Leaders Development Foundation, Inc. (TLDFI)

Candis 3 Marketing Cooperatives

SHAPING TOMORROW'S CONSERVATIONISTS

Biodiversity Conservation in Puerto Prinsesa's Northwest Area and its Attached Interconnected Ecosystem Project

"When I was young, the sea was rich and abundant, but because of unsustainable resource use, the sea lost its richness," shared 48-year old school Principal Salvacion Alicando to grade five and six students at an orientation on biodiversity conservation and protection in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. By increasing the children's awareness on the importance of biodiversity conservation, Salvacion hopes that her students will become good stewards of the environment in Palawan which is one of the major key biodiversity areas in the Philippines.

Candis 3 Marketing Cooperative (C3MC), a people's organization based in Palawan, worked with Salvacion and local leaders in implementing a landscape approach to biodiversity conservation in Puerto Princesa. The approach links biodiversity management with existing beliefs and practices of communities living within the protected areas to ensure local stewardship of resources.

Through the Biodiversity Conservation in Puerto Princesa's Northwest Area and its Attached Interconnected Ecosystems Project, C3MC engages with community residents like the students and their families in protecting keystone species like sea turtles through biodiversity orientations and tree planting activities.

"I can now understand the connection of the mangrove trees, sea grass and marine animals and how important it is to protect them," shared one of the students.

Most of the children and their families live along the coast and depend on the sea for their food and livelihood. Information campaigns by C3MC enabled them to realize how their actions directly affect the plants and animals living in the same or nearby areas. Many of them also committed to do simple acts like throwing their garbage in proper places, as these could end up in the ocean and potentially harm marine life.

As communities become better aware of their environment and its links to their daily lives, residents are motivated to participate and get involved in environmental protection. The project has transformed illegal fishers and loggers to resource advocates. Some residents are now community volunteers called *Bantay Pawikans* (marine turtle wardens) who help in reporting turtle sightings in beaches and illegal collection of turtle eggs in highly vulnerable areas.

A total of six people's organizations are directly involved in monitoring illegal activities such as sea turtle egg poaching. These concerted efforts have contributed to the protection of over 17,000 turtle eggs and the release of more than 8,000 baby turtles to their natural habitat.

C3 Philippines, Inc.

FISHERFOLKS HELP PROTECT DUGONGS AS FRONTLINE RESPONDERS

Protecting the Dugongs (Dugong Dugon) and Busuanga's Marine Habitats Project

Crisander Bayos, 25, is a fisherman in Calawit Island in Busuanga and is a member of the indigenous people's community called Tagbanua. He became a fisherman at a young age to help his family. Whenever he goes out to fish, he would see dugongs *(Dugong dugon)* living around the island.

At first, he did not know if he can catch dugongs and sell them. "But as a member of the Tagbanua community living in the island, I grew up with the idea that I have the responsibility to protect all forms of life on land and on sea," Crisander said. This principle led him to approach the Community Centred Conservation Philippines (C3PH) and report dugong sightings to the group.

Since fishermen like Crisander constantly encounter dugongs whenever they go fishing, they can easily identify their living habitat. Thus, they are recognized as the main protectors of the remaining population of dugongs in Busuanga. At present, one of the last strongholds of dugongs in the Philippines is found in this island.

C3 Philippines, through the Protecting the Dugongs and Busuanga's Marine Habitats Project, enables fisher folk volunteers to protect dugongs in their area, as well as conserve their habitat through a series of lectures and training on dugong biology and ecology and marine mammal stranding response.

The dugong is regarded as one of the country's most threatened marine mammals. Its decreasing population is caused by illegal fishing activities, bycatch (accidental catching) and habitat destruction and degradation. All these reduce the dugongs' capacity to maintain the nutritional quality and species composition of seagrass communities. The seagrass serves as natural nurseries for fishes and other marine creatures.

Bearing this knowledge, Crisander is now one of 40 Dugong First Responders in the municipality of Busuanga. He shared, *"We started to get to know more about the dugong through our monitoring activities. I then realized that co-existence with the animal is not just a mere personal responsibility but also a contribution to marine conservation."*

"I have learned that there are a lot of things I can do to take better care of our environment. After all, it is for our future."

Photo by Cza Constantino, Haribon Foundation

Haribon Foundation, Inc.

MINDORO YOUTH: YOUNG CHAMPS FOR CONSERVATION

Strengthening Capacity of Local Conservation Actors in Managing the Sub-Watersheds of Naujan Lake National Park Project

One of the principles of nature states that "humans are stewards of nature". Regardless of gender, color, education, social status and age, people play an important role in protecting and conserving the environment. However, due to insufficient knowledge on the importance of conservation and the often very limited alternative livelihood opportunities, people continue to engage in activities that destroy the environment.

One of the key biodiversity areas in the Philippines which continues to lose forest cover is the Naujan Lake National Park (NLNP) in Mindoro. It is the fifth largest lake in the country and it serves as the home to critically endangered species like the Philippine Duck and the Tamaraw.

Haribon Foundation, through the Strengthening Capacity of Local Conservation Actors in Managing the Sub-Watersheds of Naujan Lake National Park Project, improves the awareness and effectiveness of local conservation groups for the protection of sub-watershed areas in the NLNP. Haribon has recognized the important roles of the youth in this conservation effort.

"As a youth in Mindoro, I have an important role in caring for the environment," said Brigitte Gonzales, 13 years old and a Grade 8 student. She is one of the 42 young Grade 7 and 8 student leaders from 17 high schools in Oriental Mindoro who actively participated in an environment camp organized by Haribon.

The training has enhanced Brigitte and other students' appreciation and knowledge on ecosystems, biodiversity, wastes, watersheds, climate change and environmental laws. Armed with new knowledge and skills, the participants, now called Eco Rangers, presented different project proposals to creatively protect the surrounding sub-watersheds of the NLNP.

"I can see how many people destroy our Mother Earth," stated Brigitte. "I have learned that there are actually a lot of things I can do to start the change and take better care of our environment. After all, it is for our future."

The Eco Rangers are carrying out their proposed conservation projects in their respective schools. Some of which include proper waste segregation where students make their own trash bins out of plastic bottles and enhanced mangrove protection advocacies through mural paintings created by young artists in their schools.

Haribon Foundation, Inc.

CONSERVATION LEADERS PROTECT NAUJAN WATERSHEDS

"I live near the Naujan Lake. In our community, erratic weather conditions have been strongly felt by ordinary people in the recent years because of our declining forests," lamented Leonardo Camo, Chairman of the Victoria Organic Farmers Association.

The Naujan Lake National Park (NLNP) covers a vast 21,655 hectares of land that is abundant in biodiversity and inhabited by threatened and endemic species such as the Tamaraw, Mindoro bleeding-heart pigeon and the Philippine duck, which are listed vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Despite its ecological importance, the NLNP and its sub-watersheds are threatened by pressures that cause its degradation including land-use conflicts, over-extraction of resources and poor waste management.

One of Haribon Foundation's flagship activities under the Strengthening Capacity of Local Conservation Actors in Managing the Sub-Watersheds of Naujan Lake National Park Project is the Biodiversity Fellows Program or the BFP.

Community representatives like Leonardo and environment officers attend a series of coaching and mentoring sessions that train future conservation leaders in the effective management of the NLNP sub-watersheds in the four neighboring municipalities namely Naujan, Victoria, Socorro and Pola. Fellows will apply their learnings through their proposed conservation projects that contribute to the protection of these sub-watersheds.

Another Biodiversity Fellow, Raquel Umali, Coordinator of the Municipal Planning and Development Office in Naujan, identified the lack of public awareness as a major factor that aggravates environmental problems. "This is the reason why

Photo by Lounelle Godinez, Haribon Foundation
From left to right - Caroline G Manuel, Candido J Melgar, Raquelita M Umali, and Manuel P Delica - some of the Biodiversity Fellows at the Recognition Ceremony

we need to strengthen environmental governance," she explained. "As civil servant, it is my duty to contribute to the conservation of our environment. As a Christian, it is my responsibility to be a steward of God's creations. I shall perform these duties to the best of my ability," says Raquel.

Alex Villanueva, Vice Chair of the Batuhan Upland and Lowland Farmers Association in Pola distinguished BFP from the seminars he used to attend. "BFP gave us a bigger picture of how we should use our natural resources with great consideration for the next generation." Using his learnings from the BFP, Alex plans to propose a policy or livelihood program in their barangay that pursues sustainable practices.

On May 25, 2018, five BFP Fellows from four partner municipalities in Oriental Mindoro completed their modules and capped the program with a recognition ceremony. They are now working on realizing their projects, which include river conservation, buffer forest establishment and eco-tourism promotion among others, together with their respective communities and the local government.

Institute of Social Order

CULION'S COMMUNITY-BASED MANGROVE NURSERIES

Promoting Participatory Island Development Strategy in Culion, Palawan

Mangroves are important biodiversity ecosystems where coastal and marine resources thrive. Locally called *bakawan,* these sturdy trees both contribute to robust fishery production and coastal protection, especially in communities where fishing is the main source of livelihood and the adverse impacts of climate change is an everyday reality.

The island municipality of Culion in Palawan Province is blessed with lush mangrove resources. However, natural calamities and extractive activities such as charcoal production have reduced Culion's mangrove forests by 40 percent.

"Our community is abundant with different kinds of commercially important fish like Lapu-lapu (Groupers) and *Dalagang Bukid* (Blue and Gold Fusiliers). But because we are not able to take good care of our surroundings, especially maintain our mangrove forests, their population slowly lessened, affecting the livelihood of our fisher folk," said Leona Espada, a member of a people's organization (PO) in Baldat, Culion.

Leona knew she has to do something to help protect their natural resources, else her family will be greatly affected. That was why she did not hesitate to join the Institute of Social Order (ISO) in helping local communities protect their biodiversity resources through the Promoting Participatory Island Development Strategy for Culion, Palawan Project.

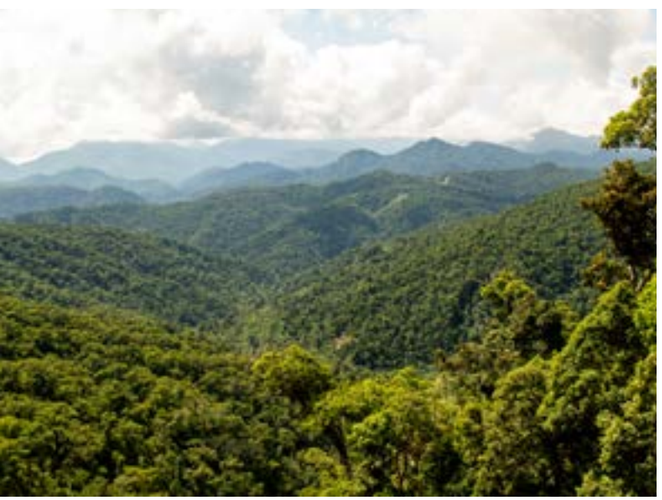
Through community organizing and skills enhancement activities, ISO enables POs, like the Baldat Fishermen and Farmers Association (BAFFA) where Leona is a member, to effectively and rightfully safeguard their coastal resources. These include setting up mechanisms that protect and conserve the island's mangroves.

ISO conducts Mangrove Nursery Establishment Trainings where community representatives learn the science-based approach to mangrove reforestation. Participants who have attended these trainings realized that mangrove nurseries not only ensure the high survival rate of seedlings but also result to an increased biodiversity of Culion's mangrove forests.

Leona expressed, "Because we now better understand the importance of mangroves in our communities, we at BAFFA and other POs are inspired to work together to plant more bakawan by making community nurseries."

ISO was able to help establish four community-based mangrove nurseries in Culion, located in four barangays including Baldat. They guide POs in proper seedling and site selection, as well as on how to properly propagate mangrove seedlings. Interestingly for this undertaking, it is mostly the PO members who enthusiastically took on the task of monitoring the mangrove nurseries and collecting propagules.

They were joined by their families and neighbors, young and old, men and women. These communities live simple lives and do not have much, but they gave their all in constructing these nurseries. For them, this is their initial collective effort towards mangrove rehabilitation and conservation in Culion.



Photos By Merlijn van Weerd, MFI

Amorphophallus: A potentially new species of the genus Amorphophallus from the Arum Family discovered at the limestone forest in the NSMNP

Mabuwaya Foundation, Inc. (MFI)

PUTTING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN THE BIODIVERSITY AGENDA

Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park (NSMNP): "Ating Buhay-Ilang, Ating Gubat, Ating Bahay" (Our Wildlife, Our Forest, Our Home) Project

The 360,000-hectare Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park (NSMNP) in northeast Luzon is one of the largest and most diverse protected areas in the Philippines. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List, 128 globally threatened and near-threatened species have been recorded in the park, including the critically endangered Philippine eagle, Isabela oriole and the Philippine crocodile. The NSMNP has been identified as an important bird area, a conservation priority area and a key biodiversity area. The park protects the largest remaining contiguous forest area of the country.

"Without that forest cover, people will suffer from flash floods and erosion. The forest makes sure that there's always water available for thousands of farmers in Cagayan Valley. The park is also important for the Agta, its first inhabitants, who strongly depend on natural resources found in the park," shared Merlijn van Weerd, Chief Executive Officer of the Mabuwaya Foundation.

Mabuwaya trains local communities for the conservation of threatened species through advocacy activities, research and proper management of protected areas. They bring conservation work closer to the hearts of the communities through familiarity with the species and emphasizing their strong relationship with the latter through the project, "Ating Buhay-Ilang, Ating Gubat, Ating Bahay" (Our Wildlife, Our Forest, Our Home).

Esmeralda Galano, a student from Divilacan National High School said that participating in awareness campaigns conducted by Mabuwaya made her realize that she can do something to take good care of the environment. "We should do our best to protect our animals and our forests because they are also protecting us. As a student, I support activities that help protect species by knowing more about them."

Esmeralda and her classmates give presentations about the Varanus Bitatawa, a recently discovered monitor lizard endemic to the Sierra Madre. "These are species people don't normally know about. But these students know the facts about Varanus Bitatawa and lecture hundreds of other students about it. I'm really proud of seeing that because that is one direct result of this project," enthused Merlijn.

As a project initiative, Mabuwaya gathered and organized all NSMNP-related researches and information and was able to set-up two NSMNP libraries. A first in the Park's history, these libraries make all NSMNP-related researches, articles and reports accessible to the public. They cater specifically to students, researchers and practitioners who want to learn about applying sustainable protected area management practices, especially in the NSMNP.

"The NSMNP library is a one of a kind resource center. It is by far the most complete, most diverse, and most updated storehouse of knowledge on a specific key biodiversity area. The materials I found in the library are very rich resources and helped me a lot with my research about biodiversity in Northern Luzon," expressed Leia Fidelis Castro-Margate, a researcher from the University of the Philippines Baguio.

After the three-year implementation, project initiatives led to the establishment of 10 local protected areas. Vigorous awareness activities through Mabuwaya's campaign icon, Krokey the crocodile, have reached more than 5,000 students and community members in nine municipalities in Isabela Province.

Maguindanao Development Foundation, Inc.

THE MARSH PROTECTORS OF LIGAWASAN

Improved Biodiversity Conservation with Effective Local Governance Project

Arais Sagad, 44, is a farmer-fisherman who lives in Kabacan, Cotabato Province in Mindanao. He resides near the Ligawasan Marsh, Mindanao's largest wetland. He recalls in the 1980s and earlier, different species of fishes, birds and other animals and plants were abundant in the marsh. "Everywhere, one could catch different kinds of fishes; we had lots of *sawa* (a family of waterlily) to eat and could collect the eggs of wild ducks for food. But today, all these are almost gone," expressed Arais.

The Maguindanaon Development Foundation Inc. (MDFI) partners with farmers and fisher folks like Arais to rehabilitate, regenerate and restore the habitats of flora and fauna to improve the biodiversity of the Ligawasan Marsh. It used to be the most biodiverse wetland and marshland ecosystem in the country but years of destructive human activities like illegal logging and fishing have gradually destroyed the marsh.

Through the Improved Biodiversity Conservation through Effective Local Governance Project, Arais and his fellow fishers and farmers living near the marsh volunteered to guard the marsh with the hope of bringing back its abundant ecosystem.

They are known as *Bantay Pawas* (marsh wardens) organized and trained by the project to safeguard and protect the identified Biodiversity Improvement Site in Ligawasan. The site has an area of 25 hectares (an area about 500 times as big as a basketball court) and has been re-planted with habitat-forming native palms and trees known to serve as sanctuaries or breeding places of fish species and other aquatic resources.

"My family has been living here for a really long time. We are very blessed to be living near the Ligawasan Marsh. We feel like we have everything that we need to survive," said Arais. "Ligawasan Marsh is a paradise for us. It is our home, our identity, our pride and our last frontier. This is why we have the responsibility to take good care of it."

Bantay Pawas has a total of 53 members who were deputized as wildlife enforcers by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. These volunteers, together with barangay officials and other community folks grow native plants like the nipa, Bangkal tree and bamboo along the swamp model areas to help improve the biodiversity of wetland habitats.

Nagkakaisang mga Tribu ng Palawan, Inc.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES CONSERVE FORESTS AND LIVELIHOODS IN PALAWAN

Strengthening the Role of Indigenous People in Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Governance Project

Tilso Butig is a Tagbanua leader from Aborlan, Palawan. He only studied until the third grade, and went on to become a *kaingin* farmer.

The *kaingin* system, also called slash and burn farming, is an agricultural practice where trees are cut and burned for the purpose of cultivation. As a result, the land is spent and soil is eroded, pushing farmers to move on to another strip of land. The government condemns the practice — especially in areas like Palawan, which has been dubbed the "last ecological frontier" of the Philippines.

Activities like kaingin, illegal logging and poaching threaten Palawan's forests. All these happen on the ancestral domain of the Tagbanua tribe which comprises more than half of the local population. It was on this premise that the Nagkakaisang mga Tribu ng Palawan (NATRIPAL) carried out its project, Strengthening the Role of Indigenous People in Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Governance. It involved indigenous communities in Palawan like the Tagbanuas as environment champions. Local talks and trainings encouraged them to become forest wardens, citizen scientists and conservation entrepreneurs.

With the help of NATRIPAL, locals like Tislo have since turned their lives and their environment around. He has since become one of the 39 trained Bantay CADTs (Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles) and Forest Patrollers who keep an eye out for destructive activities.

"I regret the time that I was one of those who destroyed the mountains," said Tislo, who has since used his allowance as a warden to restore his plow. "But now, I am happy because I've learned how to adopt a more environment-friendly way to earn money while helping protect our biodiversity."

Community members engaged by the project as citizen scientists conduct biodiversity surveys and researches that helped them learn how to sustainably use natural resources like the almaciga resin and wild honey. Research findings and recommendations were captured in two printed publications. This is a big achievement for the tribe as they were used to passing information through oral tradition. These books will allow them to accurately pass on the knowledge to other communities and to the future generation.

Research and awareness activities have also encouraged Tislo and other community members to embrace not just proper agricultural livelihood methods but also conservation enterprises like sustainably producing honey-based products, selling banana chips and abaca-weaved items, among others. Joint efforts between NATRIPAL and tribal organizations paved the way to open the first conservation and livelihood center in their community. Held last March 02, 2018, the launch has also led to the declaration of this day as the Indigenous People's Day in Aborlan, Palawan.

PATH Foundation, Philippines, Inc.

THE GUARDIANS OF THE VERDE ISLAND PASSAGE

SEAnergy Project

"It's official! I'm now a Bantay Dagat!" Remedios Dotado, 51, exclaimed after receiving her identification card from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. Remedios, a local of Barangay Ilag, Oriental Mindoro is just one of 133 community members who were appointed as fish wardens under PATH Foundation Philippines, Inc.'s SEAnergy Project.

The SEAnergy Project aims to conserve marine biodiversity in the Verde Island Passage, a strait between mainland Luzon and Mindoro Island. It is called "the center of the center of marine shorefish biodiversity in the world". It is also a key source of food, livelihood and economies for almost two million inhabitants living in five surrounding provinces. However, it is threatened by overfishing and other illegal or unregulated activities. Identified by scientists and conservationists as a biodiversity hotspot, local governments and communities are pressed for time and resources to save its fragile ecosystems — which include corals, sea grass, and mangroves — from further degradation and total destruction.

Due to a lack of local law enforcement in the area, civilian fish wardens are critical in helping safeguard coastal waters from pollution, destructive fishing practices, urbanization and unmonitored recreational activities. New recruits receive Basic Fisheries Law Enforcement Training, where they learn a warden's duties and responsibilities, the importance of coastal protection, fishery laws and regulations, and proper seaborne patrolling and apprehension. They are fiercely dedicated, and are often underappreciated. Some even sacrifice their lives to defend fishing grounds in the area.

Although the job is traditionally assigned to men, 35 women — including Remedios — enlisted for the project with enthusiasm. "People should know it's not that easy to be a fish warden. I dedicated time and effort in the name of protecting our waters," said Remedios. "I have not taken an exam in a very, very long time. It's a big accomplishment to me personally and for the Barangay Ilag fishing community."

Marine protected areas (MPA) in the province now have a better chance of flourishing with these new wardens around. After implementing SEAnergy for two years, 755 hectares worth of natural resources are under improved management.

Paolo Barroso, president of the Provincial MPA Law Enforcement Network, could not be any happier. "This is a welcome development," he said. "More fish wardens mean a stronger fight against violators and protection of our marine resources."

PATH Foundation, Philippines, Inc.

MINDORO OPENS A PROFITABLE PATH TO CONSERVATION

If there is one thing that the communities along Verde Island Passage have learned, it is that conservation is everyone's business.

The Silonay Mangrove Conservation and Eco-Park, one of the emerging tourist destinations in Oriental Mindoro, boasts of a 41-hectare mangrove forest and several flora and fauna that draw scientists from around the world. Managed by Sama-samang Nagkakaisang Pamayanan ng Silonay (SNPS), the park in Calapan City is also a popular pick for student field trips as well as corporate and government events.

"The mangrove forest in the area has grown so much that I can say our reforestation efforts paid off," said Samuel Josef Ibon, 20, an architecture student and part-time tour guide at the park.

PATH Foundation, Philippines Inc.'s (PFPI) **SEAnergy Project**, which aims to conserve marine biodiversity in the Verde Island Passage, soon found its way to the park. About 20 members of SNPS received training in food catering and business planning. SNPS eventually assigned 30 percent of the profit from its livelihood enterprise to contribute to the overall management of the marine protected area (MPA). This forms part of the conservation agreement implemented by the project.

In another MPA in Puerto Galera, PFPI trained 20 members of the San Antonio Women's Association (SAWA), a group of local women who are in livelihood enterprises. They grew their own organic vegetable garden, in an effort to augment the incomes of fishing households and reduce fishing pressure. It was also a social incentive for marine conservation and a way of getting healthier meals on family tables.

"We tended our organic vegetable garden for months. And when we did our first harvest, it felt like it was a big accomplishment for us!" exclaimed Mary Jane Marquez, an active SAWA member.

PFPI was able to craft a total of 10 conservation agreements across five towns in Oriental Mindoro. These agreements formalized the commitment of people's organizations like SNPS and SAWA to participate in initiatives that promote marine resource conservation and management as they perform their livelihood activities like ecotourism, fishing and seaweed farming.

Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc.

MAKING SCIENTISTS OUT OF NEGROS CITIZENS

Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation in the Negros Island Regional Development Agenda Project

Loreto Marcelino Jr. is a forest ranger of Mt. Kanlaon Natural Park in La Carlota City, Negros Occidental. When a team of researchers and volunteers from the Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PBCFI) Co's Digital Flora of the Philippines, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Provincial Environment Management Office and Philippine Science High School came to the mountain, the rangers were invited to join the team as they conduct their flora and fauna survey.

Loreto and 137 other rangers and volunteers from Negros were trained by PBCFI to become citizen scientists. They are community members who gained learnings and skills to conduct biodiversity monitoring surveys. During these activities, they are able to help PBCFI and other research groups in assessing habitats and identifying species found in three protected areas in Negros Island namely Northern Negros Natural Park, Mount Kanlaon Natural Park and the Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Natural Park.

Negros Island is home to Mt. Kanlaon and about 41 globally endangered species. Residing in the rainforest is the Visayan hornbill, which was thought to be extinct until a PBCFI-led expedition rediscovered the endemic bird in 2014. Yet species living on the volcano still face threats from poaching, as well as illegal logging that destroys their habitats.

Under the Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation in the Negros Island Regional Development Agenda Project, PBCFI enables communities to participate in wildlife monitoring and synchronized counting of the hornbill, one of the area's flagship species. They also organize advocacy activities to increase awareness and appreciation of the community on biodiversity conservation efforts in the Island.

In 2017, PBCFI and their group of citizen scientists reported the highest count of hornbills found in the three protected areas. They recorded an estimate of 33 hornbills comprising of two species—the Visayan Hornbills and the Rufous-headed Hornbill. These are indicators of a healthy environment, re-affirming the importance of the parks in biodiversity conservation.

While forest rangers like Loreto may not be professional scientists, his role as a citizen scientist has a big impact on the protection of the rainforests and the local community's appreciation for wildlife.

"I learned a lot about the importance that animals play in the environment," Loreto said. "Now, it is up to me to pass this knowledge on so that more people will be encouraged to get to know more about our rich biodiversity and help us take good care of them."

Amyema Lisae: Flower of the new mistletoe species that was discovered in BTLNP. It is also the only yellow mistletoe in the Philippines. Photo by Pieter Pelser, PBCFI

Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc.

A SWEET SOLUTION: ATTAINING PROFITABLE CONSERVATION

Beekeeping and honey harvesting has long been rooted in indigenous culture. For natives in Negros and Palawan, the practice was a source of income — but because honey supply was not ample all year round, harvesters have had to find new ways to fill in gaps.

While bees may seem like unassuming insects, they have an important role in the mountain ecosystem. As pollinators, they are responsible for the growth and spread of flowers and plants.

The Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PBCFI) took it a step further by engaging communities in native beekeeping. Through workshops and activities, they taught locals not only best practices in hive management, but the sustainable production of other honey-based products.

As a step to share knowledge and best practices with other conservation organizations, PBCFI invited the Nagkakaisang Tribu ng Palawan (NATRIPAL) to attend one of their beekeeping workshops. NATRIPAL is an indigenous peoples' federation in Palawan and has also implemented a biodiversity project supported by the USAID. They have been doing wild honey harvesting for years but this only provided them with seasonal income.

"PBCFI introduced us other ways to profit from beekeeping," Jo Anne Abrina, NATRIPALS' Environment Development Coordinator said. "Their workshop demonstrated how to produce other beekeeping by-products like soap, balm, shampoo and cider which can help us earn throughout the year."

When Jo Anne went back to Palawan, she was eager to share her learnings with other members of NATRIPAL. This new insight encouraged the organization to open opportunities to the wives of honey gatherers to be involved in this conservation enterprise.

PBCFI Executive Director Lisa Paguntalan stated, "Beekeeping brings solution to livelihood needs of the communities. Through the proper management of native bee species, conservation becomes attainable at the same time profitable."

Back in Negros, PBCFI acquired a beekeeping equipment and handed it over to the participants of their beekeeping workshops to continuously support this conservation enterprise. They were able to engage with a total of 46 community members from five organizations in Negros Island. The recipients have already started to set-up bee colonies in their households and in shared areas within their organizations.

Philippine Eagle Foundation, Inc.

PUSAKA: CONSERVATION THROUGH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Enchancing Biodiversity Conservation within the Unprotected (Non-NIPAS) Regions of the Mount Apo Key Biodiversity Areas

The ancestral domain of indigenous peoples is more than just a piece of property – it is the home where their origin, history and culture thrives and continues to stand the test of time. For them, losing the forests in their ancestral domain may lead to the loss of their identity as a tribe.

"People think that we, the indigenous people, do not have a concept of conservation, but in fact, we have had that concept in our culture for ages," said Lipatuan Joel Unad, an Obu Manuvu elder and leader in Davao City.

Together with the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF), the Obu Manuvu, one of the subtribes of the Bagobo, decided to revive Pusaka, an indigenous cultural concept of conservation, in the hope of protecting the remaining virgin forests, as well as the biodiversity in their ancestral domain. They declared more than 17, 000 hectares of forest-covered mountains as the Pusaka of the Obu Manuvu.

Pusaka is the traditional Bagobo-Manobo practice of sanctifying entities, living or non-living, as "precious" or "sacred" because they have become—from the perspective of an individual, family or clan—priceless.

PEF implements the project dubbed as Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation within the Unprotected Region of the Mt. Apo Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) through community-based conservation strategies such as the Pusaka.

In their effort to contribute to sustainable development, PEF has organized a series of consultation meetings with the Obu Manuvu leaders to talk about how they can best apply their indigenous knowledge systems and practices in helping manage Mt. Apo's finite natural resources. They recognized that most of what is left of the Mt. Apo's natural forests overlap with their ancestral domains. Thus, through the Pusaka, all of the biodiversity within the sanctified forests, including its resident Philippine eagles and the important ecological and economic services that these watersheds, air sheds and the forest ecosystem provide will be preserved as well.

This vision began to materialize through the formal signing of the Pusaka Declaration, putting into writing for the first time the Pusaka tradition and its underlying philosophies. This paved the way to creating Pusaka Councils in indigenous communities. "We are very open to learning from our non-indigenous partners like the Government and the PEF, but we also want to make practical use of our own philosophy in our development programs," said Lipatuan Joel.

PEF continues to support the village-based Pusaka Councils in their area management functions. On May 2017, the Pusaka Council and Barangay Council of Tambobong in Davao City signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the creation of a barangay ordinance that will institutionalize and mainstream the Pusaka Council's policies in the local government.

Philippine Eagle Foundation, Inc.

A DIALOGUE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND PEACE

Conflicts occur among tribal groups, especially regarding issues related to land, natural resources and clan boundaries. Yet oftentimes, a catalyst can spur action and inspire solutions for the greater and common good of the community.

The Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) carried out the Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation within the Unprotected Region of the Mt. Apo Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) Project which focuses on site protection and management and environmental law enforcement. One of its strategies is to engage with indigenous communities to integrate science and culture into biodiversity conservation.

To achieve this goal, PEF coordinates with community tribal leaders and provides them the opportunity and resources to meet regularly – a challenging task since these leaders live far away from each other. Through these coordination meetings, clan leaders are able to discuss their differences and reach a common ground and plan of action for a higher purpose. Communities were also able to revisit their history and cultural practices: the *Obu Manuvu* tribe determined locations and entities that should be declared as *pusaka* (sacred); while the *Manuvu'n Tinonanon* declared their *Limlimuwan* and *Ponownan ni Songayan* for Barangay Libertad, Davao del Sur effectively protecting these areas in their ancestral domain.

The project has also become an avenue for tribal leaders to discuss and resolve issues and conflicts. Project activities like the Community Development Plan (CDP) formulation paved the way for the three *Datus* of the *Manuvu'n Tinonanon* of Barangay Libertad, Arakan, North Cotabato to meet for the first time in 20 years. They agreed to meet on a common goal which is to develop their community and help protect their lands.
The CDP workshop became more than just a meeting. It turned into a celebration of reconciliation and unification of Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title holders. "I was so happy that the three datus of our community were able to reunite after a very long time," said Merlita Provida, Libertad Barangay Captain and daughter of one of the datus. "We have been looking forward to this day not just for our families but more importantly for the conservation of both our culture and our biodiversity," Merlita concluded.

Tribal leaders of indigenous groups living near the KBAs are considered as influencers in their respective communities. For them, these are more than just a KBA. It is a place where their culture thrives, thus it is important for them to protect the area so they get to bestow it to succeeding generations.

Coordinated activities like biodiversity monitoring, patrolling, tree planting and surveying led to the improved natural resource management of approximately 37,000 hectares of forest domain and watershed, almost 40 percent of the total KBA.

Soil and Water Conservation Foundation, Inc.

YOUNG WARDENS OF CENTRAL CEBU PROTECTED LANDSCAPE

Strengthening Governance, Biodiversity Conservation and Protection and Information Systems in Central Cebu Protected Landscape (CCPL) Project

Recel Saga, 27, a teacher from Ginatilan National High School, runs an environment advocacy club that sustains a biodiversity area outside the school by encouraging her students to join activities like planting trees. "Ten years from now, I want to be able to see our community with a more beautiful and functional trail and rich biodiversity reserve."

The trail is part of the Central Cebu Protected Landscape (CCPL), which encompasses five protected areas across 48 barangays in five municipalities and three cities in the province. The Tabunan Forest, home to bird species like the Black Shama, the Cebu Flower Pecker and the Cebu Hawk Owl, are part of this landscape.

In part due to a lack of sufficient livelihood opportunities in the area, locals turn to extractive activities like charcoal production and timber poaching. Lucresio Son, the President of the Tabunan Forest Warden Farmers Association, says the practice of kaingin (slash-and-burn farming) also exhausts the environment. "Because of these practices, the birds are slowly disappearing and the trees have decreased in number," Lucresio lamented. "Schools maintaining biodiversity trails was a big help in bringing back the life of our forests," he expressed.
These biodiversity trails form part of the Strengthening Governance, Biodiversity Conservation and Protection and Information Systems in Central Cebu Protected Landscape (CCPL) Project.

Implemented by the Soil and Water Conservation Foundation, Inc. (SWCFI), the project banks on awareness campaigns in schools that can strengthen protection systems in the CCPL by partnering with students and teachers like Recel.

"Because of the project, we were introduced to native trees and animals. It made me realize I should help save and protect them," said James Ryan Saga, 16, one of the club's active volunteers. James Ryan is a son of crop farmers, and he dreams of one day becoming a teacher. "I want to inspire my classmates and other people to know more about our environment and help us protect our forests by planting more trees."

At a young age, James already have a strong grasp of the relationship of humans with its environment. Through awareness activities conducted by the project, James is able to enumerate the importance of trees, which includes its significance during natural calamities, the shade they provide to humans and animals and the relationship of trees with birds.

Because of the strong commitment showcased by students like James and teachers like Recel, SWCFI was able to forge partnership agreements with 10 schools near the CCPL under the Youth Eco-governance initiative. The partnership agreement has jumpstarted the development of more school biodiversity reserves and trails.

Photo by SPIADFI

South Pacific Integrated Area Development Foundation, Inc.

LEYTE FARMERS EARN AND LEARN WHILE SAVING MT. NACOLOD

Securing Biodiversity in High Conservation Value Areas (HCVA) in the Mt. Nacolod Landscape Project

Romeo Muca, 38, is a farmer from in Sogod, Southern Leyte. Due to extreme poverty, he began looking for work at the age of 15 to help support his parents and their other six children. He never finished his education.

On top of poverty, Romeo's community also faced a looming environmental problem. Mt. Nacolod, the 18,688-hectare mountain range of Southern Leyte, was threatened by illegal logging. Poaching was also a problem, as the mountain range is home to many endangered endemic birds — such as the Philippine cockatoo, Visayas wattled-broadbill, Walden's hornbill, and the Mindanaoan bleeding heart. It was also home to wild tarsier and forest ground frogs.

The South Pacific Integrated Area Development Foundation, Inc. (SPIADFI) carried out its project, Securing Biodiversity in High Conservation Value Areas (HCVA) in the Mt. Nacolod Landscape in collaboration with local governments, academe and community organizations. It highlights the importance of HCVAs in sustaining a flourishing biodiversity that directly impact communities in Southern Leyte.

Romeo was looped in. Despite his humble background, he impressed SPIADFI by constantly attending meetings, seminars, and workshops — and showing genuine interest and care for the environment. These activities enabled Romeo and other members of the community living near the mountain range to know the different sustainable ways of utilizing resources in HCVAs.

"I was curious on how else to protect our land and our forests because I considered these as our sources of livelihood," Romeo said. He then became active in various community reforestation activities like nursery establishment, wildling collection, tree planting and replanting. He even assisted the team in research activities and contributed to the full characterization of species in selected study areas. This project component covered and conserved 260 hectares (65 hectares per area in four sites) of the Mt. Nacolod mountain range.

Apart from gaining environmental insights, Romeo was also able to earn through these activities. He received incentives that allowed him to provide for his family. He even contributed a part of it to their local association as a start- up capital for their salabat (ginger) tea processing enterprise.

"It is vital that we continue protecting and conserving Mt. Nacolod and its resources for the community, for our families and especially for our children's children," shared Romeo.

Surigao Economic Development and Microfinance Foundation Inc.

PROTECTING THE ISLAND PARADISE OF SIARGAO

Improved Management of the Siargao Islands Protected Landscapes and Seascapes (SIPLAS) Key Biodiversity Conservation Areas for Sustainable Communities Project

Despite being established as a protected area, Siargao Island has neither strict regulations nor consistent enforcement. Fishermen have begun to observe the dwindling volume of catch. "Over the years, I observed the rapid changes in our environment and how it affected our livelihood," said Tangbo Farmers and Fisherfolks Association (TAFFA) Chairman Manuel Dolar. He recognized the need to save and protect their seas now before it's too late.

The Surigao Economic Development and Microfinance Foundation Inc. (SEDMFI), through their Improved Management of the Siargao Islands Protected Landscapes and Seascapes (SIPLAS) Key Biodiversity Conservation Areas for Sustainable Communities Project, works together with the local government and community groups like TAFFA to properly manage natural resources in the island, as well as strengthen activities that protect their forests and seas based on an existing protected area management plan.

"I have always been fascinated by the sea. I grew up in a coastal fishing community and I have seen how it helped us live a good life," shared Medelina Corminal. In her sixties, she is an active fish warden and member of the Rizal Farmers and Fisherfolk Association (RIFFA) who oversee the Rizal Marine Fish Sanctuary.

Manuel and Medelina are also part of the C4CLE SIPLAS or the Cooperation for Coastal Law Enforcement Cooperation in Siargao Island Protected Landscape and Seascapes. It is a group of volunteers and local officers that were formed through the project's goal to promote effective patrolling operations and law enforcement in SIPLAS.

"Continuous illegal fishing and coral reef degradation will ultimately destroy our seas. This then will affect not just our marine ecological system but also us, fishermen and other families living in Siargao," Manuel expressed. "That is why it is important to start protecting it today."

Collaborative efforts between the local communities and government led to the establishment of three marine protected areas and two community watersheds which covered two SIPLAS Municipalities—Pilar and Sta. Monica where Barangays Tangbo and Rizal are located.

"Now that I have the power to protect the sea I love, I will do my best to defend it." Medelina added that anyone fishing in the marine protected area was doing it at their own risk. "I consider the community as my own family. They then consider me as the mother of the sanctuary, and that is I why I will do my best to protect it."

Surigao Economic Development and Microfinance Foundation Inc.

SIARGAO CONSERVES NATURAL RESOURCES THROUGH ECOTOURISM

Ricardo Lasco runs a resort in the island of Siargao. He grew up next to the sea his whole life. His local community in Barangay Alegria used to be a simple coastal settlement of fisher folk. He grew up watching both women and men head out to the ocean, as the children picked shells and swam among the coral reefs.

He was also there when the community began to change. Faced with dwindling catch, locals resorted to illegal methods of fishing. The influx of local and international tourists also affected the demand for their marine and agricultural products.

The Surigao Economic Development and Microfinance Foundation Inc. (SEDMFI) then developed a plan to establish protected areas. Through the **Improved Management of the Siargao Islands Protected Landscapes and Seascapes (SIPLAS) Key Biodiversity Conservation Areas for Sustainable Communities Project**, SEDMFI helped form new marine protected areas (MPAs), one of which is located only a short distance from the beachfront of Ricardo's resort.

Eager to help, Ricardo partnered with the Alegria Farmers and Fisherfolks Association (ALFFA) through a conservation enterprise that rents gear and provides recreational facilities to tourists. He also offered part of his property for a guard house and watch tower for Bantay Dagat (fish warden) operations. Ricardo said, "I opened this resort to allow visitors to witness the natural beauty of the sea. I am glad to have contributed in some way to maintain and protect it."

ALFFA is one of the five organizations that partnered with SEDMFI to help properly manage resources in SIPLAS and set-up alternative livelihoods. The farmers and fisherfolk associations from the barangays of Rizal and Salvacion also provide recreational facilities and gear rental. The Mabini, San Roque, Datu Vegetable Growers Association has an agricultural supply store that sells seeds and vegetables, while the Tangbo Farmers and Fisherfolk Association raises free range native chicken. All these organizations work closely with the local government.

"We support our private sector and community organizations because at the end of the day, we share the same goal and that is to take care of our beloved island," expressed Sta. Monica Mayor Fernando Dolar, "We continue to work together to help preserve the natural beauty of Siargao."

The MPA located in Alegria, Municipality of Sta. Monica is one of three newly established MPAs. Another one is found in Rizal, in the same municipality while the third is in Salvacion, Municipality of Pilar. These new MPAs cover approximately 140 hectares in SIPLAS.

Tanggol Kalikasan, Inc.

FROM FISH POACHER TO FISH WARDEN

Reducing Threats and Improving Sustainable Management of Biodiversity in Tayabas and Pagbilao Bay Project

"We scooped blasted fish for a day, it was abundant. Income was good but it was risky," shared Reynaldo Atiga, 52, who was once a dynamite fisher. At 12 years old, he learned fishing from his father and became an expert in pounding corals and catching large fish like the endangered humphead wrasse, locally known as mameng. "When my father got caught using cyanide for fishing, I told myself that I don't want to suffer the same fate."

He had many realizations since then. "When I was diving to get the fishes that we caught using cyanide, I also discovered the damage it is causing to the coral reefs. Later, I saw that our illegal activities are affecting the volume of fish that we are able to catch. It's not even enough to support my growing family," recalled Reynaldo who is also a father of 13 children.

Since then, Reynaldo began a new life and complete turnaround from his past. He became a part of the Task Force Bantay Dagat (fish warden) and was even elected as a fisher folk leader in Lucena City, Quezon Province. He actively supported the Reducing Threats and Improving Sustainable Management of Biodiversity in Tayabas and Pagbilao Bay Project led by Tanggol Kalikasan, Inc. (TKI). Through the project, they were given additional trainings to improve their tasks in patrolling the waters and reporting those who still do illegal fishing.

"Driven by my dream of becoming a law enforcer, I joined the project's paralegal and environmental workshops to learn more. I also encouraged other active officers of our fisher folk organizations and community leaders to join us," he said.

The province of Quezon is home to Pagbilao and Tayabas Bays—rich marine protected areas that are natural breeding grounds for fish, shellfish and even sea turtles. However, the bays and surrounding mangrove forests are endangered by commercial fishing, wildlife hunting and tree-cutting. Studies found that hard coral cover dropped to about 32 percent due to destructive fishing practices and natural calamities.

Reynaldo is one of 44 Bantay Dagat members engaged by TKI who helped improve the biophysical conditions of Pagbilao and Tayabas Bays. Along these bays, the San Roque Fish Sanctuary was established in Sariaya, Quezon. With help from these wardens, coral reefs — and with it, the fish population — have increased. Soon, manta rays were spotted – an indicator that biodiversity in the area has greatly improved.

"These bays are important fishing grounds. They provide food and livelihood to the people of Quezon and nearby provinces," Reynaldo declared. "We need to protect them not just to support our needs today but also for our children's future."

Photo Credit: Tanggol Kalikasan, Inc. (TKI)

WiForFISH: An innovative monitoring tool used by Bantay Dagat members for marine ecosystems management and law enforcement

Tribal Leaders Development Foundation, Inc.

A MOTHER'S CALL TO SAVE ALLAH VALLEY

Sustaining a Viable Environment in the Allah Valley Watershed Forest Reserve (SAVE Allah Valley)

Due to poverty, former teacher, Ofelia de Pedro and her husband, Willy, together with their children, searched for better land to farm, which they found outside a forest reserve in the Municipality of Bagumabayan, province of Sultan Kudarat, Mindanao.

Using what little savings they have, Ofelia and Willy bought a piece of land and started farming. Unfortunately, the couple's lack of knowledge and skills led them to adopt unsustainable agricultural practices such as *kaingin* or the slash-and-burn method. They availed of financial assistance to grow crops like corn. However, the family experienced failed harvests due to rodent infestation and ran into debt.

It is the mission of the Tribal Leaders Development Foundation, Inc. (TLDFI) to orient indigenous families and upland farmers like the de Pedros and work with them to preserve the biodiversity of the Allah Valley Watershed Forest Reserve (AVWFR). Despite having been declared a protected area, the AVWFR is still being deforested due to large scale agricultural plantations, *kaingin* farming, illegal logging and mining. The loss of forest cover has resulted in a degraded environment.

Through the Sustaining a Viable Environment in the Allah Valley Watershed Forest Reserve or the SAVE Allah Valley Project, TLDFI visit highlands and far-flung communities to conduct environmental orientations where Ofelia was one of the invited participants. She was quick to realize that their livelihood "failed" because they were cutting down trees and destroying wildlife habitat.

In the next orientation activities, Ofelia was again invited, this time as a speaker. She would often impart, "The reason why we always experience tremendous loss in our agricultural livelihood was because our ways were not sustainable." She then shared how she decided to do something about it and started to invite other community members to join her in planting more trees.

Ofelia's family continue to farm on their land but they now use sustainable farming practices and multiple cropping, which allows them to produce corn, squash and peanuts. This practice has increased their family income while naturally maintaining the fertility of the soil.

On weekends, the whole de Pedro family, together with other members of the community, works at the established tree nursery, weeding, watering and potting seedlings which they use to maintain their tree planting activities. Her husband, Willy, is now one of the 30 community-based Wildlife Enforcement Officers who were equipped by TLDFI with knowledge and skills to protect and preserve the wildlife and the remaining patches of the Allah Valley.

USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, supported projects that enable communities to become an active part of economic value chains. This was done through trainings on business planning and models, as well as investments in technology that could sustainably help Filipino families.

Pagtambayayong Foundation, PARFUND and TDFI supported startup ventures and agribusinesses, and were able to establish 703 micro-enterprises in the provinces of Cebu, Bukidnon and Davao. Dickie Soriano of TDFI underlined, "We have a lot of talented Filipinos who work hard and have the creativity to build value. All they need is to have a chance and what we are giving them is that chance to succeed. Now, they have a business which they can hand over to their children."

Project activities conducted by Oro Chamber Foundation, PinoyMe Foundation and TAMACO created self-sustaining cooperatives through partnerships with private corporations dealing in high-value crops. Their initiatives have improved the capacity to access loans and financing of 16 cooperatives in Bukidnon and Mindoro. "Because of the grant, we were given the opportunity to extend assistance and inspire these farmers to change their mindset and become a more productive part of the economy," shared Dan Songco of PinoyMe.

Economic Growth Grants were also instrumental in acquiring innovative technologies that can maximize the potential of these organizations to establish more sustainable communities. In October 2018, TAMACO launched the first salt washing and centrifuge processing machine in the Philippines. The technology will allow farmers to improve both the quality and quantity of their salt, resulting in higher profits. "This machine is going to be a game-changer because it will set the standard and quality of salt that we produce," said Carlos "Jombet" Magsino of TAMACO.

Meanwhile, residents of Barangay Reparo in Nasugbu, Batangas, have managed to process threads and textiles from sugarcane stalks. "Turning a New Leaf," a weaving business model by RFI trained rural workers in the production of sugarcane bagasse-based threads, using degumming equipment, high speed sewing machines, big handlooms and spinning machines. Threads and fabrics produced through these machines were manufactured into colorful bags and pouches, and pillowcases among others. These products were marketed outside Batangas, even in other countries like France and Spain. Bea Roxas of RFI disclosed, "At the end of the day, what difference does your bag made in Nasugbu have from another bag that's made somewhere else? It's the story behind that we sell. That there's a community that you're helping whenever you buy our product."

ECONOMIC GROWTH GRANTEES

• Cagayan de Oro of Commerce and Industry Foundation, Inc. • Philippine Agrarian Foundation for National Development (PARFUND) • Pagtambayayong - A Mutual Aid Foundation, Inc. (PFI) • PinoyME Foundation (PinoyME) • Roxas Foundation, Inc. (RFI) • Tamaraw Salt Producers Cooperative (TAMACO) • Tuason Development Foundation, Inc. (TDFI)

Cagayan de Oro of Commerce and Industry Foundation, Inc.

CREATING INCLUSIVE BUSINESSES WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF BUKIDNON

Program Support for the Chamber's Promotion of "Inclusive Growth through Inclusive Business"

Atty. Burt Estrada is the heir apparent to the role of his father, Judge Ben Estrada, as Chief of the Bukidnon-Tagoloanon tribe in Bukidnon, a province in Northern Mindanao. His training started when he was an eight year old boy. Atty. Burt became *Datu Manhan-ayan* when it was evident that he was ready to take on his role as future chieftain of the tribe.

One of his missions as a young datu was to enable his tribe to become sustainable communities. This dream gradually came into fruition when they actively engaged in the "Inclusive Growth through Inclusive Business Project" of the Cagayan de Oro Chamber of Commerce and Industry Foundation or Oro Chamber.

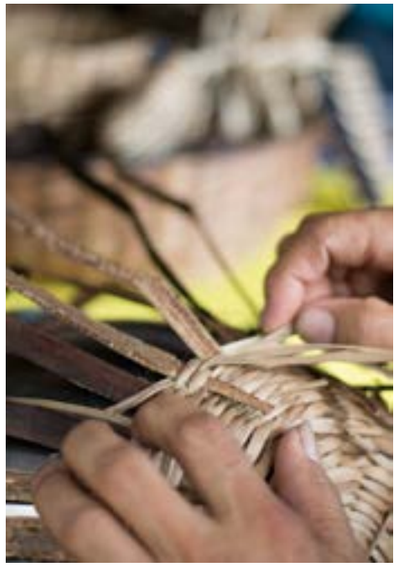
Through the project, the Bukidnon-Tagoloanon Tribe secured the En Banc Approval and Recognition from the National Commission for Indigenous People of its Indigenous Political Structure in November 24, 2017. This was a momentous day for all members of Atty. Burt's community and a dream come true for Judge Ben, as this signifies the state's recognition of their governance structure and political processes.

"We slowly learned that Inclusive Business is the key for our community to prosper and gradually rise from poverty," shared Atty. Burt, "The project guided us into organizing ourselves as a cooperative that has a legal identity and to be recognized as an Indigenous People's Organization. Now, we can officially engage with banks and institutional markets."

Members of their organized group, the Bukidnon-Tagoloanon Mulahay Ha Kabukalagan Agriculture Cooperative, underwent business planning workshops conducted by the Oro Chamber. These series of trainings assisted them to develop business plans for their chosen high-value commercial crop, cacao, since most of them are cacao farmers.

It was a deliberate process in the beginning as some entrepreneurial concepts were new to them. But their sustained efforts paid off when they signed a marketing agreement together with Kennemer Foods International, an international agribusiness company, which will be the coop's institutional market for their cacao products.

"The project was like a basketball coach for us. It didn't only teach us how to play, but it also walked us through strategies to continue winning in this 'game' against poverty," expressed Atty. Burt. He also underlined that the Bukidnon-Tagoloanon people now have the competitive edge to take on the global market.



Cagayan de Oro of Commerce and Industry Foundation, Inc.

SMALL ABACA FARMERS GAIN ACCESS TO BIGGER MARKETS

Abaca, with the scientific name Musa *textilis*, is a tree-like herb resembling that of a banana plant. It's fiber is durable, resistant to pressure and can be easily dyed in different colors. In the handicraft industry, it is used as pulp material for handmade paper, cordage or as fiber to be woven into ropes and braids. Unknown to many, paper money is composed of 20 percent abaca fiber. The plant abounds in the Odino Clan Ancestral Domain in Malaybalay, Bukidnon—a province in Mindanao.

For years, Datu Erson Odino and his wife, Nancy, have been weaving abaca textiles for their small handicraft business. They hand-weave products like baskets, bags and water containers, among others, from the abaca textile they produce in their ancestral land. They would sell their product in nearby cities with no assurance that their products will be sold. There were days when they earn less than what they spent.

While their small business was able to provide them with their basic needs, Datu Erson's main challenge was learning how to sustain this for his children and the future generation.

This inspired them to engage with Oro Chamber's Promotion of "Inclusive Growth through Inclusive Business". Through the project, the Odino Clan was formally organized as a cooperative known as the Kibalabag Matanos Agriculture Cooperative (KMAC), on November 28, 2017 by the Cooperative Development Authority. This is a dream come true for the clan as they can now access funds from government banks. KMAC members also underwent cooperative basic seminars and business planning workshops that allow them to improve their products and meet market demands.

Datu Erson expressed, "This opportunity given to us is priceless. It helps us achieve our dreams and improve our lives."

Enabled by the series of trainings they have attended, KMAC members, with the guidance of the Oro Chamber is engaging Newtech Pulp Inc., a manufacturing company that will bring their abaca harvests and products to bigger markets through a transparent pricing system.

"The progress of our small abaca business is evident," said Datu Erson. "We are hopeful that the future will hold a better life for our children and our children's children."

FARMER'S LIFE GOALS ACHIEVED THROUGH DUCK RAISING

Duck Enterprise for Employment Generation and Growth (Duck-EGG) in Mindanao Project

Neil Belleza, 47, lives in a modest house in Valencia City, Bukidnon. He has clear priorities for his family. His first priority is the education of his two children. He hopes to achieve this goal by engaging in a duck growing enterprise.

The Philippine Agrarian Reform Foundation for National Development (PARFUND) implemented the Duck Enterprise for Employment Generation and Growth (Duck-EGG) in Mindanao Project. The Duck-EGG Project aimed to transform farmers and other agricultural workers in select provinces in Mindanao into agri-entrepreneurs.

PARFUND was able to achieve this by enhancing the duck industry value chain. The six enterprises of the duck industry value chain supported by the project included duck layer farm, duck hatchery, duck growing, alternative duck feeds production, duck meat processing and duck products retailing.

What attracted Neil to duck growing is the opportunity to increase his income in a short period of time. Unlike other duck enterprises, income from growing duck chicks until they are ready to lay eggs is earned every four and a half months. With hard work and technical assistance from PARFUND, Neil earned a net income of P30,525, or a monthly income of P6,783. In a rural setting, this is a significant amount. He used his earnings to pay the tuition fees of his two children.

"I have learned a lot from this experience as a first-time duck grower. Because of this, I encouraged the participation of my family in duck enterprise management," shared Neil. He has since availed of the project's re-loan scheme, earning additional income to help achieve the dreams of his family.

During its three-year project implementation, PARFUND was able to train more than 500 farmers, including Neil, and provided them with knowledge on the Duck Industry Value Chain. Among the six enterprises, the ready-to-lay (RTL) growing enterprise had the fastest payback period (five months) and posted the highest return on investment (92 percent). Some of the RTL growers have used their earnings to expand their business and build up their assets.

Photo by PARFUND

During its three-year project implementation, PARFUND was able to train more than 500 farmers, including Neil, and provided them with knowledge on the Duck Industry Value Chain.

Philippine Agrarian Foundation for National Development

QUACKING UP BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Eliseo Asilo, a farmer from Bayugan City, Agusandel Sur, is eager to learn how to set up and manage his household-based duck layer farm to earn additional income for his family. "There is a large demand for duck eggs in my area so I know this will be a good business. I will provide the space (land) and housing for the ducks," he says excitedly.

The Philippine Agrarian Reform Foundation for National Development (PARFUND) promoted inclusive growth in Philippine rural economies by offering six business opportunities to aspiring 'agripreneurs': duck layer farm, duck hatchery, duck growing, alternative duck feeds production, duck meat processing and duck products retailing. PARFUND accomplished this under the **Duck Enterprise for Employment Generation and Growth (Duck-EGG) in Mindanao Project.**

Each business serves as a market for the other: for example, the layer farms supply raw or fresh duck eggs to the hatcheries, which supply ducklings to duck growers, which, in turn, supply duck eggs to retailers and, finally, to the local market. The cooked duck egg or *balut* is a major source of protein in the daily diet of lower income groups in Mindanao and other areas of the country. This makes the duck industry value chain self-sustaining, with each enterprise influencing both the demand and supply of duck meat, eggs and other by-products.

Meanwhile, in Malaybalay City, Bukidnon, Anabel Abaga has been growing ducks for many years. Her earnings in this enterprise allowed her to send her two children to school, as well as provided the needs of her family such as food and medicine. They were also able to afford to buy a multicab, to be used mainly to transport the ducks from one place to another. From their income, they were able to repair their house.

Through the Duck-EGG Project, she learned new and more efficient techniques and has improved in her duck growing business. Together with her husband, Anabel is pasturing 500 ducklings for four months and sell them to breeder farms at P170 to P200 per head. "I would take care of my ducklings like children," Anabel proudly said for pasturing ducklings required full effort, commitment and skill.

The Duck-EGG Project targeted the heart of rural poverty in Mindanao, and was designed to transform farmers and other agricultural workers by enhancing the duck industry value chain.

Eliseo and Anabel's businesses are just two of the 317 duck-egg enterprises in the duck value chain that were established in the provinces of Bukidnon and Agusan del Sur. The project was able to harness the skills, energy and talents of community members, and build on emerging economic opportunities in the locality.

Pagtambayayong - A Mutual Aid Foundation, Inc.

ENABLING ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS FOR SMALL FARMERS

Economic Recovery and Growth for Small Farmers in the Yolanda-affected Areas of North Cebu project

Rebecca "Vicky" Toñacao, 43, is a farmer based in Medellin, Cebu. She and her husband Rogelio, a furniture maker, were just earning enough to get by and send their son Ton-ton to college. A daughter of tenant farmers in Bogo City, Vicky never had the chance to finish high school. She could not be prouder of how close she was to providing her teenage son a shot at a more comfortable future.

Then super typhoon Haiyan struck in 2013. It wiped out her home and most of her livestock. Her goat herd never grew to the same size it was before the disaster. Her husband's job became unstable — and they were faced with the daunting possibility of pulling Ton-ton out of school.

Vicky felt almost hopeless until she got involved with a non-government organization dedicated to supporting grassroots communities, Pagtambayayong – A Foundation for Mutual Aid. She was then tapped to participate in their economic recovery program as an organic hog raiser.

Even before the storm, 80 percent of Pagtambayayong beneficiaries were already subsistence farmers with only a quarter of a hectare dedicated to corn, vegetables, and free range chicken. Some engaged in sugar cane production. Across the board, farmers lacked technical assistance and financing.

Pagtambayayong trained farmers in North Cebu in organic hog raising, maximizing the use of local forage. It was cheaper than commercial feed and more accessible. When forage was low, pre-mixed feeds were delivered to farmers. The foundation also helped market the livestock. Its model covered a holistic process, from production to marketing, and allowed beneficiaries to avail of loans for pig pens.

It was this loan that helped Vicky. On the harvest of her first cycle, she kept one sow for breeding and earned almost 13,000 Php, which she used to pay off debts for her son's tuition. On her second harvest, she kept another breeder and earned 19,000 Php from eight hogs. They used the money to pay her cousin, who pawned to her the farm lot she occupies.

Today, Vicky no longer works on the field, and instead concentrates on raising livestock. She now has four pig pens and three breeders, one of which has ten piglets. With a growing goat herd and a steady source of income, she plans to eventually buy her cousin's land altogether.

Her husband now has a regular job, and leads a group of furniture workers. Ton-ton graduated with a degree in Marine Engineering this year. Her family is only one of about 338 hog raisers assisted by Pagtambayayong.

PinoyME Foundation

HEART OF A FARMER, MIND OF AN ENTREPRENEUR

Reducing Rural Poverty through Agroentrepreneurship Project

Indigenous communities living in the highlands of Bukidnon work as farmers all their lives. However, they are only able to sell their products to traders who are able to reach them. Not aware of market prices, they sell their hard-earned harvests at a low cost.

"We are farmers who are just dependent on our harvest and on whoever wants to buy them," shared Danilo Adrayan, a farmer from Lantapan, Bukidnon. "But then, we learned that we are capable of selling our harvests at a much higher price."

His participation in the Reducing Rural Poverty through Agroentrepreneurship Project fueled this realization. Forming production clusters and connecting farmers to the formal market economy was the main objective of this project implemented by the PinoyME Foundation. They partnered with three non-government organizations (NGOs)—the Diocesan Social Action Center (DSAC), KAANIB Foundation and PASALI Philippines Foundation—who are directly involved with farmers through people's organizations (POs).

This project paved the way for farmers in Lantapan to organize a group now officially referred to as the Lantapan Vegetable Farmers Marketing Corporation (LVFMC) where Danilo serves as the Chairperson. "We earn a lot more now. We used to be ordinary farmers," he began. "But now that we have learned a lot from the trainings given by the project team, we are not just farmers anymore but also officers, bookkeepers, auditors and secretaries of the LVFMC."

Dan Songco, President and CEO of PinoyME Foundation, said the project encouraged them to think not just like farmers — but like entrepreneurs. It gives them a holistic perspective so that they can compute expenses, project their income, transact with banks and even engage with large companies.

Trainings and workshops conducted through the Agroentrepreneurship Project opened opportunities for local farmers to have their products compete with the marketplace and be recognized globally. Empowered by these activities, the Bayanihan Millenium Multipurpose Coop (BMMPC) whose members are coffee farmers in Pangantucan, Bukidnon, joined a national coffee cupping competition where they won second place.

This achievement gave Operations Manager Leonila Secadron an opportunity to represent BMMPC in a study visit to Seattle, Washington, USA. During this trip, Leonila learned more about the international coffee industry. Their products were also tested and she went home not just with new learnings about coffee processing but also with a list of potential global buyers.

"I am so inspired to share what I learned during this trip," enthused Leonila. "Because we are now able to produce coffee products that are at par with international standards, we now have the opportunity to sell our coffee not just in areas outside Mindanao but to the international market as well."

PinoyME, together with the three NGOs, was able to assist a total of 12 POs, including LVFMC and BMMPC, in the provinces of Bukidnon, Sarangani and Sultan Kudarat. They reached almost 3,000 small farmers in Mindanao whose incomes have increased substantially.

Handloom machine: A weaving technology procured through the project. It produces threads from sugarcane bagasse that are being used to make bags, placemats and many more.

Roxas Foundation, Inc.

WEAVING DREAMS FROM SUGARCANE

Turning a New Leaf: Threads and Weaving from Sugarcane Project

Irene Silipin, 40, is a polio survivor. Her only dream is to be able to put her five children to school. So, she sold food or washed laundry every day. But due to her handicap, she could not land a regular job — until she was taught to weave.

She is one of the women weavers who works for the Threads for Weaving from Sugarcane Project, a Roxas Foundation, Inc. (RFI) initiative in Irene's neighborhood in Barangay Reparo, Nasugbu, Batangas. Under the project, fibers from sugarcane stalks are spun into thread. It is a meticulous but safe process, where bleached fibers are combined with cotton and tested for strength.

As an agricultural barangay, majority of the working population do not have regular jobs and depend on sugarcane farming as their source of income. Work as a sugarcane cutter, or pagtata-ad, is laborious with very little compensation. When the crop was not in season, locals had to fend for themselves. However, it was one of the only readily available jobs in the community.

Isidra "Ising" Cabingan, 52, also had to hack at the fields until she was taught to produce thread. She has the burned and rough skin to show from the time, when she worked long hours under the heat of the sun yet still needed to borrow money when she got home. She and her family had to endure having only bananas or cassava for a full meal. Since becoming a weaver, she has felt privileged — a comfort she thought she would not experience in her lifetime. Both Irene and Ising even get weekends off.

RFI uses a technology that produces sugarcane threads. These threads are then used to produce various products like stylish bags, purses and placemats of export quality. RFI is also exploring the use of threads as fabrics. The project trains Irene and Isidra, and 83 others, in using this technology and taps them for textile production.

"With the additional income that I am earning from weaving, my family is somehow getting a better living experience and my children continue schooling," expressed Irene.

"Being a part of this project changed everything," said Ising. "It is a once in a lifetime kind of experience to be given an opportunity to learn a new skill and get paid a decent daily wage at the same time."

The project also provides different training programs that will further enhance their skills which in turn help them create business opportunities using sugarcane threads.

Tamaraw Salt Producers Cooperative

A SWEET BEGINNING FOR SALT FARMERS

Poverty Alleviation through Intensification of Salt Farms Productivity and Capacity Building Project

Emmanuel Bayaoa, 49, and his family owned a piece of land in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. But their land could not sustain crops so they explored salt instead. Since then, he started working with several salt farmers in his hometown.

Most of the salt farmers in Mindoro were self-taught. The island province is responsible for 40 percent of the Philippines' total salt production, 80 percent of which is produced by the Tamaraw Salt Producers Cooperative (TAMACO) — the sole cooperative for salt farmers in the country.

Even though there is enough local capacity to supply around half of the national demand, 80 percent of salt products are still imported. Large traders still control market prices. Moreover, local producers are disadvantaged by a lack of technology.

Salt production was a dying industry when TAMACO started out. However, the future began to look up when TAMACO implemented the Poverty Alleviation through Intensification of Salt Farms Productivity and Capacity Building Project.

"Before this project, salt was priced at 90 cents to 1.00 Php per kilo. Now it can go from 2.50 Php to 2.90 Php per kilo, and it can only go up," said TAMACO Chairperson Carlos "Jombet" Magsino.

Salt producers like Emmanuel and the salt farmers he work with can feel the development not just in their income but also in their lifestyle. "Additional earnings allowed me to expand my salt farms and create more salt beds," he said. "For my salt farmers, before, they used to only make 25,000 Php every season. Now, they can earn four times as much." Some of the other salt farmers in Occidental Mindoro were able to invest their money in buying a motorcycle to bring their kids to school, the others renovated their houses.

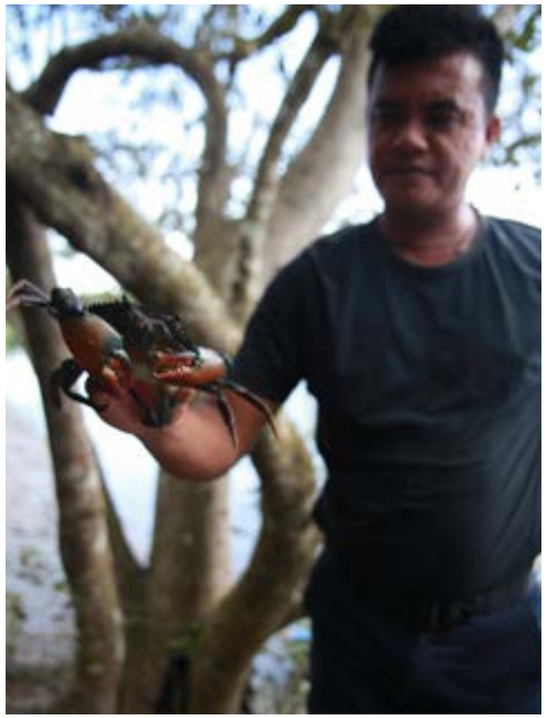
For salt farmer Mamer Mandapat, 35, his life was changed when he attended a Basic Entrepreneurship Training Course organized by TAMACO and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority. He was able to learn new skills and even put up a piggery so he doesn't have to entirely depend on his earnings from salt farming.

"Before, farmers were unfortunate," said Mamer. "But since TAMACO's project helped the whole salt farming industry, our income has increased, we paid off our debts, our children's school allowance was raised even a little, and we don't just eat rice and fish — sometimes, there's chicken."

When TAMACO was formed, it only had 16 members. Now it supports about 3,000 salt farmers all over Occidental Mindoro — and the installation of the country's first salt washery and processing plant is expected to further increase their income.

Salt washing and drying processing plant: The machine is designed to produce high-quality salt through its washing and drying processes; thus, meeting market requirements for salt whiteness and purity level.

Photos by TAMACO



Tuason Development Foundation, Inc.

BUSINESS INCUBATOR GENERATES JOBS IN DAVAO

Davao Gulf Business Incubator Facility for Start-up Businesses Project

Crispina "Pina" Wolfe, 47, spent most of her time sweeping the streets near Tagum City Hall. But all of that has changed. Today, she is busy processing chili into powder and flakes, and selling it to the local market.

"For a long time, I've been thinking that my life's progress is very slow being just a street sweeper, so when an opportunity came for me to go into a chili farming business, I did not hesitate to grab it," said Pina, who is one of 45 small entrepreneurs in Davao del Norte awarded with a soft business loan by the Tuason Development Foundation, Inc. (TDFI) through the Davao Gulf Business Incubator (DGBI) Facility for Start-up Businesses Project.

Benito Deiparine, 63, shared the same thought as he grew up being a farmer. Somehow he knew that there's more to farming. "I observed agriculture business is a progressing industry, a farmer like me is eager to contribute to this progress," shared Benito. "The trainings I got from DGBI helped me a lot in getting into duck raising and improve in the business."

The business incubator focuses on assisting struggling farmers, fisher folk and other families living along the Davao Gulf region by training them on entrepreneurship and providing access to capital to start or expand their own business.

Pina and Benito have improved their businesses through one-on-one coaching with the DGBI team. The mentoring sessions include topics in financial management, marketing and business planning among others, to help them and other DGBI small entrepreneurs enhance business practices and encourage sustainable operations. Local governments in the region also assist by accelerating business licensing and providing opportunities for entrepreneurs to exhibit and sell their products.

These mentoring activities helped Benito earn an additional 10 to 15 percent. He used this to expand his duck raising business so that he can have something valuable to pass on to his two children.

Pina, on the other hand, used her loan to acquire necessary materials for her chili products. There is a high demand for both chili powder and chili flakes. A mall in Davao City is offering Pina a contract to continuously supply them with chili products. Pina laughed as she said, "I was able to change my career with the help of DGBI. Chili is hot, but it gives me hotter income".

Education is still not accessible to all Filipinos — and four projects supported by USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, hope to break barriers to universal education. These grantees have mounted projects geared not only towards accessibility, but for inclusivity as well.

Education grants played a vital role in improving the access to basic education for more than 15,000 students, out-of-school youth and adult learners nationwide.

IMAN and RBI increased the quality of early grade reading instruction and adult braille literacy through the use of technology. IMAN invested in computer tablets as a learning platform for non-readers and slow readers while blind adult learners under RBI's project used braille materials and a translation software to improve their braille literacy levels. Braille instructors use computerized braille typewriters and embossers to increase the production of hard copies of their reading materials.

FIT-ED, on the other hand, improved access to school-based continuing professional development for basic education teachers through the Digital Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) Training Program. It is a scalable technology-supported courseware for K-3 teachers developed by FIT-ED, in partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd). The digital ELLN has reached more than 4,000 teachers from 31 DepEd Divisions in 11 Regions nationwide. When rolled out, ELLN-Digital can boost the literacy and numeracy outcomes of around 200,000 pupils. "ELLN-Digital boosted my confidence in the teaching-learning process," stated Claire de la Cruz–Bitbit, one of the teachers who used ELLN. "It encouraged me to be more specific in imparting ideas to my fellow teachers about teaching strategies and specific learning environments."

Meanwhile, the indigenous Blaan people in Mindanao were left out of the Philippine government's mother tongue-based education program — forcing students from these communities to learn another language to understand their lessons. To address this, CLAFI revived "Flalok", the Blaan art of storytelling to establish a culture of reading towards raising literacy rates in the indigenous group. The project produced various mother-tongue reading materials like big story books and the first Blaan dictionary. Reproduction of these materials has reached more than 20,000 which were given to partner Blaan schools. "Commitment poured when people heard about this effort to preserve Flalok, a beautiful storytelling art that was gradually forgotten, unpracticed and replaced by modern technology," said Richlie Lyndon Magtulis of CLAFI. "Now more Grade 1 and Grade 2 Blaan pupils will enjoy traditional storytelling using their own language, and learn more through the stories and characters that depict their own culture."

EDUCATION GRANTEES

• Conrado & Ladislawa Alcantara Foundation, Inc. (CLAFI) • Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development, Inc. (FIT-ED) • Integrated Mindanaons Associations for Natives (IMAN) • Resources for the Blind, Inc. (RBI)

Conrado & Ladislawa Alcantara Foundation, Inc.

FLALOK STORYTELLING IN THE EYES OF A BLAAN CHILD

Flalok Project: Reviving the Blaan Art of storytelling to Improve Literacy and Develop a Community of Readers in South Central Mindanao

Renante Malatingan is a 7-year old Grade 1 Blaan pupil of Lamlifew Indigenous People Integrated School in Sarangani Province in Mindanao. He is shy and barely talks to his classmates. He seldom participates in class discussions and his teacher rarely hears his voice. During classes, he is contented with sitting at the corner of the room without uttering a single word.

There was no way his teacher would know if he was able to understand his lessons or not. He continued to be this way throughout the semester until his class adviser, Teacher Florencia Pandian, conducted a Flalok—the Blaan tradition of storytelling. She shared the story of Nga *Datu Labe* (The Brave Datu), a story of a brave young man who, through his *fais* (Blaan sword), killed the big snake that had been snatching people passing by the road.

Teacher Florencia told the story with great enthusiasm using a colorful "big book" with pop-ups of the story's main characters. This captured Renante's attention and he was so thrilled by the storytelling that he left his spot at the corner of the room and joined his classmates. He started to actively participate in the Flalok storytelling session. That day, Renante was the most participative student in class.

Under the Flalok Project, implemented by the Conrado & Ladislawa Alcantara Foundation, Inc. (CLAFI), the Blaan Tribe's art of storytelling is revived to improve the literacy of Blaan learners. CLAFI was able to produce 72 Flalok big books, each containing authentic Blaan stories.

Blaan teacher-writers convert orally shared traditional stories into printed form such as these books, with illustrations depicting Blaan values and characters. These Big Books are used during Flalok classes in Grades 1 and 2 in 108 partner Blaan schools in Sarangani, South Cotabato, Koronadal City and General Santos City — all in South Central Mindanao.

Eagerness showed in Renante's eyes as Teacher Florencia finishes the story and shared the values of facing one's fear. When she noticed the change in Renante's behavior, Teacher Florencia approached him and asked him what he thought about the story. He did not hesitate to tell her, "I really liked the drawings in the big book. I can see the *datu* was so brave. I want to be like him one day."

Renante also expressed how excited he was to attend his classes from then on. He always looks forward to Teacher Florencia's Flalok storytelling to learn more about the Blaan life and culture. Renante is just one of the 15,000 Blaan students who were encouraged by the Flalok Project to become active learners.

Photos by CLAFI

Conrado & Ladislawa Alcantara Foundation, Inc.

BLAAN WISDOM BEARER: THE STORY OF FU GORI

FFu Gori Salienta, 98 years old, is the oldest Blaan Flalok storyteller in South Cotabato, a province in South Central Mindanao. She was fond of listening to Flalok stories when she was a child. Her mother would always tell her these stories every night until she and her siblings fell asleep. She kept in her heart the lessons she learned.

"Finishing one story takes several nights before starting a new one. I have always enjoyed listening to my Mother's Flalok. At the end of every story is a moral lesson that guided me as I lived my life," Fu Gori smiled as she recalled these moments with her mother.

When she had a family of her own, she also shared Flalok stories to her children. Sadly, her children did not practice the art of storytelling. That was why her grandchildren have not even heard a single Flalok story.

"I am happy because the Flalok Project is slowly reviving the Blaan art of storytelling and that we are starting with young Blaans"

In 2015, Conrado & Ladislawa Alcantara Foundation, Inc. (CLAFI) implemented the **Flalok Project: Reviving the Blaan Art of storytelling to Improve Literacy and Develop a Community of Readers in South Central Mindanao**. Fu was one of the first Blaan elders who showed support and fondly shared authentic Flalok stories passed on by her grandmother. Among these stories include Bai *Fanwe* (name of a Blaan girl) and *Nalang Masang Blawen* (The Fish with Golden Gills).

"I am happy because the Flalok Project is slowly reviving the Blaan art of storytelling and we are starting with young Blaans," Fu Gori expressed in Blaan dialect.

Teachers would conduct Flalok classes for Grade 1 and 2 pupils with the aid of Flalok Big Story Books, Flalok Dictionary, Teachers' Guides and Learner Materials written entirely in Blaan language. This way, Blaan children learn through the Flalok stories which are rarely heard nowadays.

Because of the Flalok Project, Fu Gori is hopeful that her mother's stories can live on and her grandchildren will appreciate the stories that taught her life lessons when she was their age.

CLAFI has published a total of 72 different Flalok stories in Big Books which were entirely written in Blaan. These include the stories shared by Fu Gori. They were able to accomplish this with the help of Blaan teacher-writers, leaders of the Blaan Indigenous Cultural Communities (BICCs), Department of Education Supervisors and Coordinators.

This has even paved the way for the Flalok Project to acquire copyright certificates from the National Library of the Philippines for the Flalok Big Books and other Blaan learning tools.

With the continuous support of the Blaan communities and the local government agencies, CLAFI was able to produce and distribute almost 20,000 teaching and learning materials, such as big books and charts, to108 partner Blaan schools in the region.

Reviving this tradition to enhance learning of Blaan students will hopefully lead to the inclusion of the Blaan language into the Mother Tongue Based Multi-Lingual Education Program of the Department of Education.

Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development, Inc.

BRIDGING TEACHER TRAINING GAPS FROM A DISTANCE

Technology-Supported Elementary School Teacher Professional Development Project

Despite committed attempts, providing professional development for over 600,000 teachers nationwide remains a herculean task. It was through a technology-supported program that the Department of Education (DepEd) made headway, and through the efforts of Anne Choi and her colleagues that they broke ground.

The Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development (FIT-ED), together with DepEd, developed a technology-based courseware under their project entitled Technology-Supported Elementary School Teacher Professional Development. The project was able to provide primary educators with modern and improved instructions in teaching basic literacy.

Anne Choi, a dedicated educator and a mother of two girls, was vital in developing the DepEd Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) training course. She was then tapped to help pilot ELLN Digital, the technology-supported blended model of training delivery for Kindergarten to Grade 3 Teachers nationwide.

"It was great to see how the original ELLN teacher training program evolved into a more self-directed training program. Given the courseware, teachers can study or review the materials at their own time," shared Anne. She added that the courseware materials and DepEd's learning action cells (LACs) sessions complemented each other very well.

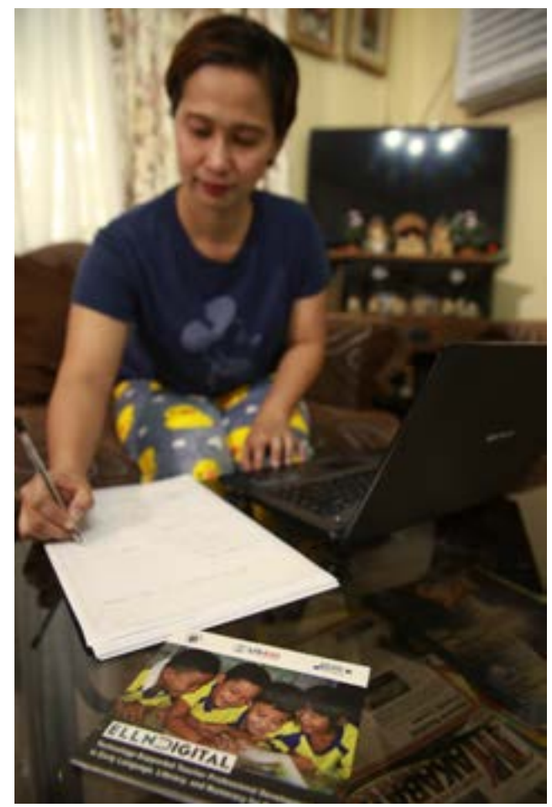
Unlike the face-to-face method, ELLN Digital can be used by teachers on their most convenient time during the school year. And because it is in digital format, more users can have access to the modules.

ELLN Digital has reduced the cost for the delivery of teacher trainings in basic education as it was able to reach more than 4,000 K-3 teachers from 240 schools in 31 divisions nationwide during its pilot period of just five months. The conventional face-to-face training would have taken years and can cost a lot in travel and personnel expenses.

Anne was the lead instructor for the webinars provided by the program to train teachers who serve as "Learning Facilitators." Webinars are live video seminars conducted using the internet.

Organizing these webinars was vital for the success of the program as this clued in the implementers on what worked and what needed more improvement. Anne underlined that "the webinars provided an opportunity to 'bridge' the geographic gap between the central program implementers and field implementers. The webinar was a space where we could all meet and talk, and do a *kamustahan*—to see how the project was progressing, as well as to identify what else we needed in terms of implementation."

A total of 42 learning facilitators and regional monitors were trained in mentoring LACs through webinars. They were provided with the needed equipment, like computer tablets, to communicate with LACs on a regular basis. "These webinars allowed us to reach out to these facilitators and directly know if they found the courseware relevant to, and aligned with, the K to 12 curriculum. Teachers who do study the courseware diligently are able to learn a lot from it," shared Anne.



"Based on the training of trainers, we found the program effective and efficient. Since it was designed for scale-up, we can easily share the ELLN Digital with the rest of our division's K-3 teachers."

Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development, Inc.

EDUCATOR'S PASSION INSPIRES CHANGE ACROSS WHOLE DIVISION

Dindo John Moreno has proudly made the academe his career. Having completed three education-related degrees, the 49-year-old husband and father has truly lived out the value of education and continuous development. He serves as a Supervisor in the Department of Education (DepEd) Nueva Vizcaya.

His passion to develop the potential of his fellow educators has driven him to pursue more rigorous trainings. That was why it was no surprise when Dindo was chosen to represent Nueva Vizcaya and attend a training session on Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) Teacher Professional Development Program, implemented by the Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development (FIT-ED) and DepEd.

The multimedia training is based on the modules of DepEd's basic course for K-3 teachers, which covers 14 domains of language and literacy. The project mobilizes the school-based Learning Action Cells (LAC) composed of public school teachers to effectively deliver, continually assess and improve training content and methods.

A total of 42 DepEd Supervisors coming from different regions in the country attended the training. They were provided with facilitating and mentoring skills that allowed them to give constructive feedback and support to school-based LACs.

After going through the extensive sessions during the ELLN Digital pilot, Dindo and his colleagues were impressed with the results. He believed in the potential of the program and has become one of its strong advocates.

Dindo recalled, "Near the end of the course, my fellow teachers and I were excited to share the ELLN-Digital program in the different schools." They learned more about how to improve their literacy and numeracy instruction, as well as guiding and mentoring co-teachers. He added, "My personal rewarding experience as an ELLN Digital Learning Facilitator led me to propose to our School Division Superintendent that we immediately expand the program to the rest of the schools in the division."

One of the program's goals was to be a sustainable and scalable alternative to the current system – one that is limited, among other reasons, by the need to take teachers away from their schools. As a supervisor, Dindo saw the advantages of ELLN Digital since teachers can access the training modules even if they remained in their duty stations.

He stated that "based on the training of trainers, we found the program effective and efficient. Since it was designed for scale-up, we then shared ELLN Digital to the rest of our division's K-3 teachers."

Dindo's experience with the program has been enough to encourage him to share it to schools who weren't chosen to be part of the pilot. This was well-received by other teachers in Nueva Vizcaya. Soon, more and more schools were already benefitting from ELLN.

"Reyhana insists on going to her classes. She tugs at my clothes every morning to urge me to accompany her to school...She is different—her difference being her willingness to learn."

Integrated Mindanaons Associations for Natives

YOUNG FILIPINOS GAIN ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION

Innovations for Rural Education Advancement (iREAD) Project for Moro Children in Mindanao

In Maguindanao and North Cotabato, two provinces in the Philippines' southern Mindanao region, pervasive instability due to violent extremism, poverty and underdevelopment prevents many children from obtaining a basic education.

Armed conflict forces families to evacuate from their homes, and recurring power outages cause schools to suspend classes. Meanwhile, many rural families cannot afford to send their children to school. As a result, many young people do not fully learn to read or write.

Reyhana Endigay, age 10, has never attended formal education. Until this year, she could not write her name.

Aside from living in a challenging environment, Reyhana is also deaf. Because of her condition, Reyhana's parents kept her from school. "She might be bullied by classmates for being different," says her mother, Babo Bai.

While the Department of Education works to improve access to quality education in areas affected by conflict, the Integrated Mindanaoans Association for Natives (IMAN) is complementing that work through its Innovations for Rural Education Advancement (iREAd) Project for Moro Children in Mindanao Project.

When Reyhana's parents heard about the project, they saw it as an opportunity for her to attend school with her peers. Their daughter was soon going to class every day. "Reyhana insists on going to her classes. She tugs at my clothes every morning to urge me to accompany her to school," says her mother.

Norma Sulaiman, a community facilitator, teaches lessons in sign language for Reyhana. "She is different—her difference being her willingness to learn," Sulaiman says.

Reyhana and her classmates are developing self-esteem and creativity by learning how to make decisions, solve problems and be responsible. Workshops and games promote a culture of peace, where the children learn to tolerate their differences, treat each other with respect and resolve conflicts.

Today Reyhana can read and write. She is more confident and has new friends. "Without this program, we would have given up on providing the education she needed," her mother says.

Equipped with a quality education and essential life skills, Reyhana is one of more than 700 students who can now look forward to a brighter future, where they can take advantage of more opportunities and model peace and stability in their homes and communities.

Integrated Mindanaons Associations for Natives

INNOVATIVE TEACHING FOR BANGSAMORO CHILDREN

Many areas in South Central Mindanao are still untouched by technology. The Integrated Mindanaons Association for Natives (IMAN) recognized the need for innovative teaching technology to motivate students to read more. Teacher Manny Adam from Baya Elementary School in Maguindanao, finds technology amazing and exciting to use in the classroom.

"Many students don't like to read because it's hard for them. But using gadgets made them like reading and explore innovative educational tools that suited their daily lesson," expressed Teacher Manny.

Through iREAD Project, teachers used computer tablets in their classes to improve the children's reading skills. These gadgets allowed students to access reading materials and other educational programs developed through iREAD.

IMAN handed over 150 computer tablets to five elementary schools, including Baya, in five different barangays in Maguindanao and North Cotabato where 303 students were able to learn how to easily identify sounding letters. Learners identifying sounding letters is very important as this is one of the foundations of reading.

Aside from the improvement in their reading skills, the eagerness of these students to attend their classes has also increased. They have become more participative in their classes and learned faster.

"Seeing the Bangsamoro children motivated by the new gadgets and striving to learn was such a spectacular opportunity. Children loved using this technology as this is something new for them," said Teacher Manny.

In line with the commitment of the Department of Education to provide a conducive learning environment even to children in situations of conflict and in remote areas, USAID and IMAN selected project sites that had little or no access to electricity.

Through the project, IMAN has successfully installed a 1000kw Solar Power System, which has the capacity to provide electricity to recharge the tablets and run two computers for five hours, in identified off-grid schools in the region,

"This solar power system will surely help improve the students' academic performance and will give us teachers the opportunity to explore the use of technology in children's education," said Nasser Guiamilil, Principal of Baya Elementary School.

iREAD project activities also included a provision of solar-powered audio-visual equipment to these target elementary schools. IMAN was able to establish an e-library through the use of computer tablets, continuing skills enhancement for teachers and reproduction of school instructional materials.

Resources for the Blind, Inc.

ACCESS TO BRAILLE LITERACY OF PERSON WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN MINDANAO

Improved Braille Literacy Among Adults with Visual Impairment Project

"My dream is to become a successful teacher one day," enthused Meryl Acosta, 21 years old, who has low vision since her teenage years. She lived in a small town in Lanao del Sur, Mindanao called Wao. When she reached high school, her sense of sight gradually waned. She could no longer read and write properly. "It was very difficult but I really wanted to finish my studies," said Meryl as she recalled her high school days.

Meryl's strong desire to finish school inspired her to continue attending class everyday despite the significant loss of her vision. It was not an easy task because despite her will to study, her classmates started to bully her. There would be times her drive would fade but her dream to become a teacher kept her going until she finished high school at 16 years old. However, her sense of sight worsened and her parents discouraged her from going to college.

When the Resources for the Blind, Inc. (RBI) team saw Meryl's profile at the Persons with Disability Affairs Office, they immediately visited Meryl at her home in Wao to verify her condition and to introduce RBI's Improved Braille Literacy among Adults with Visual Impairment Project.

As the RBI team shared the opportunities that the project would offer, Meryl started to revive her childhood dreams. With the permission of her parents, Meryl joined the program.

Through the assistance provided by their local government, Meryl was able to travel to Valencia City in Bukidnon, Mindanao where she was welcomed by her new family, the Bukidnon Visually-Impaired Entrepreneurs (BVIE). The organization was RBI's implementing partner, which also served as a learning center, where Meryl and other blind adult learners would attend their Braille literacy classes.

"I really want to proceed to college so I can become a teacher one day," Meryl declared. She eagerly underwent the nine modules of the program where she was taught to read and write using Braille. In six months' time, she was able to complete all modules and graduated from the program.

RBI partnered with five learning centers across regions in Mindanao. The project was able to engage a total of 202 blind adult learners who received Braille reading interventions. Of the number, 80 blind adult learners completed the end-line assessment including Meryl.

"I thank God for allowing RBI to knock on my door and give me the opportunity to once again pursue my dreams. With hard work and dedication, I truly believe that all of us, even people with disabilities like me, can do something to make our dreams come true," enthused Meryl.

Digital Braille Tools: To efficiently reproduce reading materials, instructors use a braille translation software and a braille embosser that can print out texts in braille.

Resources for the Blind, Inc.

A BRIGHTER FUTURE IN SIGHT

Felix Perez was nine years old and a grade one student in a regular school in Valencia, Bukidnon when he started to lose his vision. At the age of 14, he became totally blind. According to Felix, he experienced discrimination and rejection even from his own family due to his disability. Despite this, he remained strong and determined to attain success in life. Today, he is pursuing a college degree in Bachelor of Science in Social Work at San Augustine Institute of Technology in Bukidnon. He also volunteers as a teacher to blind adults and as the president of an association called the Bukidnon Visually Impaired Entrepreneurs.

Rosa Pamado, 34 years old and a graduate of the Center for Handicapped in Cotabato City, became blind at the age of eight. For many years, she stayed at her hometown in Koronadal City, uncertain of her future.

Felix and Rosa are two of 29 individuals who participated in a baseline assessment of the literacy needs of blind adults conducted by the Resources for the Blind, Inc. (RBI) in Mindanao, specifically in Cagayan de Oro, Butuan and Davao City.

RBI implemented the **Improved Braille Literacy among Adults with Visual Impairment Project** which aimed to promote and facilitate braille literacy, as well as provide better employment options for blind adults.

"This project has inspired me not to give up. That despite my disability, I can still study. I can still work. I can still contribute to society," shared Felix. "Learning how to read and write in braille has given me hope to continue studying. My vision is for many blind adults in my community to be able to do the same."

Under the project, RBI uses modern Braille technology in teaching like the braille typewriters, braille printers and braille computer keyboards. These equipment allow trainers to develop teaching manuals for blind learners who are also taught to type and print in braille.

RBI developed an adult Braille literacy instruction module, which the project was able to test and validate. RBI also partnered with the Braille Accessibility Network Philippines which will help in the promotion of Braille literacy throughout the country.

By mobilizing private sector and public support, USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, worked with five organizations to bring communities to work closer with the government. These grantees improved transparency and integrity mechanisms through the active and direct participation of and feedback from people's organizations.

AFON, JVOFI and NCPC promoted participatory planning and budgeting in 31 municipalities in the provinces of Antique, Benguet, La Union, Ilocos and Camarines Sur. AFON's People-Led Monitoring and Evaluation System (PLMES) allowed civil society organizations (CSOs) to keep tabs on local government unit (LGU) purchases, covering a total of 225 projects. "PLMES is designed for inclusive learning for both the LGU and the people, all for the improvement of community projects," said Jeoffrey Pagunaling of AFON. A similar civic engagement was led by NCPC, organizing seven people's councils across Metro Naga for the purpose of acting as citizen monitors of government projects.

On the other hand, JVOFI established an alliance of LGUs to protect the Amburayan River Basin and Watershed, a critical resource that crosses three provinces and 15 municipalities in North Luzon. Strengthened by the commitment of government representatives, project activities led to the designation of the river as a Water Quality Management Area (WQMA). This is the first time that a civil society organization successfully shepherded the designation of a water system as a WQMA.

Most of the youth in politics still hail from political dynasties, but YPS began to change that after establishing 15 Youth Vote Philippines (YVP) chapters nationwide. YPS provided various platforms for a collaborative exchange on citizen participation in democracy and enhanced political engagement. Through their YVP Chapters, YPS educated more than 17,000 Filipino youth on government processes to extract accountability from their public officials. "YPS activities gave me a different perspective of the challenges that we are facing as a nation," said YVP volunteer Rizza Duro. "I met fellow young people who inspired me and added value to what I do as a youth volunteer."

While other projects seek to bridge the gap between the state and civil society, ICD's project focused on the private sector. ICD implemented a corporate governance scorecard for private firms to make sure they are at par with the standards of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Project activities have improved the corporate governance practices of 392 publicly-listed companies — with 11 of which reaching the ASEAN Top 50 Corporations — as well as government-owned and controlled corporations, among others

GOVERNANCE GRANTEES

• Antique Federation of Non-Government Organizations, Inc. (AFON) • Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) • Jaime V. Ongpin Foundation, Inc. (JVOFI) • Naga City People's Council (NCPC) • Young Public Servants (YPS)

Antique Federation of Non-Government Organization, Inc.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACTION IN ANTIQUE

People-Led Monitoring and Evaluation System (PLMES) Project

Corruption and mismanagement in government always bite, but their effects hit much closer to home in grassroots communities.

Driven by its mission to promote social accountability mechanisms, the Antique Federation of Non-Government Organizations (AFON) launched the project entitled People-Led Monitoring and Evaluation System (PLMES) in 2014, tapping civil society organizations (CSOs) as local monitors to contribute in the quality implementation of government projects and services.

Through the project, a total of 270 civil society organization members from nine covered municipalities in Antique were trained and mobilized to engage constructively with their government through the conduct of monitoring and evaluation activities using the participatory score card process.

Leo Lupango, 57, a PLMES monitor and President of Anini-y CSO Alliance, said the endeavor not only taught them what to watch out for in government projects — but also the relevance of a watchful civilian eye.

"We learned how to evaluate projects — their quality, whether they were done well, how to get involved," said Leo. "We also learned that any money saved because of efficient project execution is a big help to both the government and the community."

Local monitors have undergone a series of workshops that equipped them with skills in constructive engagement, public speaking, data processing and analytical abilities — all in order to fulfill their newfound roles.

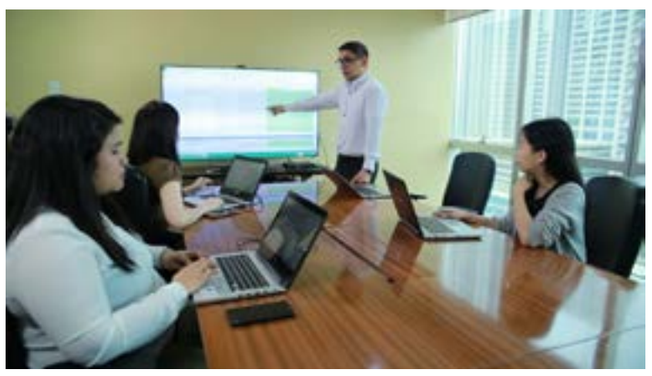
In the municipality of Anini-y, local monitors including Leo kept track of the additional facility construction at the Sira-an Hot Spring, one of the known tourist spots in the area. Using monitoring tools such as the People's Score Card, they observed expenses incurred and the quality of the constructions. Enhanced resort facilities attracted more tourists, as well as a steady income for community members. These results reinforced the value of PLMES in directing the project towards providing long-term effects.

"We monitors learned that the government is not the only one with a responsibility to monitor projects," said Leo. "The importance of the PLMES lies in how people in the community learn to be watchful toward government projects, to care, and to participate. After all, our goal is the same—to improve the quality of life of our people."

Tighter relationships between civil society and local government units (LGUs) have been forged, and officials now take care in accounting for assets and delivering on time. Locals now see themselves as partners, not just beneficiaries, and seek active involvement and transparency.

"PLMES inspired us to be more transparent with our ongoing projects for the communities and to even create more that has a tangible impact to the people," said Anini-y Municipal Mayor Maxfil Pollicar. "They helped us realize that it is not enough that projects are being implemented. It is equally important to know if they are effective and are able to address their needs." In 2017, collaborative work between CSOs and the LGUs contributed for Anini-y to be given a Seal of Good Local Governance by the Department of Interior and Local Government.

In the course of three years, the PLMES project was able to monitor a total of 225 projects, more than half of them were concentrated on livelihood and infrastructure.



UNDERLINING GOVERNANCE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

ASEAN Corporate Governance Scorecard (ACGS) for Philippine Publicly Listed Companies (PLCs) Project

Governance is as important in the private sector as it is in public affairs. Best practices attract investors — a must-have for the Philippines' growing economy.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) integration pushed economic and sociocultural sectors in the Philippines to adopt practices to make it at par with other member states. The Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) was appointed as the country's domestic ranking body to promote good corporate governance.

In 2014, ICD initiated a project that looks into whether business firms adhere to certain regional standards. These standards are detailed in the ASEAN Corporate Governance Scorecard (ACGS), which assesses companies' policies and practices when it comes to disclosure, transparency, stakeholder relationships and responsibilities of the Board.

"The way forward is to improve the performance of the companies, their thinking," said Roberto Bascon, ICD Director of ACGS. "The mindset should be more than minimum compliance, but really focused on how to create value — not only for the shareholders, but to other stakeholders as well."

While the project was initially targeted only for publicly-listed companies (PLCs), support for the initiative allowed it to expand to the insurance sector and government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs). Through ICD, the ACGS scorecard was popularized and company executives and directors were trained on good corporate governance practices.

"On our second year for the insurance sector, we saw a 10 point increase in average scores. The same goes with the GOCCs," added Roberto.

ICD took a step further when it worked with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) to produce a Philippine Corporate Governance Blueprint.

After three years of implementation, ICD was able to assess a total of 482 PLCs, GOCCs and insurance companies. The improved performance of Philippine PLCs against its regional counterparts is evident based on the annual local and peer assessment done. According to investment firms in the region, PLCs with good corporate governance practices are considered good investments as they can be resilient to financial crises.

Before the project, no company from the Philippines was in the ASEAN Top 50. But during the 2015 ASEAN Corporate Governance Awards, seven Philippine companies joined the Top 5, while 11 qualified in the following year.

ICD envisions to bring these best practices not just to corporations — but to other sectors too, including grassroots communities, micro-finance institutions, cooperatives and rural banks.

PROTECTING THE AMBURAYAN RIVER: SHARING STORIES, SHARING DREAMS

Protecting and Defending the Amburayan River Basin and Watershed through Good Governance and Active Indigenous People's Participation Project

Legend tells the tale of a local folk hero named Lam-ang, a man born with extraordinary strength and ability, who once bathed in the waters of the Amburayan River after an epic battle. The story of Lam-ang has been passed on from generation to generation, and was retold in front of a group of local government officials, agencies and other community representatives committed to saving the Amburayan River and sustainably managing its resources.

Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator for Ilocos Sur Dr. Enrie Mendoza shared Lam-ang's story to highlight the significance of the river, which spans an area of almost 130,000 hectares—starting from the province of Benguet, crossing through La Union and Ilocos Sur. He added, "Not only is it a vital source of water for irrigation and livelihood, but is also a reminder of local culture and identity. The story of Lam-ang may be fictional, but the epic river mentioned in the tale and its current issues are all too real."

In 2014, the Jaime V. Ongpin Foundation, Inc. (JVOFI) brought together various community representatives from the three provinces to unify goals and efforts that would ensure the protection of the Amburayan River and its surrounding watersheds.

Through the Protecting and Defending the Amburayan River Basin and Watershed through Good Governance and Active Indigenous People's Participation Project, local government officials from the project sites gathered to discuss strategies and collaborative ways to sustain support in protecting the Amburayan River. "If you sell the forests, it is akin to depriving your children and grandchildren of water," Benguet Governor Nestor Fongwan said.

Various activities like community consultations and conferences led to creating a technical working group that included 15 local government units and community representatives from Benguet, La Union and Ilocos Sur. This served as an avenue for collaborative partnerships, instead of boundary disputes, to be formed. One strategy identified was to enroll the Amburayan River as a Water Quality Management Area (WQMA), which required strong stakeholder cooperation.

This has encouraged representatives of the three provinces to pledge their support. Their commitment was formalized through a sustainability partnership agreement, signed by the governors of the Provincial Local Government Units of Benguet, La Union and Ilocos Sur, Regional Directors of the Environment Management Bureau and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Four years since the project commenced, DENR designated the Upper Amburayan River System in Benguet Province and the Lower Amburayan River Systems in Ilocos Sur and La Union provinces as WQMAs in January 2018. This is a remarkable achievement as it is the first initiative led by a civil society organization for the designation of a water system as a WQMA. This then will ensure that the water quality from these river systems comply to set standards through a unified water management plan, close monitoring by authorities and sustainability of efforts started under the project.

Naga City People's Council

PEOPLE'S COUNCILS: CONNECTING PEOPLE OF METRO NAGA WITH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Advancing and Instituting Greater Accountability and Transparency through Expanded Civic Engagement in Metro Naga Project

When the Local Government Code of 1991 — or Republic Act 7160 — was passed, it enabled marginalized sectors to represent themselves in local legislative bodies. But due to a lack of implementing rules and regulations, the selection of the last seat for representation is often left to local government units.

This is where People's Councils step in. These non-government entities are expected to ensure that marginalized sectors participate and be on the receiving end of government programs. They also provide a check and balance for local officials, calling them out when there are any signs of irregular activities. However, many of these organizations may not fully grasp their role — or be equipped to do so.

For many years in the province of Camarines Sur, only the capital had this council — at least, until the Naga City People's Council (NCPC) decided to organize sectors in neighboring municipalities. The NCPC launched a Metro Naga-wide project that arm civic leaders with the knowledge and skills that their job demands — and eventually establish and institute greater accountability and transparency in government.

"Now people can say they are a part of local government projects, and they are a part of those who benefit as partners," expressed Pamplona Mayor Augustus Ceasar M. Cruz III. "With the presence of people's councils, we are able to identify priorities with them – what people really need and not just ones we think they need."

The People's Council in their town gathers representatives for solo parents, women, farmers, senior citizens and fisher folk among others. It was the Council who took care of budgeting and setting directions for social services in their municipality.

"Before, the sectors here weren't organized. We were just on our own. But when NCPC came into the picture, all the sectors in Pamplona are now active in letting their voices be heard," said Alita Romales, Chairperson of the People's Council in Pamplona.

NCPC was able to organize seven people's councils in municipalities surrounding Naga City. One council was established in each of the municipalities of Minalabac, Pamplona, Pasacao, Calabanga, Camaligan, San Fernando and Ocampo in Camarines Sur province.

Young Public Servants

FROM AN AVID GAMER TO AN ENGAGED FILIPINO YOUTH

Democratic Citizenship and Good Governance for Change: Enhanced Political Participation among the Filipino Youth project

Computer gaming in the Philippines is a growing industry, where a large percentage of Filipino gamers include children and youth between ages 10 and 21. Many view this habit as a bad influence to the youth's behavior. But one avid gamer testifies this is not always true.

"In gaming, at least we feel our value, we feel our importance. That our teammates need us to win," shared Joven Pantollano, 21, who lives in South Cotabato. He has been playing video games since he was young. For Joven, playing video games gives him a sense of worth. However, due to prejudices, he and his fellow gamers tend to isolate themselves from society, thinking that they will never be understood.

Every time Joven plays, he feels that he has a purpose. Every time he wins, he feels like he has achieved something. All these, however, made greater sense when he attended a voter's education caravan held in South Cotabato, an activity organized by the Young Public Servants (YPS).

The event, organized through the Democratic Citizenship and Good Governance for Change: Enhanced Political Participation among the Filipino Youth Project, focused on how the Filipino youth can have a better understanding of good governance and democratic citizenship. Discussions during the forum made Joven appreciate his role as member of the gaming community. Inspired by new insights and a renewed sense of purpose, Joven then started participating in more activities advocating for active citizenship as a youth volunteer.

YPS tapped gaming companies in the Philippines, realizing that most young people of voting age were into online gaming. In partnership with organizers of regular gaming events, YPS set up booths, called Photovote, during national gaming festivals and summits. Photovote aimed to address young people's queries on voter registration.

"I can see that voting is like playing: one wrong move and your team suffers defeat. Same goes with voting, one wrong vote, then the whole country suffers from bad governance", said Joven as he recalls the lessons he learned both from online gaming and his volunteerism experiences.

Through voter's education, Photovote and social conversations, indifferent ones were encouraged to share their thoughts on various social issues like health and education. The more people affirm and validate their experience, the more they became interested to take part in nation building activities. Through these campaigns, YPS was able to reach and engage with more than 17,000 Filipino youths including Joven.

"We might have taken just a small step toward active citizenship, but this is exactly where productive communities begin."

Young Public Servants

SOCIAL CONVERSATIONS: GENERATING GREATER YOUTH PARTICIPATION

For Rodolfo Achas III, 20, the best way to pay it forward is to be of service to his own community.

Third, as he is fondly called by his friends, knows very well what it feels like to be deprived of certain favorable chances in life. Growing up in a typical Filipino family in the distant town of Baras in Rizal, he worked as an office assistant under the municipality's Special Program for Employment of Students. With his perseverance, he earned the trust of the local government and became the President of Baras Youth Leaders Federation. Just as he thought he was doing enough for Baras, he got to know Young Public Servants (YPS) in the first Social Conversation conducted in their community. The activity encouraged Third to examine the impact of his contributions as a youth leader.

"I realized that I have been confined to what I think our community needs. I never bothered to know what my fellow youth really have to say", narrated Third.

Through the **Democratic Citizenship and Good Governance for Change: Enhanced Political Participation among the Filipino Youth Project**, 24 Social Conversations were conducted in the National Capital Region and in 34 other provinces including Rizal. These sessions provided young people with the chance to freely talk about pressing concerns in their communities. They exchanged ideas and shared first-hand stories on governance without fear of prejudice.

"Open communication with the youth leads to identifying good solutions to social problems. It is not enough to just develop projects for the community; they have to be part of it. We have to be a part of it," realized Third.

This led him to establish their own YouthVote Philippines (YVP) Local Chapter in Baras, encouraging his fellow Baraseño youth to discuss various youth agenda including health, education and employment, which they personally presented to the municipal mayor.

YVP creates opportunities for engagement available to more young people in their communities. Since the project began in 2014, YPS was able to establish 15 YVP chapters all over the Philippines. Through these YVP chapters, YPS convened ten post-election roundtable discussions nationwide to monitor the post-election progress of the youth agenda in select areas and provide an opportunity for greater youth and community engagement.

Motivated to continue engaging more youths, Third enthused, "We might have taken just a small step toward active citizenship, but this is exactly where productive communities begin."

LIST OF ACRONYMS

A

ALS	Alternative Learning System
ATIP	Anti-Trafficking in Persons
AVWFR	Allah Valley Watershed Forest Reserve

B

BCPC	Barangay Council for the Protection of Children
BCCA	Behavior Change Communication and Advocacy
BFARMC	Barangay Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council
BFP	Biodiversity Fellows Program
BMMPC	Bayanihan Millennium Multi-Purpose Cooperative
BMS	Biodiversity Monitoring Survey
BFAR	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
BTNLP	Balinsasayaw Twin Lakes Natural Park
BVIE	Bukidnon Visually Impaired Entrepreneurs Inc.

C

C3MC	Candis III Marketing Cooperative
C3PH	Community-Centered Conservation Philippines
CADT	Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title
CB-CRM	Community-Based Coastal Resources Management
CCIP	Center for Conservation Innovation Philippines, Inc.
CCPL	Central Cebu Protected Landscape
CCPV	Community Child Protection Volunteers
CDA	Cooperative Development Agency
CELE	Community Environmental Law Enforcers
CENRO	City Environmental and Natural Resource Officer
CERA	Control Environment Risk Assessment
CLB	Children's Legal Bureau
COINDECO	Coffee Industry Development Council
CSO	Civil Society Organization

D

DA-HVCDP	Department of Agriculture–High Value Crop Development Program
DepEd	Department of Education
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DOJ	Department of Justice
DSAC	Diocesan Social Action Center
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry

E

ELE	Environmental Law Enforcement

F

FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FLEP	Forest Protection and Law Enforcement Plan

G

GCB	Green Coffee Beans
GPS	Global Positioning System
GMT	Grants Management Team
GRB	Grants Review Board
GRF	Gerry Roxas Foundation

H

HCVA	High Conservation Value Areas

I

IACAT	Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking
ICD	Institute of Corporate Directors
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IPED	Indigenous People's Education
ISO	Institute of Social Order
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature

K

KABATA	Kabataan Batok sa Trapiking ug Abuso
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
KFI	Kennemer Foods, Inc.

L

LBP	LandBank of the Philippines
LCAT	Local Committee on Anti-Trafficking
LCD	Liquid Crystal Display
LCGA	Lebak Coffee Growers Association
LED	Light-emitting Diode
LRT	Local Research Team

M

M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAO	Municipal Agriculture Office
MCGA	Maasim Coffee Growers Association
MFARMC	Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council
MKBA	Marine Key Biodiversity Area
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTBMLE	Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education

N

NATRIPAL	Nagkakaisang mga Tribu ng Palawan, Inc.
NCPC	Naga City People's Council
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NLNP	Naujan Lake National Park
NPO	Non-Profit Organization
NSMNP	Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park
NTFP EP	Non-timber Forest Products Exchange Programme, Inc.
NUPAS	Non-US Organization Pre-Award Survey

O

ORMI	Opportunities for Risk Management Improvement

P

PAMB	Protected Area Management Board
PBCFI	Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc.
PCAT	Provincial Council against Trafficking
PCREA	Participatory Coastal Resource and Ecological Assessment
PEF	Philippine Eagle Foundation
PENRO	Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer
PFG	Partnership for Growth
PFPI	PATH Foundation Philippines, Inc.
PIT	Project Implementation Team
PLCs	Philippine Publicly Listed Companies
PMT	Project Management Team
PREDA	People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Foundation

R

RIACAT	Regional Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking

S

SAKTAS	Samahan ng mga Katutubong Tagbanua sa Sagpangan
SB	Sangguniang Bayan
SEDMFI	Surigao Economic Development Microfinance Foundation, Inc.
SGV	SyCip Gorres Velayo & Co.
SIPLAS	Siargao Islands Protected Landscapes and Seascapes
SPIADFI	South Pacific Integrated Area Development Foundation, Inc.
SWCFI	Soil and Water Conservation Foundation, Inc.
SWG	Site Working Group

T

TAMACO	Tamaraw Salt Producers Cooperative
TDFI	Tuason Development Foundation, Inc.
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
TLDFI	Tribal Leaders Development Foundation, Inc.
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
TVPL	Taal Volcano Protected Landscape
TWG	Technical Working Group

U

USAID	United States Agency for International Development

V

VIP	Verde Island Passage

W

WEO	Wildlife Enforcer Officers
WFP	Work and Financial Plan
WiForFISH-MIS	Wildlife, Forestry and Fishery Indicator Spatial Hub-Management Information System

Annex C

The Roads Taken:
CSO INITIATIVES TOWARD INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

USAID
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PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN FUND

THE ROADS TAKEN:

CSO INITIATIVES TOWARD INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

THE ROADS TAKEN:

CSO INITIATIVES TOWARD INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

MARCH 2019

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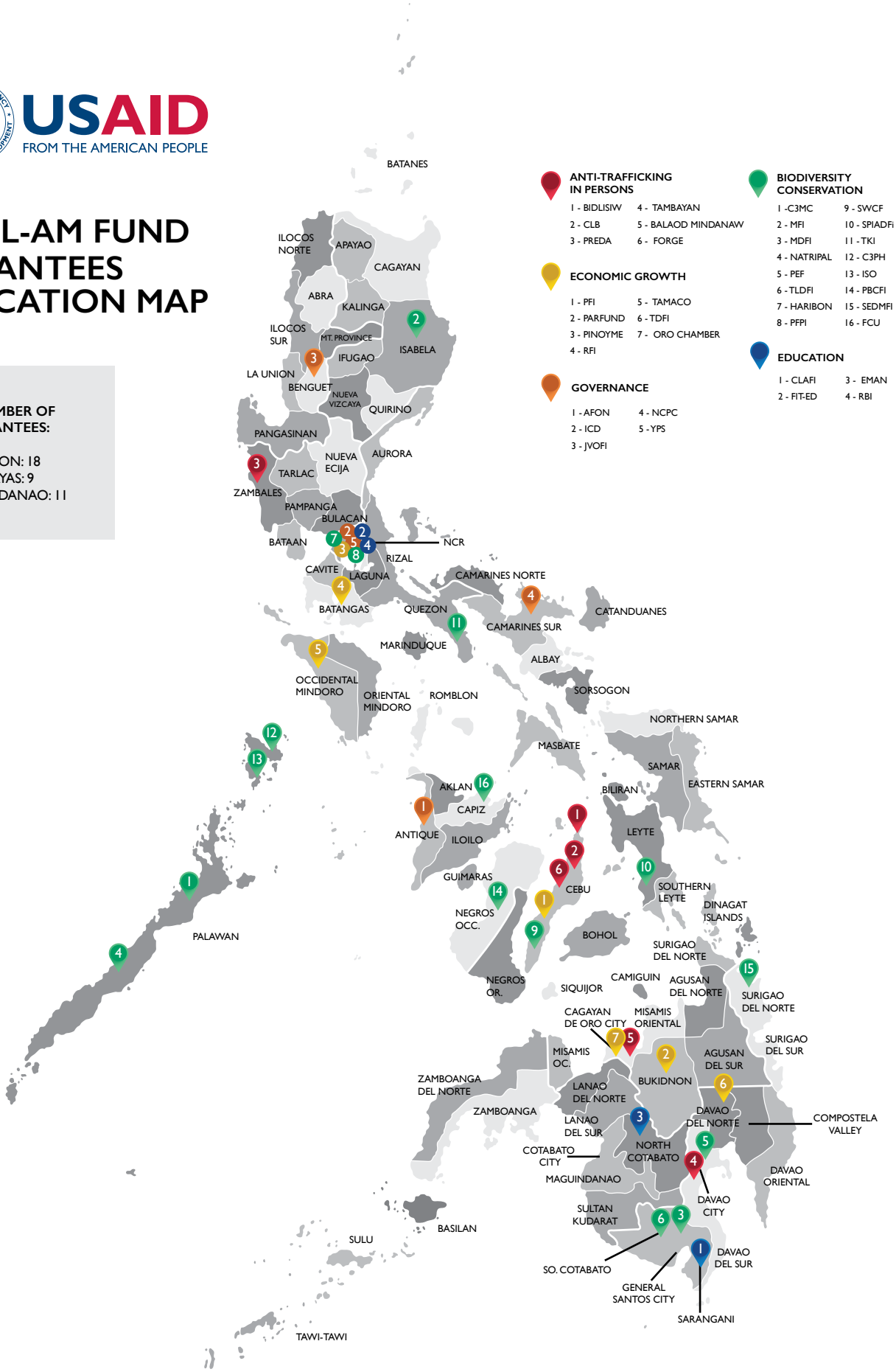
USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PHIL-AM FUND GRANTEES LOCATION MAP

NUMBER OF GRANTEES:

LUZON: 18
VISAYAS: 9
MINDANAO: 11



THE ROADS TAKEN:

CSO INITIATIVES TOWARD INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Inclusive and sustainable development is a persistent challenge for the government, business sector, civil society, and even for development organizations in the Philippines. In 2010, USAID embarked on a major transformation under the theme "Journey to Self-Reliance". This publication presents the experience of a USAID-supported grant-making facility, in building and strengthening capacity of local organizations to pave pathways for development and self-reliance.

In August 2013, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) opened a five-year grant-making facility to support the initiatives and activities of civil society organizations (CSOs) that address the various constraints to inclusive and sustainable development. This grant-making facility, known as the Philippine-American Fund Project (Phil-Am Fund), provided financing for projects in five (5) thematic categories: (1) economic growth; (2) biodiversity conservation; (3) education; (4) governance; and (5) anti-trafficking in persons (ATIP). The grants that were awarded through the Phil-Am Fund supported project ideas that promote: (1) business start-ups and innovation through entrepreneurship (economic growth); (2) advocacy for greater accountability and integrity (governance); (3) programs geared towards combatting human trafficking (ATIP); (4) technology-based solutions to reduce child and adult illiteracy (education); and (5) conservation efforts for the management of natural resources and biodiversity (biodiversity conservation).

By its close on December 2018, the grant-making facility has awarded 38 grants for development initiatives on economic growth (7 grants); biodiversity conservation (16); last-mile challenges in education (4); governance (5); and anti-trafficking in persons (6).

The Phil-Am Fund was managed by the Gerry Roxas Foundation, Inc. (GRF), a premier social development institution founded in 1958, which has provided technical services and assistance to civil society organizations (CSO).

This publication is part of the knowledge management efforts of Phil-Am Fund to document and share innovative ideas and critical interventions that were instrumental in achieving the desired outcomes in the five (5) thematic categories. These are considered as pathways to development –approaches, strategies, or interventions that were tried by CSOs, which worked towards a more inclusive and sustainable development in the places and contexts where they were applied.

By sharing these interventions, Phil-Am Fund hopes that the ideas and interventions could help improve the designs and programming of future grant facilities and enable other state and non-state stakeholders to consider them in their own programs and activities.

Seventeen (17) interventions were identified as pathways to development. Each pathway is briefly described giving the reader an appreciation of the development problem or the challenge that was addressed; the critical program intervention implemented; and the initial results arising from the experience. Lessons drawn from the field and those that are deemed relevant for future grant programming, or of similar development assistance programs are also identified.

ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (ATIP) GRANTEES

• Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw, Inc. (BALAOD) • Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc. (BFI) • Children's Legal Bureau (CLB) • Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors (FORGE) • People's Recovery Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation, Inc. (PREDA) • Tambayan Center for Children's Rights, Inc.

ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

EMPOWERING THE VULNERABLE

Awareness Raising and Youth Advocacy Against Trafficking

The Philippines is entrenched in a worldwide web of trafficking in persons (TIP). Internationally, Philippines is primarily considered as a source country for victims of sex trafficking and forced labor. Within the country, internal trafficking remains a major concern.

According to the Children's Legal Bureau (CLB), a USAID grantee, around 400,000 Filipinos have become victims of human trafficking, mostly in the form of forced labor, based on findings from the Walk Free Foundation and a Gallup Report. In another study by ECPAT International and Terre des Hommes, Cagayan de Oro City (CDO) ranked fourth nationwide and second in Mindanao among the cities identified as sources, transit points, and destinations of TIP, both domestically and internationally. Another city, Cebu City, is considered a leading destination of sex trafficking victims, according to the 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report of the United States Department of State.

Several reasons were cited on the prevalence of TIP. CLB pointed to the unfamiliarity of young boys and girls with the modus operandi of sex traffickers that made them an easy prey to the promise of lucrative work in the cities, which, in reality, were sex-related jobs in bars, cybersex dens, and similar entertainment establishments. Likewise, TIP operations have exploited the ease of access and travel provided by the presence of a well-functioning road network and integrated transport systems.

Advancements in information technology have also spread online pornography as a new form of TIP. Two (2) court convictions against foreign nationals in Cagayan de Oro City showed how sex crimes against children committed locally could reach as many countries as possible through online pornography. Despite the convictions, the CLB reported that cases of online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) rose almost thrice, from 57 in 2013 to 167 in 2015, and eight (8) out of 10 children (80 percent) were considered vulnerable to OSEC.

Awareness Raising and Youth Advocacy as Key

Awareness raising and youth advocacy are the initial key steps towards empowering the youth against the dangers of TIP. The USAID grantees in the Visayas and Mindanao focused their efforts on youth advocacy and information, education, and communication (IEC) campaigns in designated TIP hotspots. While the approach is not new, some initiatives were introduced to make the design participatory, consultative, and relevant to the actual conditions of the target communities. As a result, the target beneficiaries were not simply treated as recipients of various activities, but rather as actual participants empowered to create and disseminate their own campaign materials through various media, and to organize their own activities in support of the advocacy and IEC campaigns against TIP.

One USAID grantee, the Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw, Inc. (BALAOD Mindanaw), directed its efforts on Grade 9 and Grade 10 public high school students in the cities of Cagayan de Oro and El Salvador, and the municipalities of Opol and Alubijid, all in the province of Misamis Oriental. From 2016 to 2018, it conducted numerous educational caravans and paralegal training to raise awareness on anti-trafficking in persons (ATIP), covering topics such as the TIP regional situationer, OSEC, children's rights as an integral part of the broader human rights framework, and the Philippine legal system on ATIP.

As part of its awareness-raising and youth advocacy campaign, BALAOD Mindanaw organized a three-day high-profile multimedia event on March 6-8, 2018 in Cagayan de Oro City, which aimed to raise awareness on ATIP. The three-day event started with a motorcade by partner organizations and volunteers around Cagayan de Oro City, followed by the public high school activities such as the final competitions on extemporaneous speech and jingle composition, presentation of the winning video production, and photo exhibit. It culminated with the Stop Trafficking of Persons (STOP) concert, which was attended by 2,500 participants. The STOP concert featured popular singer Ebe Dancel and Ooberfuse, an English human rights and anti-trafficking song-writing duo.

BALAOD Mindanaw also reached out to other stakeholders who play an important role in promoting ATIP awareness and advocacy campaigns, including the parents, government, local authorities, and communities. BALAOD Mindanaw's wide-ranging approach to advocacy and IEC campaigns reflects a common-sense assumption that creating a wide network of well-informed stakeholders is the key toward establishing effective measures against TIP.

Multiplier Effects of School-Based Advocacy and IEC Campaigns

Throughout the two-year advocacy and IEC campaigns in public schools, BALAOD Mindanaw organized a total of 283 educational caravans that reached up to 11,000 students, 9,000 parents, and 300 school authorities. Moreover, its paralegal training was enabled more than 2,500 public high school students to become advocates against the issue of human trafficking. Some of them organized their own activities, such as conducting room-to-room awareness campaigns, holding audio-visual presentations, and posting anti-trafficking messages on their social media accounts. It is encouraging to note that, after attending the anti-human trafficking conference on January 25, 2017, 20 participants, composed of human rights lawyers and law students, pledged to help the victims, from case build-up to actual prosecution.

The City Government of Cagayan de Oro passed two ordinances: one on incorporating counter-trafficking measures in an existing City Children's Welfare Code, and another on monitoring the travel of minors in transport terminals and ports. Sixteen (16) barangays in Cagayan de Oro City, and the public high schools in their jurisdictions, agreed to develop stronger measures against human trafficking. The Department of Education (DepEd) in Region X issued Department Order No. 40, series of 2012, also known as the "Child Protection Policy," to more than 20 public high schools.

Alerting the Vulnerable to Action

The pathway to an effective and successful solution to a given problem rests significantly on raising the awareness and developing the support of targeted beneficiaries and engaging them as partners. In the case of TIP, youth advocacy and IEC campaigns were deepened by engaging the high school students, their parents, school officials, local authorities, and the communities not as mere target beneficiaries but as active partners. Such an approach empowered the once vulnerable sector, the youth, and other concerned sectors to unleash their energies to protect the youth and children from the clutches of TIP. Their active involvement per se will help sustain the efforts, especially after the external partner withdraws from the communities.

ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

IN US WE TRUST

Collaborative Fight Against Trafficking in Persons

The 2015 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report of the United States Department of State identified Cebu as one of the leading destinations of sex trafficking victims, and a pedophilia hotspot with the highest rate of child sex tourism in the country. A collaborative study done by the Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors, Inc. (FORGE), a USAID grantee, and its partner non-government organizations (NGOs) revealed the rampant operation of child, teenage, and women sex trafficking in Cebu, as shown by the increasing number of children rescued from online pornography and from persistent pimping and trading in island resorts, seaports, transit areas and terminals, bars, clubs, and other similar establishments.

Another USAID grantee, the Children's Legal Bureau (CLB), identified three (3) TIP hotspots in Cebu, namely: (1) the municipality of Cordova as a haven for online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC); (2) Talisay City as a source, transit, and destination of child and women trafficking; and (3) Bogo City for registering the second highest incidence of child labor in the province.

Northern Iloilo, which consists of 11 municipalities, could be another TIP hotspot warned the Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc., another USAID grantee. It was among the hardest hit areas by Super typhoon Yolanda in November 2013. According to the Harvard School of Public Health, "natural disasters... are the primary environments" for human trafficking. Northern Iloilo has remained largely rural, with limited economic opportunities, and is slowly recovering from the calamity. As such, alternative work in the growing tourism-driven entertainment industry puts the women and children at risk.

Combating TIP Through Collaboration

Acknowledging that TIP is a multi-dimensional problem that requires a multi-sectoral approach, the USAID grantees in anti-trafficking applied the collaborative approach in working with their fellow civil society organizations (CSOs) and with the government.

Orientation and capability-building program formed part of the initial activities that the newly-formed partnerships undertake to ensure that the members share a common understanding of the knowledge and skills needed to address ATIP to better level their expectations, express their commitment to the cause, and map out an action plan for succeeding activities.

The collaborative approach extends towards the formation of partnerships or associations with individuals and professional organizations that possess the types of expertise needed by the TIP victims. The Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc. (BFI) partnered with the Psychology Department of the University of San Carlos (USC) in Cebu City to develop the "family- and community-focused diagnostic, therapeutic, and counselling tools that guide victims and their families through a process of self-assessment, life and career planning, and accessing life and career opportunities, also known as Child and Family Healing, Recovery, and Reintegration (CFHRR)". It also mobilized professionals and community volunteers to apply the CFHRR to the victims and their families and track their progress and recovery.

Government agencies were also engaged in important components of the overall ATIP strategy where government authority and resources are crucial for implementation. These include the establishment of an ATIP referral and reporting system, the activation of relevant multi-sectoral bodies, the issuance of policies and passage of ordinances, and increasing the manpower of concerned offices. Moreover, the People's Recovery Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation, Inc. (PREDA) collaborated with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to capacitate barangay leaders, and with the Department of Education (DepEd) to provide multi-disciplinary training to teachers.

Fruits of Combined Labor

The joint efforts paid off in several ways. Partnerships with local governments were sealed, corresponding policies and ordinances were issued, and relevant local and multi-sectoral bodies were activated. DepEd and public schools were involved, as well as CSOs and individual professional and student volunteers. Concrete activities were undertaken, such as rescue missions, the filing of cases, IEC campaigns, the conduct of capacity-building programs, and the establishment, operationalization, and strengthening of the referral and reporting mechanism.

The Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc. (BFI) persuaded five (5) out of 11 local governments in Northern Iloilo to augment their Social Welfare and Development Office (SWDO) personnel, reactivate their local council against trafficking (LCAT), establish help desks in the ports, and approve the two-year collaborative and strategic ATIP plans. Likewise, the CLB convinced the municipality of Cordova and the cities of Bogo and Talisay to establish their respective Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) and provide it with an initial appropriation of PhP200,000 each in Cordova and Bogo City, and PhP1,000,000 in Talisay City. It collaborated with its partner barangays to organize the Barangay Council against Trafficking (BCAT) under the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC), and organized Community Watch Groups (CWGs) with 570 volunteers.

Through the efforts of the CLB, 49 CSOs working on ATIP in the Visayas formed a network of CSOs for ATIP, primarily for ATIP capacity building and sharing of good practices and information. FORGE facilitated the creation of the Community Child Protection Volunteers (CCPV) and the Kabataan Batok sa Trapiking ug Abuso (KABATA, or Youth Against Child Trafficking and Abuse) in eight (8) target barangays to "increase community involvement and mobilization against child trafficking."

From the experiences of the USAID grantees, an effective ATIP program must be designed as a system of mutually dependent parts, each one building on and working with another. It must include activation of TIP referral and reporting system, conduct of rescue missions, case build-up and prosecution. FORGE helped its barangay partners create their own referral and reporting flows. The CLB facilitated the filing of report for 26 incidents of child pornography and child abuse to LCAT, resulting in the arrest of 12 suspected human traffickers. It also worked with the BCPCs to report 61 suspected TIP cases, 21 of which resulted in the conduct of rescue missions, filing of cases, investigation and prevention of planned trafficking acts. The incidents were reported to the proper authorities such as the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Regional Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking (RIACAT). PREDA, on the other hand, is part of the multi-agency body tasked to conduct rescue missions of trafficked women, teenagers and children. It also worked with the local prosecutors on the filing of cases against human traffickers.

If not us, then who?

In a span of two (2) years, the USAID grantees were able to establish collaborative arrangements with national and local governments, with other CSOs, and even with individual students and professionals. They recognized each other's competence and commitment, and strived to be always consultative, collaborative, and trustworthy. Undoubtedly, the achievements gained from these collaborative arrangements were substantial, which, in turn, bolstered the partnerships to continue. Beyond the achievements, each stakeholder recognizes the fact that each of them must take up the cudgels for ATIP for, if not them, then who?

ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

THE COMMUNITY AS COUNTERMEASURE

Capacitating the Community to Combat Trafficking

"To stay silent is to take the side of the oppressor." Inaction in times of injustice may inadvertently equate to support for the offender. At the community level, local authorities are expected to be the immediate responders. However, for cases of child trafficking and sexual abuse, complaints are not usually acted upon by the community and local authorities due to their fear of involvement or plain unawareness. Children, thus, continue to suffer in silence, and the vicious cycle of crime and impunity continues.

Findings of a baseline research conducted by the Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors Foundation, Inc. (FORGE) showed that the lack of awareness and information exist not only among people in the community, but also among frontliners who are not cognizant of the signs of trafficking in persons. While the Philippines has an Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, its interpretation and implementation do not exactly match. The findings suggest that the situation is more dire and common in far-flung areas. Unsure of how and where to report, people kept mum despite possible cases of trafficking in their neighborhood.

USAID, through the Philippine American Fund, supported the Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw, Inc. (BALAOD Mindanaw); Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc. (Bidlisiw); Children's Legal Bureau (CLB); Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors, Inc. (FORGE); People's Recovery Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation, Inc. (PREDA); and the Tambayan Center for Children's Rights, Inc. (Tambayan Center) in their programs against trafficking in persons (ATIP).

Capacitating the Community

Victimization usually starts in the community, solutions therefore should start with the community. The process of victimization usually starts at the community. Thus, the community is the start of any solution. To enable this, CSOs working in ATIP had to raise the community members' awareness and build their capacities. Once equipped with the necessary skills, communities were able to contribute to prevention, reporting, detection, rescue and rehabilitation.

Awareness-raising campaigns and capacity-building activities were meant to address the lack of information and knowledge. PREDA managed a community-based preventive education program on children's rights, child abuse prevention, responsible parenting, and accountability in responding to child abuse cases targeted toward parents, teachers, local social workers, and village officials. A total of 18,103 individuals were reached, while 171 individuals received legal assistance.

BALAOD Mindanaw built the capacities of 182 paralegals covering topics such as basic human rights and children's rights, regional situationer on human trafficking cases, online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC), and an introduction to the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003. Similarly, the CLB also trained paralegals and parasocial workers to provide victims with assistance, from case filing to reintegration.

On the other hand, Tambayan Center conducted its awareness-raising advocacy through various forms of media. Their campaign reached 8,335 individuals and 730 local officials, and assisted 84 victims. Moreover, the NGO also carried out a participatory action research (PAR) in six (6) target barangays, which assessed the vulnerability of families to trafficking in persons (TIP). The PAR served as the basis for the livelihood skills training and the income-generating activities that were held for these communities. To better educate the community regarding trafficking, the Tambayan Center held street plays that mirrored real events and visualized the horrors of trafficking. These featured children from the local community and reached a total of 2,272 families.

FORGE's awareness-raising, prevention, and capacity-building initiatives first focused on frontliners in the transport and tourism sector, since cases of trafficking often take place in tourist and transit areas. FORGE reached out to porters, pedicab drivers, taxi drivers, as well as the owners and staff member of hotels and resorts. The organization also trained 382 members of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) who are expected to be the first responders in trafficking and abuse cases at the local community.

Given the heightened vulnerability of children displaced from their homes after Typhoon Yolanda, the Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc. (BFI) conducted one-on-one community outreach education and learning activities catering to 1,110 vulnerable children. Up to 120 community volunteers were also equipped with practical knowledge regarding the issue of trafficking in persons and its red flags, to whom and where to report alleged cases, as well as which organizations to tap for services needed by trafficked victims. These community volunteers were also capacitated to handle child trafficking and abuse cases in cooperation with the social workers. Aside from these, Bidlisiw also had community-based rehabilitation and therapeutic intervention, which reached up to 1,149 children.

In partnership with the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO), Bidlisiw also organized community watch groups (CWGs) to develop and strengthen their community-based detection, reporting, and referral system. The CLB also fostered people's cooperation for community detection by organizing 570 volunteers and devising a communication and reporting mechanism. This involved reporting suspected cases, providing victims with assistance, and referring them to services at the city or municipal level. FORGE, likewise, helped in developing a localized reporting and referral system within the community to establish a routine in reporting and responding to cases of trafficking and abuse. PREDA, on the other hand, had a helpline called Angel Annie wherein 111 legitimate cases were reported, 38 of which involved rescued children.

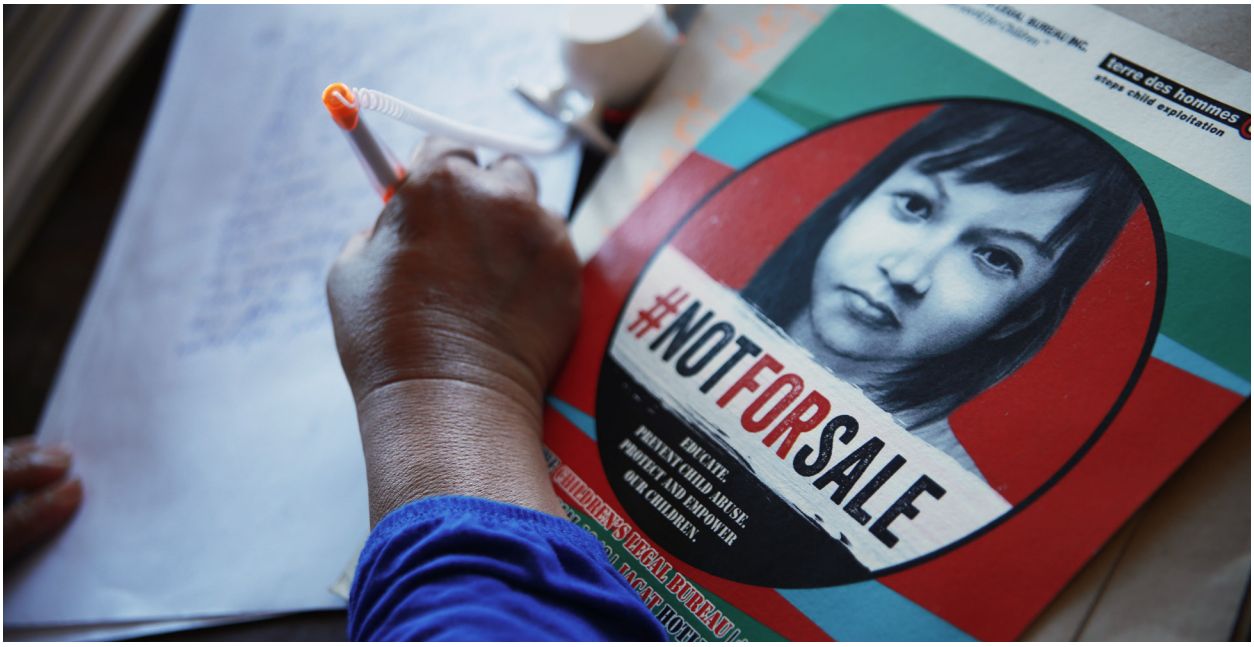
Community in Action

It is through people's collective action that campaigns, no matter how far-fetched, are made possible. The number of people reached and tapped by these NGOs may seem small compared to the country's entire population, but these are more than enough people to cause ripples of change.

Nancy Cairel, a teacher turned advocate, and who attended BALAOD Mindanaw's paralegal training, shared: "I care for my students. It is important for us teachers to be a part of this campaign. BALAOD Mindanaw's trainings have imparted vital information about human rights and human trafficking which I did not know before. It enabled us teachers to pass on this knowledge to our students and their parents so that they can also contribute in our fight against trafficking."

Barangay Councilor Roselia Mayormita from Davao City also shared how grateful she was to the Tambayan Center for having their barangay as one of their target communities: "We are thankful that the street play was shown in our barangay. People are now more aware of what human trafficking is after watching seemingly real events. Despite it being dangerous, people allow or agree to human trafficking because of poverty and the lack of knowledge regarding the issue."

Combatting TIP is a formidable challenge. But these stories of aspiration and victories, no matter how small, give people the hope that, one day, it will all be possible if communities worked together. To quote PREDA Founder Fr. Shay Cullen: "If we stopped, we would be defeated, and more children will be abused. Whether we win or not is not so much the point, but the thing is to get more and more people to become advocates and to stand against it. Maybe then, things can change. We cannot do it alone. We need all the people out there who have the influence, power, and moral righteousness to be able to say, 'I am going to help stop this.' That is what we really need."



ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

REBUILDING CHILDREN'S LIVES THROUGH A HEALING HOME

In an impoverished society, perpetrators view children as prey for monetary gain and as targets for the commercial sex industry. Moreover, while homes should be a child's source of care and comfort, some children experience domestic abuse. These children oftentimes run away from home, increasing their vulnerability to trafficking. In some families, trafficking is perpetrated to make ends meet.

The Philippines, as a developing country, continues to face the global challenge of trafficking in persons. In 2014, Olongapo City was cited by the United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report as a trafficking hotspot, having been known for its red-light districts. Similarly, Cebu City was cited as a sex trafficking destination, and even tagged as a 'pedophilia hotspot' by the country's law enforcement agencies for having the highest recorded rate of sex child tourism across the country.

The Home Builders

USAID, through the Phil-Am Fund, supported two (2) non-governmental organizations (NGOs) based in Olongapo and Cebu in their advocacy of providing shelter to children who are victims of trafficking. These homes give the children an opportunity to become children once more and enjoy the life that they were deprived of. These shelters do not only keep children away from their abusers, but also help them in recovering from their cruel past.

The People's Recovery Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation, Inc. (PREDA) has run therapeutic homes in the Zambales countryside for more than 40 years. These homes provide shelter support, protection, healing, and empowerment to child victims. On the other hand, the Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors, Inc. (FORGE) runs two (2) out of the very few residential centers in Cebu that accommodate victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

The Blueprint

PREDA takes on a comprehensive approach for its anti-trafficking in persons intervention, from rescue to reintegration, by working with its partners in saving children from places of discomfort and in giving them a new home through its therapeutic shelters for boys and girls. PREDA offers refuge to repeatedly abused children, either domestic or those held in captive in brothels.

PREDA does not force its services to the children. For some cases, investments on patience, affirmation, and support are needed before they can trust the social workers. For those engaged in the sex trade, social workers were faced with the challenge of convincing them to leave the trade and join them in the shelter. Unlike other facilities, PREDA's therapeutic homes are not gated; thus, children can come and go as they please. FORGE applies the same open, multi-faceted approach to its homes. Catering to those who "voluntarily sought help to free themselves from abusive situations," these residential care facilities are considered as safe havens by rescued teenage girls and boys.

Rebuilding children's lives is a difficult process which entails a holistic approach that would deal with the different aspects of a child's life. Both PREDA and FORGE strive to provide children with all their basic needs. Children victims under their care receive services such as medical assistance, counseling, and psychological and family therapy so that they can come to terms with their trauma. Family therapies are held for an involved child to reconcile and get the support of their immediate family members. Activities under family therapy include counseling, education on responsible parenthood, and supervised visits or parent-child encounter activities. This is in preparation for the child's future reintegration. Aftercare services and monitoring are also carried out once the children are no longer in the organizations' custody.

PREDA capitalizes on positive reinforcement to help children gradually build up their self-esteem, learn about their rights, and regain their dignity. Similarly, FORGE carries out study sessions which revolve around self-reflection, cultivating group dynamics and peer support in times of personal crisis, human development, and handling emotions and stress. Other topics range from talking about one's body, reproductive and sexual health, the difference between healthy and unhealthy expressions of emotions, and preventing negative behaviors by managing one's emotions.

Aside from these, there are other activities geared toward honing children's values, characters, and skills. PREDA holds personality and human development trainings, workshops on visual arts, puppetry and theater arts, as well as outdoor recreational activities. These are primarily aimed to be diversion activities, but are also intended as a means to foster healthy relationships among the children and the shelter staff. On the other hand, FORGE utilizes different venues for expressing emotional release, which include art therapy classes. Likewise, FORGE equips children with practical skills through their life skills, educational, livelihood, and technical vocational assistance. Children at PREDA are also given a chance to continue with their studies through formal and non-formal education, depending on their readiness.

Stories of Healing and Resilience

After almost a year at FORGE's Teen Dreamers' Home (TDHome), a 13-year old girl who experienced domestic sexual abuse from her drunkard father and brother showed her bravery and resilience as she shared: "Nadawat naman nako ang gibuhat sa akong brother. Ganahan ko nga masulod siya sa shelter arun matabangan sad siya" (I have already accepted what my brother did to me. I want him to be admitted inside a shelter for him to get help).

Another story of inspiration involves a girl who has been trafficked since she was 13 years old. She was rescued by PREDA and now resides at their Home for Girls. Now 18 years old, she is grateful to the organization, her counselors, and her therapists for the opportunity to rebuild her life, sharing: "I began to value my life again, and I am looking forward to a better future. It is through them that I came to realize my rights and dignity."

These are just two (2) stories of transformation out of the many lives touched by FORGE and PREDA through their therapeutic homes. In a span of two (2) years, FORGE was able to provide supplementary psychosocial intervention to 48 children through their shelters. In a span of three (3) years, PREDA was likewise able to rescue and admit 115 children victims of sexual abuse, commercial sexual exploitation, and trafficking to their therapeutic homes. Eighty-six (86) of the children residents were reintegrated to their families and communities. An annual average of 47 children availed of the services and facilities for the holistic recovery and rehabilitation program.

Coming from diverse backgrounds and having experienced different yet similarly unthinkable kinds of abuse, rescued child victims found a new home away from home—a place where they felt welcome, protected, and empowered to know their worth and rebuild their dignity. It is a healing home where children who were traumatized, and whose trust were broken, can begin to start rebuilding their lives anew.

BIODIVERSITY GRANTEES

• C3 Philippines, Inc. • Candis 3 Marketing Cooperative (CANDIS) • Haribon Foundation, Inc. (HFI) • Institute of Social Order (ISO) • Mabuwaya Foundation, Inc. (MFI) • Maguindanao Development Foundation, Inc. (MDFI) • Nagkakaisang mga Tribu ng Palawan, Inc. (NATRIPAL) • PATH Foundation, Philippines, Inc. (PFPI) • Philippine Biodiversity Coservation Foundation, Inc. (PBCFI) • Philippine Eagle Foundation, Inc. (PEF) • Soil and Water Conservation Foundation, Inc. (SWCFI) • South Pacific Integrated Area Development Foundation, Inc. (SPIADFI) • Surigao Economic Development and Microfinance Foundation, Inc. (SEDMFI) • Tanggol Kalikasan, Inc. (TKI) • Tribal Leaders Development Foundation, Inc. (TLDFI)

BIODIVERSITY

BIODIVERSITY CHAMPIONS: NATURE'S BEST BET

"The environment in Naujan has changed with time," one local official expressed. The change was not for the better. The nearby communities residing near Naujan Lake, the country's fifth largest lake, experience annual flooding due to massive siltation and declining forest cover. Informal settlers by the lakeside do not have proper sanitation facilities. Some also have backyard piggeries and carelessly dispose animal wastes in the water. Evidently, improperly zoned developments or land-use conflicts contributed to the deteriorating environmental situation.

Kaingin, charcoal production, and illegal tree cutting contributed to the deteriorating forest conditions, since community members mainly rely on subsistence livelihood. Another contributing factor is low public awareness and appreciation of the value of Naujan Lake's ecosystem. The community needed to be reminded that Naujan Lake is a Wetland of International Importance (1999 Ramsar Convention), home to the already vulnerable Papan (Philippine Duck) and endangered species like the Philippine Teak, Mindoro Warty Pig, and the Tamaraw.

Awareness-Learning-Action Approach for Biodiversity Champions

HARIBON Foundation for the Conservation of Natural Resources, Inc. (HARIBON), with the support of the USAID, through Phil-Am Fund, pursued an awareness-learning-action approach for its Biodiversity Champions, a select pool of local leaders and school-based change-makers. The two-year USAID grant, which ran in four (4) municipalities of Oriental Mindoro from 2016 to 2018, recruited, trained, and prodded to action a pre-screened group of local government and people's organization officers (Biodiversity Fellows), high school science teachers (Eco-Guardians), and Grade 8 to 9 students (Eco-Rangers). The grant covered the sub-watersheds of the Naujan Lake National Park (NLNP), specifically the Municipalities of Naujan, Victoria, Socorro, and Pola.

The Biodiversity Fellows, Eco-Guardians, and Eco-Rangers underwent dedicated capacity-building courses. They learned about environmental conservation and watershed management. They visited the Naujan Lake National Park ecosystem to become familiar with the concepts. They conceptualized proposals for conservation projects and actual implementation as part of their learning and action.

The Biodiversity Fellows Program (BFP)

Sixteen (16) participants initially joined the program, and 12 were able to complete the Fellowship challenge. Fellows attended four (4) training phases consisting of 18 modules, running a total of 14 days. Phase I to III focused on biodiversity fundamentals, policy and legal frameworks, and monitoring and evaluation. Phase IV revolved around project development.

The selection of the fellows is critical. The program targeted municipal government and community leaders in recognition of their decision-making roles in their own organizations. The Biodiversity Fellows Program (BFP) sought the participation of municipal mayors, environmental and planning officers, and the officers of people's organizations (POs). Additional requirements were introduced for the POs: (1) they must be living near the lake and its sub-watersheds; (2) they must have the ability to write and present proposals; (3) they must be able to lead projects; and (4) they must be dependent on forest resources. The healthy mix of fellows and their networks ensured that their advocacies reached more people.

Four (4) conservation action plans, one (1) per municipality, were drafted and implemented for a minimum of six (6) months. The Naujan team addressed the Butas River problems through the installation of a Materials Recovery Facility, conduct of a river cleanup and an inventory of trees along the river, promotion of organic farming and crafts from water lilies. The Pola team proposed the reforestation farming of indigenous forest trees, the planting of fruit-bearing trees, and the promotion of alternative livelihood like mushroom production, smoked-fish processing, native pig and poultry raising. The Socorro team led the establishment of the nurseries of indigenous species for planting buffer trees along the lake. The Victoria team promoted community-based eco-tourism livelihood, which required coastal cleanups, the promotion of organic farming, and the creation of eco-youth volunteers.

The Fellowship was crucial in forming a committed pool of leaders that are willing to be "instrument(s) of change" for the environment. An officer of an irrigators' association found the BFP to be "life-changing," while a municipal budget officer found his "calling." The BFP succeeded in securing the lifetime commitment of its Fellows for the cause. As a 70-year-old farmer shared: "Hangga't ako'y malakas at nabubuhay, isusulong ko ito (For as long as I am strong and alive, I will push for this advocacy)."

Eco-Guardians and Eco-Rangers (EG-ER) Program

Seventeen (17) high school science teachers and 28 Grade 8 and Grade 9 students formed the EG-ER Team. The Eco-Guardians (teachers) nominated the Eco-Rangers (students). Some of the nominees were the class achievers, while others simply described themselves as fun-loving, students that identify themselves as 'not academically-inclined'. The Eco-Guardian and Eco-Ranger labels imply their different roles and responsibilities. Eco-Guardians were expected to roll-out school-based projects and mentor the Eco-Rangers, who, in turn, were expected to implement the conservation projects, especially on waste management and reforestation.

The course for the Eco-Guardians complements the Science K-12 curriculum, designed in coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd) based on the results of a training needs analysis. Eco-Guardians were asked to prepare learning modules, class activities, and teaching demos. Eco-Rangers attended two (2) training activities. Like the BFP course, the first training focused on biodiversity input sessions, while the second focused on project implementation. An environmental leadership conference was held at the end of project implementation as a venue for the Eco-Rangers to share their insights and lessons in becoming Biodiversity Champions.

The Eco-Rangers led a range of conservation projects, which benefited from the support of the DepEd, barangay and municipal governments, and local communities. Some projects were focused on awareness raising (i.e., poster- and slogan-making, mural painting, and school seminars), while others were focused on waste management (i.e., contests on trash can design and recyclable parols, plastic bottles as trash bins, clean-up drives, and school plastic ban). Greening initiatives were also initiated through native tree nursery, riverbank rehabilitation, eco-park, seedling distribution to households, and mangrove and tree planting.

The Eco-Rangers gave positive feedback on their experience. One found being an Eco-Ranger a "rewarding role…because of the opportunity to lead fellow students" on environmental advocacy. They felt that they "have become more responsible and curious about the environment" and more "conscious of their actions." One quipped: "I used to think that...being young, my lack of experience and abilities hindered me from making a positive change." Eco-Rangers defied that notion when it gave the youth a "huge responsibility to come up with initiatives that make a huge difference."

The Triad

If nature were to stake its survival on a bet, the best choice would be on a pool of Biodiversity Champions, individuals who are able to successfully push for the biodiversity agenda and initiatives. Only 12 Biodiversity Fellows, 17 Eco-Guardians, and 28 Eco-Rangers were recruited, but their entire communities were engaged in the implementation of conservation projects. The triad's circle of influence has a promising multiplier effect. Making champions out of local leaders, teachers, and the youth seems to be a good starting point for HARIBON's vision of "every person a biodiversity champion."

BIODIVERSITY

BEYOND GOOD INTENTIONS

Promoting Endemic Species for Reforestation

Popular exotic species are often used in reforestation initiatives because of their ability to grow and reproduce faster, thus creating an immediate picture of conservation and reforestation impact. But such kind of species could lead to more harm than good. For example, the mahogany, often the tree of choice in massive reforestation programs, could deplete the soil of needed minerals and organisms and drive out native floral and faunal species. In forests replaced with mahoganies, there might be proud, vain, and self-centered trees standing tall, but there are no flowers to behold and no songbirds to hear.

Forests and wildlife management experts have stressed the importance of appropriate information in environment protection and conservation. Particularly, they emphasized that the use of exotic species in reforestation poses threats to native species. Invasive and able to proliferate rapidly, alien species of plants and animals endanger the integrity of ecosystems into which they are introduced. They could bring with them the ill effects of competition, parasitism, predation, and other unintended biological interactions. Aside from good intentions, reforestation initiatives should be guided with clear guidelines on species, techniques, and other considerations to ensure that they will not end up altering or degrading biodiversity.

Four (4) USAID grantees took these considerations and carried out enrichment planting of endemic true-mangrove and associated species. The grants were implemented in the northwestern area of Puerto Princesa, Palawan, particularly in Barangays Bacungan, Salvacion, Manalo, and Sta. Cruz by the Candis 3 Marketing Cooperative (C3MC); at the Naujan Lake National Park (NLNP), which covers the municipalities of Naujan, Victoria, Socorro, and Pola in Oriental Mindoro, by the HARIBON Foundation for the Conservation of Natural Resources, Inc. (HARIBON); in Ligawasan Marsh sites, specifically the municipalities of Tulunan, M'lang, and Kabacan, by the Maguindanaon Development Foundation, Inc. (MDFI); and in Siargao Islands Protected Landscapes and Seascapes (SIPLAS) by the Surigao Economic Development and Microfinance Foundation, Inc. (SEDMFI). Through these grants, vast expanses of forests were planted with mangrove and fruit-bearing trees, in the hope of improving the habitats and sources of food for wildlife. More importantly, they encouraged the participation of residents, from maintaining the nurseries to the actual planting of propagules and seedlings, fostering a sense of community and synergy.

Saving the Forests by Going Native

To curb the threats of forest loss, the grantees carried out measures such as the management of community nurseries and reforestation using endemic tree species. They have produced desirable results as shown in the vast areas planted with native trees and the change in people's mindset—from extractors to protectors of the environment.

The C3MC zeroed in on the protection of watershed areas and riverbanks through enrichment planting in four (4) barangays, namely Salvacion, Manalo, Sta. Cruz, and Bacungan. The cooperative grew Narra (Pterocarpus indicus) seedlings, along with other hardwood species like Ipil (Instia bijuga), Cacao (Theobroma cacao), Paitan (Cliedion spiciflorum), and assorted rattan species in the community nurseries that it established in the four (4) barangays. It headed a massive tree-planting activity on Jul. 4, 2015, in time for Puerto Princesa City's Pista Y ang Cagueban, or Feast of the Forest. Prior to the feast, it also conducted tree-planting activities in February and April of the same year. To date, the C3MC covered a total of 380 hectares of forest areas.

With the goal of increasing forest covers, improving biodiversity habitats, mitigating natural calamities, and restoring a healthy environment in the NLNP, HARIBON established buffer forests. Strips of lakeside land were planted with trees, shrubs, and other vegetation. Serving as buffers, they serve as the lake's "first line of defense" by preventing pollution from entering it and keeping the water cool during hot weather. They also prevent soil erosion and flooding and provide food and habitat to wildlife. In Pola, particularly, the foundation made possible the planting of 45,692 seedlings of fruit-bearing trees such as Rambutan, Sinturis, Calamansi, Chico, and Durian; of indigenous forest trees such as Narra, Molawin, Lawaan, Dao, Apitong, Giho, and Batino; and mangrove species. In Socorro, it established seven (7) barangay forest tree nurseries and planted a combined total of 7,200 fruit-bearing and indigenous trees in the sub-watersheds. In Victoria, it encouraged the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) to start implementing the Gradual Organic Farming Program at the NLNP with the mobilization of 15 farmers, each with a one-hectare model farm.

The MDFI and SEDMFI also engaged in similar initiatives. Covering the target of 75 kilometers of riverbanks in the Ligawasan Marsh for rehabilitation, the MDFI facilitated the planting of 8,000 Bangkal trees and 6,000 Nipa and Libi native palms. The SEDMFI provided non-extractive agricultural services, including the management of community nurseries for endemic tree species.

Long-term Impact on People's Mindset and Community Participation

It may be too early to determine how much the endemic tree-planting activities have helped in refreshing and replenishing the forests. Same for the number of propagules and seedlings distributed and planted, data on the status of the forests—whether the propagules and seedlings have grown into mature trees and mangroves—is limited. Suffice it to say, it is important that tree-planting activities are followed with proper care and monitoring activities. Such is the good example set in Pola where, a year after seedling distribution and planting, it was observed that the plants have grown about two (2) meters and are expected to bear fruits after a few more years.

One positive result of the grants is that they have not only raised the awareness of people in the urgency of planting trees, but have also improved their appreciation of local species.

The grants have also fostered a sense of community and participation. Among the groups and organizations engaged were local agriculture, environment, and natural resources offices, Bantay Gubat (forest guard) personnel, local government units (LGUs), farmers associations, cooperatives, and other stakeholders. In Socorro, information, education, and communication (IEC) campaigns on the Municipal Arbor Ordinance paved the way for greater people's appreciation of the endeavor. The ordinance requires engaged couples applying for a marriage license, new parents applying for a birth certificate, and delinquent youth being disciplined through community service to participate in nursery management and tree-planting activities.

The most important effect of the pathway is the change in people's mindset. As stressed by Rey Dimasacat: "It would just be a never-ending cycle if we do not stop the root cause of the problem, which is the cutting of trees." A 50-year old farmer, Dimasacat is an active supporter of tree-planting activities, with priority for Philippine native species. He now maintains a seedbank and nursery in his own backyard. Helping him in the maintenance of the nursery are his children. With pride, he beams: "Just as my parents before taught us, I am starting my children young. I want them to appreciate the value of why we need to plant those trees, and why we need to keep our forests alive."

BIODIVERSITY

KATUTUBO (NATIVE)

Engaging Indigenous Peoples (IPs) for Sustainable Biodiversity

In the remote villages of the Philippines live Indigenous Peoples (IPs), who have inhabited the areas for a long time now. Long before the advent of modern and scientific methods of environmental conservation and protection, they have been practicing proven, tested, harmless, and sustainable ways of living with nature and managing the resources on which they depend for a living.

Historically, however, IPs are among the most marginalized and excluded sectors not just in environmental management, but also in socio-economic planning and development, in general. This is despite the passage of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997 (IPRA), which puts emphasis on indigenous knowledge systems and practices on land use and ownership and resource management and protection.

Cognizant of the unique development needs of IPs, the USAID, through the Philippine-American Fund, provided grants for biodiversity conservation efforts that integrated cultural preservation and ancestral domains protection. Most notable of these grants are the programs implemented by the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) in the unprotected region of Mt. Apo in Davao and North Cotabato; the Nagkakaisang mga Tribu ng Palawan (NATRIPAL) in Palawan; and the Tribal Leaders Development Foundation, Inc. (TLDFI) in the Allah Valley Watershed Forest Reserve (AVWFR) in South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat.

Building on Indigenous Knowledge and Practices

In Mt. Apo, a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) that serves as a refuge for the Philippine eagle and other wildlife, the importance of customary rules and practices were given primacy in biodiversity conservation. In Davao City, the PEF organized a Pusaka Council, which was tasked to reinforce and strengthen the customary laws of the Obu Manuvu tribe on the protection and conservation of their ancestral domains. The foundation convened tribal chieftains in Pusaka workshops to have a consolidated decision on what to declare as "Pusaka," or an important and sanctified place, thing, or animal that should be treated with utmost respect and veneration as a vessel of the Gods.

Through the Council, policies on the Pusaka declaration were determined. Among the practices prohibited by the Council are: (1) shooting of the Philippine eagle and other bird species; (2) burning of declared Pusaka areas; (3) sale of properties within the declared Pusaka areas; (4) hunting of wild animals; (5) use of electrocution and poison in fishing; and (6) research or data gathering without the Council's permission. Recognizing the tribes' Pamaas justice system, corresponding penalties for violations, such as cash and oath during a tribal ritual, were also set. Highlighting the project is the issuance of the same declaration from the Obu Manuvu in Magpet and from the Manuvu'n Tinonanon in Arakan, both in North Cotabato. These binding indigenous conservation agreements declared 37,670 hectares of forest domain and watershed in the unprotected region of Mt. Apo as sacred entities.

Of Participatory Plans and Policies

The grants implemented by the TLDFI in the Allah Valley Watershed Forest Reserve (AVWFR) and by NATRIPAL in Palawan harnessed the potential of the IP community as a key stakeholder in environmental governance. The TLDFI was instrumental in the formulation of the Protected Area Management Plan (PAMP), Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP), and the Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP) of the T'boli and B'laan tribes. Not only did these documents serve as important inputs to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) and other planning documents of different local government units (LGUs) in the area, but, being culturally-sensitive and inclusive, they included programs and strategies for livelihood and economic development geared towards the improvement of the living standards not only of IP communities, but also of non-IP migrants in the Allah Valley Protected Landscape (AVPL).

In the case of NATRIPAL, the organization made way for a conversation among the elders Barangays Iraan, Sagpangan, and Gogognan in the municipality of Aborlan in October 2016. The said activity was initiated to promote the rights of the Tagbanua that were enshrined in the IPRA. In November 2016, community leaders, women, and children from three (3) barangays in Aborlan attended the two-day planning workshop held in Bgy. Sagpangan for the formulation of their Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP).

Investments on IP Community Enterprises

To strengthen the IP communities' roles as forests stewards, the grants also provided livelihood opportunities.

In Aborlan, Palawan, Almaciga resin collection shows a great potential as livelihood source for IP communities in Barangay Iraan and Sagpangan, given the prevailing price of PhP25.00 to PhP30.00 per kilogram of resin. Through the inventory and mapping efforts led by NATRIPAL, it was estimated that, at the current number of productive Almaciga trees, the communities may earn up to a total of PHP180, 000 per quarter. Training on the sustainable harvesting of Almaciga resin was conducted to teach the IP communities how to tap this possible livelihood.

In the AVPL, farmers received training on abaca production, which introduced them to new farm techniques that may lead to higher abaca yield. They were also taught how to grow alternative crops, such as fruit trees and coffee, so that they will not resort to livelihood that relies heavily on the use and extraction of natural resources.

Human-in-nature Approach to Biodiversity Conservation

For conservation efforts to succeed, both wildlife and human dynamics must be considered. Indigenous Peoples, as long-time inhabitants of biodiversity areas, have been doing tried, tested, and sustainable ways of managing and protecting natural resources. Thus, it is essential that traditional and indigenous ecological wisdom be honored and strengthened. In instances where they must adopt new practices to improve their ways, indigenous people should be capacitated so that such practices will be welcomed and supported in their communities.

BIODIVERSITY

CONSERVATION ENTERPRISES: A MUST IN BIODIVERSITY PRESERVATION

As of 2009, there are about 228 declared key biodiversity areas (KBAs) in the Philippines. These areas, whether terrestrial, wetland, or marine, are home to rare and endangered species of plants and animals. However, despite having a national law that protects KBAs, threats to endangered species remain due to illegal activities within the area.

KBAs are usually located in rural areas where livelihood opportunities are limited to agriculture and fishing. To provide for the needs of their families, farmers wait patiently for months to sell their crops, while fishermen risk their lives every day at sea catching fish to sell to the market. Regardless of their hard work, there are times when income is still insufficient to support their families. Given their limited livelihood opportunities, some of them engage in illegal activities such as illegal fishing, stranding and hunting of animals, cutting of trees, and poaching of wildlife.

Efforts to promote biodiversity conservation must not ignore economic and livelihood issues that communities face. Ignoring the latter, while paying attention only on the first, may result in the failure of conservation efforts. Communities expected to be responsible for protecting the KBAs might fall prey to economic activities that do not support conservation due to lack of alternative livelihood. Therefore, seven (7) USAID grantees—namely, C3PH, CANDIS, HARIBON, PATH, PBCFI, SPIADFI, and TLDFI—through the Philippine-American Fund, introduced alternative or complementary conservation enterprises to encourage the community to support conservation efforts while augmenting their household income, to help them shun activities that harm the environment.

The Strategy: Offering an Alternative

The grantees started with the selection of the type of conservation enterprise to offer. To identify the most appropriate and most fitting type of conservation enterprise, resource inventory, community participation, and the level of support from the local government units (LGUs) and stakeholders, among others, were considered. C3PH considered a facilitated mapping of the community's natural resources to identify possible conservation enterprises to offer in the community, while PATH and SPIADFI approached it through community consultations and environmental impact assessment.

The types of conservation enterprises identified vary in each of the seven (7) USAID grantees. The seven (7) grantees offered more than one type of conservation enterprise, given that some of the identified conservation enterprises have long-term returns. HARIBON had wide-ranging types of conservation enterprises such as handicraft production using water lilies and hyacinth, fruit processing and marketing, mushroom production, organic farming, poultry establishment, and even the dispersal of native pigs. The TLDFI, aside from abaca production, also provided alternative crops (e.g., coffee, fruit-bearing trees) for the beneficiaries to protect and grow, with a provision of a maintenance fee for every tree they grow, which serves as their source of income while waiting for their main crops to be harvested. CANDIS offers community-based sustainable tourism (CBST) such as forest and mangrove trekking, bird watching, and even eco-camping. C3PH supported the hand-made local handicrafts initiative of Busuanga WEAVE (e.g., dugong dolls). The PBCFI offered beekeeping by-products such as soap, balm, and shampoo. The SPIADFI had nursery establishment and salabat production and processing.

The types of beneficiaries of the conservation enterprise also varied. Involvement was voluntary, and only those who were interested and willing to participate were involved. The targeted beneficiaries were composed of members from community organizations, people's organizations (POs), farmer and fisher folks associations, women's organizations, and federations of Indigenous Peoples (IP).

The Strategy: Empowering the Beneficiaries

Provision of training was another important component of enterprise development, as it provided the beneficiaries with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively and efficiently manage the conservation enterprise. As the beneficiaries were mostly farmers and fisher folks, USAID grantees provided training related to the identified conservation enterprise. PATH provided their beneficiaries with training on food handling and safety procedures, menu planning, table setting and decoration, and business planning in relation to their food catering enterprise. For their beekeeping enterprise, the PBCFI beneficiaries learned about bee management, as well as balm, shampoo, and soap production.

Learning about resource generation and marketing strategies were considered important in ensuring the sustainability of the conservation enterprises. Of the seven (7) USAID grantees, HARIBON was able to receive PhP 40,000 from the local government of Naujan in support for their handicraft products. In addition, the local government of Naujan, through its Negosyo Center, facilitated a market-matching process for HARIBON's products. The SPIADFI got planting equipment and materials from the Department of Agriculture (DA) for their nursery and salabat production and processing enterprises.

Reaping the (Initial) Benefits

The introduction of an alternative or complementary conservation enterprise in the seven (7) USAID grants has proved to be an effective strategy in reducing illegal activities within the conservation areas. Before the SPIADFI grant, Mr. Wilfredo Mando, Barangay Councilor and Vice President of the People's Organization-Cabadbaran Farmers Association (PO-CAFA) shared that: "Bird hunting was rampant before the project was implemented. It was one of the livelihoods and sources for daily consumption in the community. Mapugas jud me ug panguha sa langgam para ibaligya ug ipanud an tungod sa kawad on (We must hunt birds in order to trade them, and to consume them, because of poverty)". He added that the lack of available livelihood opportunities in their area lured the unemployed members of the community to resort to illegal hunting. However, with the introduction of the conservation enterprises, such as the nursery establishment and salabat production and processing by the SPIADFI grantee, beneficiaries such as the PO-CAFA and People's Organization-Kauswagan Farmers Association (PO-KAFA) were satisfied for the livelihood assistance and capacity building provided to them as a means of reducing illegal activities in the area.

Not only did the conservation enterprises benefit the community members, they also provided an incentive system for the conservation of the KBAs. In the case of PATH, the organization signed an agreement allocating 30 percent of the profit gained from the enterprise to cover the maintenance cost of the marine protected area (MPA). CANDIS allocated a bigger portion of their community-based sustainable tourism (CBST) proceeds to sea turtles and MPA initiatives. A 50-50 sharing of income from the salabat production and processing enterprise was also noted in the SPIADFI grant.

The above-mentioned benefits are just initial benefits, since many of the conservation enterprises offered by the USAID grantees are still in the startup phase. It is still too early to assess the economic gains of the conservation enterprise and its impact to the community, as the information on production, sales, and relevant fees are limited. With the introduction of an alternative or complementary conservation enterprise, beneficiaries, particularly the farmers and fisher folks, now have other options to provide for the basic needs of their families. They do not need to rely on their income from farming and fishing alone, or resort to illegal activities that harm the environment, to be able to bring food at the table.

ECONOMIC GROWTH GRANTEES

• Cagayan de Oro of Commerce and Industry Foundation, Inc. • Philippine Agrarian Foundation for National Development (PARFUND) • Pagtambayayong - A Mutual Aid Foundation, Inc. (PFI) • PinoyME Foundation (PinoyME) • Roxas Foundation, Inc. (RFI) • Tamaraw Salt Producers Cooperative (TAMACO) • Tuason Development Foundation, Inc. (TDFI)

ECONOMIC GROWTH

MEETING INCLUSIVE GROWTH THROUGH AN INCLUSIVE BUSINESS MODEL

What can a business chamber do better, if not differently? In the case of the Cagayan de Oro Chamber of Commerce and Industry Foundation, Inc. (ORO Chamber), it can promote an Inclusive Business (IB) model – a development strategy of "inclusive business" toward "inclusive growth" that puts emphasis on the term inclusive.

Exclusion in Inclusive Growth?

Recent development models put value on inclusive growth. Yet, 20 years after the passage of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997 (IPRA), indigenous peoples groups continue to live in poverty, marginalized from the mainstream economy despite their right of possession of their ancestral lands. In many parts of Bukidnon, for example, tribal lands are simply rented out to agri-business companies. The tribal communities are reduced to passive spectators in the process of agricultural development, without any part in the entire value chain process of the products produced from their land. A young tribal leader from one of the Bukidnon tribes acknowledges that there is an urgent need for them to develop the agricultural lands by themselves and become integrated in the market economy, but they need mentoring and assistance to realize this.

The Pathway: An Inclusive Business (IB) Model

The USAID, through the Phil-Am Fund, supported the Oro Chamber's initiative to apply the IB model in two (2) indigenous communities living along the Cagayan de Oro (CDO) River Basin. These upland communities are the Tagoloanon tribe in Bukidnon and the Odino clan from the Higaonon tribe, both holders of Certificates of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) in their respective areas.

The IB model links upland communities that possess lands suitable for the production of high-value cash crops with high-value commercial crop companies (HVCCCs) in need of reliable producers. By engaging the upland communities to become producers of high-value crops such as cacao and abaca, the IB model integrates them as active participants in the product value chain. Linking them with HVCCCs enables communities to receive technical assistance in terms of efficient production technology, quality planting materials, and the assurance of a ready market for their produce. On the other hand, companies can fulfill part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) while ensuring their supply needs.

The USAID grant enabled Oro Chamber to assist the two (2) tribal communities in getting the National Council for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) recognition of their indigenous political systems (IPS), enabling them to use a decision-making structure consistent with their indigenous culture and way of life.

Through a series of community consultations and engagements between the Oro Chamber and the tribal communities and their leaders, the communities were able to organize and register themselves as cooperatives and business entities. The cooperatives became the economic institutions of the communities allowing them to participate in the local economy. The Oro Chamber's assistance also enabled communities to come up with their respective business plans for their chosen cash crop, to negotiate and deal with companies that could purchase their produce, and to borrow needed capital for their financing needs.

From Dependence to Self-Awareness and Self-Reliance

The IB model increased the awareness and positive outlook of the communities that they would be able to achieve economic independence and sustainable livelihood. In the eyes of the young tribal leader mentioned earlier, the model challenged them to believe that they could influence the course of their lives for the better. An example of this increased self-awareness is the vision to transform mat weaving to an art form reflective of the tradition and culture of the community. Another example is the optimism of the official sword maker of the Tagoloanon tribe in Bukidnon that demand for farm tools will increase with the opening of the cacao plantation, and that the tribe's cooperative would be able to arrange for financing for modern forging procedures.

From Passive to Active Inclusion

A significant result of the IB model was the marketing agreements by the cooperatives formed by the two (2) tribal communities with high-value commercial crop companies (HVCCCs). The Bukidnon Tagoloanon Mulahay Ha Kabukalagan Agriculture Cooperative (BTMHKAC), the economic arm of the Tagoloanon tribe in Bukidnon, forged a marketing agreement with Kennemer Foods International (KFI), a Philippine agribusiness company, under which KFI will be the market for the cooperative's cacao products. On the other hand, the Odino clan of the Higaonon tribe, through its Kibalabag Matanus Agriculture Cooperative (KMAC), achieved a purchase agreement with Newtech Pulp, Inc. (NPI) of Lanao del Sur, which will be the buyer of its abaca produce. Both agreements invoke a commitment to transparent and fair pricing, thereby ensuring that the communities will get an equitable return for their valued crops. Moreover, KMAC decided to apply for a loan with the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) to support the planned expansion of its abaca plantation.

Extending the Pathway, Covering New Grounds

Lessons from the pilot application of the inclusive business model had been incorporated into the model that is now being considered by the seven (7) tribes that make up the Bukidnon Indigenous Peoples Advisory Council (BIPAC).

Local governments and national agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Board of Investments (BOI) have committed to support the application of the model. Also, the model has been adopted in the Catholic Church's advocacy and social development program involving inmates in penal colonies. The inmates are assisted in the formation of cooperatives, in the selection and planting of high-value crops, and in acquiring business skills to prepare them for reintegration into society.

The IB model showed that, in an ancestral domain setting, indigenous communities can be integrated into and actively participate in the local economy. Here, the IB model enabled them to realize their capacity to become active entrepreneurs, and to pursue development based on their values of cooperation and responsible stewardship. Thus, the model puts the rightful exclamation point on the term inclusive in inclusive growth.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

COMMUNITIES CREATING ADDED VALUE

Popularized by Michael Porter in 1985, the value chain approach has been used in the agricultural sector to describe the actors and players doing activities along a chain that produces and delivers goods to end-users. This chain may or may not drastically alter the product, but additional value is created along the chain that enables sustainable income growth for stakeholders.

The agriculture sector in the Philippines is plagued by persistent problems of poor infrastructure links to markets, oppressive debt cycle for farmers, and reliance on intermediaries and occasionally reliable agricultural extension. Add to these the increasing threats of climate change and the competition due to global market integration. The agricultural sector is faced with the challenge of not only producing for self-sufficiency, but also for finding additional value for what were traditionally farm-to-table products only. The USAID, through the Phil-Am Fund, supported two (2) value creation and value addition projects by civil society organizations (CSOs) in Batangas and Cebu.

Reducing Input Costs

Farmer debt often starts with borrowing money from an informal lender for farm inputs (e.g., seeds, fertilizer, breeders, or feeds). Sometimes, the debt intended for farm inputs would partly be spent for immediate family needs, further reducing the already small capital for inputs. The organic hog raising project of the Pagtambayayong—A Mutual Aid Foundation, Inc. (PFI) sought to break this vicious cycle of farmer debt. This project aimed to aid the recovery of subsistence rice, corn, and vegetable farming communities in Northern Cebu that were devastated by Typhoon Yolanda (International name: Haiyan). For a community of "traditional" subsistence farmers, the methods of organic hog raising seemed comical at first, especially the notion of pigs eating forage, normally reserved for grazers, instead of feeds. These farmers, some of them women, would normally go into debt to purchase feeds to start hog raising. Romeo Leyba, a seasoned goat and cow farmer, met the project with a pinch of doubt and cynicism. Yet, he was one of the stakeholders to register one of the highest profits from this organic hog raising technology.

The organic approach was not limited to feeding techniques. Even the pig pens were set up in an organic way using bamboo fences and organic flooring and bedding, a cheaper and easier-to-clean option. These were loaned in-kind to ensure that the cash will not be spent for other household needs. The piglets were also on loan from the PFI. The buy-back method ensured that the farmers would be able to pay back their debt while leaving some to be sold to the market. The unique organic approach to feeding these "organic pigs" has enabled more than 300 Typhoon Yolanda-devastated farmers to recover with a steady stream of income from hog raising, which ranged from PHP10,000 to PHP27,000 within a three-month growing cycle. This has demonstrated that bringing down the costs at the input level can already maintain the value of a product at the onset of the process.

Creating New Value

There are times when value must be created to realize its potential profitability. The value chain approach also puts a premium on technology in value addition. This was how the Roxas Foundation, Inc. (RFI) transformed sugar cane residue into a viable fiber and a potential additional source of income for farmers. The RFI partnered with the Philippine Textile Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-PTRI) in finding the right blend of sugar cane fiber with cotton and polyester to produce a thread that can be used for weaving tableware and cloth. Existing technology used to produce pineapple and banana threads was employed to produce the sugar cane thread.

Four hundred and forty-seven (447) households in Barangay Reparo, Nasugbu, Batangas were chosen as the partner community. Individual beneficiaries included seasonal workers and unemployed residents, most of whom were women. The community partners were trained on skinning, juicing, and drying sugar cane stalks to prepare them for pre-treatment. These would ensure the right quality of bagasse to be given to the DOST-PTRI for processing. For the downstream end of the product, the community partners were trained in hand weaving and warp printing in order to produce prototypes made from sugar cane fiber. The RFI partnered with a French designer in developing classy designs that would be attractive to potential corporate clients. Around 15,000 kilograms of sugar cane stalks were processed, yielding 2,000 kilograms of dried fiber. Among the prototypes produced were placemats, desk organizers, polybags, and "bean bags" for corporate giveaways.

While the sugar cane fiber industry may still be in its incubation phase, RFI has shown that additional value can be generated from an ostensibly waste product. While sugar cane bagasse is already being used as fuel, pulp, paper, board, and feed, exploring its use as a fabric is innovative. Choosing woven fabric as a high-end product drives at a potential niche in the bagasse market.

The back-breaking work in the agricultural sector is still widely male-dominated. However, these two (2) projects have largely involved women, or have reached men through the women in their families, mainly because these were intended as supplemental to their main agricultural activity. This inclusive dimension is what makes these experiences even more empowering. What has been the key in the experiences of the PFI and RFI is the possibility of transforming an otherwise supplemental source of income into a high-value economic activity that does not uproot the agricultural communities from their main livelihood.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

SALT AND EGG: COMMUNITIES TASTING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

To participate in a market activity, one must be able to understand the whole market system of the product and pinpoint the opportunities that would provide profits and market share. Two (2) CSOs have shown that the voluntary sector can facilitate the capacity building of agricultural communities and enable them to increase their participation in the market. With support from the USAID, through the Phil-Am Fund, these CSOs have jumpstarted economic opportunities for young entrepreneurs and a domestic industry that is supposedly in decline.

Understanding the Market

The Philippine Agrarian Reform Foundation for National Development, Inc. (PARFUND) and its Duck Enterprise for Employment Generation and Growth (DUCKEGG) has been quacking up business opportunities for community partners who have participated in the balut industry in Northern Mindanao. PARFUND was able to map out the value chain of the duck egg industry in the region and to identify the value-addition activities, which it then opened to young entrepreneurs. Using the Integrated Rice-Duck Farming System (IRDFS), the project included providing alternative food for the ducks and ducklings (e.g., snails and azolla), breeding ready-to-lay (RTL) ducks, incubating duck eggs, hatcheries, duck meat processing, and retail balut selling.

PARFUND invested in providing the ducks and facilitating the collection and delivery of the duck eggs. Investments in duck housing, pasture lands, and incubators were made by the community partners, some of whom were rice-farming families and women's organizations. Linking the feed producers to the breeders and producers enabled small groups of people to supply part of the regional demand for duck eggs. Most of the retailing was done by women's groups, which found the flexibility of the late afternoon to night-time selling hours convenient. Initially intended to supplement income from rice production, some community partners reported surpassing their rice income within three (3) months of DUCKEGG. Johnny and Leonora Esoy reported surpassing their PHP6,250 monthly income from rice production with a PHP6,000 weekly income from duck egg production. Other beneficiaries reported gross incomes between PHP15,000 to PHP40,000 per month. This helped them pay existing debt, buy machines and vehicles for additional livelihood, or expand their current DUCKEGG operations.

Strategic Capital Infusion

On the other hand, the Tamaraw Salt Producers Cooperative of Occidental Mindoro (TAMACO) was able to revive a sunset industry. Around 80 percent of the domestic salt requirement is imported. Of the 20 percent of domestic salt produced, 40 percent of that is produced in the island province Occidental Mindoro. However, most of the salt produced domestically is for agricultural use and not for table salt.

In order to reverse the decline of the domestic salt industry, selected board members of the cooperative were brought to model farms in other countries to learn modern methods of salt farming. Benchmarking with Sri Lanka and Indonesia enabled TAMACO to explore growth paths for the domestic market. Thanks to capital infusion, the cooperative was able establish the first commercial salt processing plant in the Philippines. This is composed of the very first washing and centrifuge-drying machine for salt in the country. The plant is now able to accelerate production as well as improve the quality of domestic salt produce.

At the beginning of the project, TAMACO was only producing as much as 20,000 bags of salt a year. With the salt processing plant, coupled with the capacity building for salt farmers, TAMACO is now able to produce 184,500 bags of salt per year. These increases resulted in the enhanced net financial contracting capacity (NFCC) of the cooperative, from PHP43.4 million to PHP321.6 million. The NFCC determines capacity of organizations to comply with the bidding requirements of the Philippine Coconut Authority. TAMACO was able to bid for for the supply of agricultural salt in Regions IV-A, IV-B and XIII. With its increased ability to move salt produce in Mindoro, the cooperative took this opportunity to gather member-producers and agree on moving the buying price of salt from PHP 1.00 per kilogram in 2014 to PHP 2.50/ kilogram in 2018. The cooperative was also able to grow its assets from PHP4.2 million to

PHP43.9 million. In anticipation of additional income, farmer families were provided training on financial management and accounting, with 60 to 70 percent of the participants being women.

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) noticed the potential for expansion of domestic salt production. Thus, the DOST has volunteered to provide weather measurement instruments that would better predict local weather over the TAMACO salt ponds, which will then inform salt producers and farmers on the best times of the year to extract the salt. With room for more expansion in the domestic market, and with growing government recognition, TAMACO has transformed itself into a viable competitor in the domestic market and may have revived an already dying industry.

Both PARFUND and TAMACO were able to understand the market and leverage the added value they create in securing a steady stream of income for stakeholders, as well as secure a significant market share. Sometimes, it takes a non-governmental organization (NGO) to reveal opportunities in industries which the government may have already given up on. There are times when the government is not the only source of large-scale economic stimuli needed by communities to participate in the market.

EDUCATION GRANTEES

• Conrado & Ladislawa Alcantara Foundation, Inc. (CLAFI) • Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development, Inc. (FIT-ED) • Integrated Mindanaons Associations for Natives (IMAN) • Resources for the Blind, Inc. (RBI)

EDUCATION

SAVING TRADITION THROUGH A NEW LEARNING RENDITION

The B'laan's Flalok Revival

There are more ways to learn from what people can usually imagine, especially in communities with deep cultural roots. With a population of 1.5 million, the Blaan is an indigenous group with the highest population in South Central Mindanao. Members of the Blaan community are reported to have low literacy rates, partly due to the lack of materials in their mother tongue. Majority of Blaan students are monolingual, and are therefore discouraged to attend formal schooling or hindered from performing their best in schools since their language is not used as a medium of instruction.

Interestingly, this indigenous community still practices a unique oral tradition called the Flalok, a Blaan art of storytelling. The practice, though, is in danger of getting lost or extinct because there are fewer Blaan storytellers left. Influence of modern practices in their communities, and very little documentation of the practice, further contributed to its decline.

Flalok and Its Story of Revival

The USAID, through the Phil-Am Fund, assisted the Conrado and Ladislawa Alcantara Foundation, Inc. (CLAFI) in its effort to save this endangered tradition and in using the tradition to promote quality education for young learners. CLAFI advocates for the empowerment of indigenous communities in South Central Mindanao. The innovation is to revive Flalok in the form of Flalok 'big books,' and integrating it in the DepEd curriculum for the Mother Tongue-Based Multi-Lingual Education (MTBMLE). This initiative was a way of addressing 'last-mile challenges in learning,' where education should be able to reach far-flung areas and unusual targets, including the indigenous communities.

The task was not as simple as it seemed. The Blaan community had to be open to the idea of documenting Flalok, and it is only with the approval of the elders and the participation of the storytellers would it be possible gather the Flalok stories. Thus, the project started with cultur-sensitive social preparation activities. The commitment of several stakeholders was first secured. These were the Blaan indigenous cultural communities (ICC) and their tribal leaders, government agencies such as the DepEd (Region XII) and the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), and concerned local government units (LGUs). Civil society groups such as the Kafye Blaan International, Inc. and Save the Children, and institutions involved in translation and education, such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and other local higher academic institutions, were also engaged for their support and commitment.

There was a need for all these institutions to work together, especially for the ICCs. Given the intricacies and the unique qualities of indigenous tradition, the grantees had to ensure that the Blaan are socially prepared to participate and that the act of putting an oral tradition into writing was well-accepted. Consultations with Blaan elders and community elders were conducted to assure acceptance of the Blaan communities.

The next challenge was putting the oral tradition into writing and practice. With the help of the volunteer B'laan teachers and the consent of the 46 B'laan storytellers, there were 144 Flalok stories collected. These were then written, translated, and produced into 72 colorful and illustrated Flalok 'Big Books.' The grantee sought to promote the culture of reading by putting the Flalok stories into big books which the young learners can read and re-tell. Knowing these indigenous stories by heart, the Blaan volunteer teachers re-enacted and used the techniques shared by the storytellers in sharing Flalok stories to Grade 1 and Grade 2 students. These books were also used for student reading camps (Salngan Bmasa Blaan).

Localization with Great Impact: Raising Literate Young B'laans

The Flalok documentation and conversion to learning modules benefitted "a total of 15,298 B'laan children who were able to read, write, and express themselves through materials in their mother tongue." Having Flalok stories read by students and re-told by teachers contributed to the improved literacy rate of the B'laan learners. Based on the pre-test and post-test assessments made for two (2) academic years for the Grade 1 and Grade 2 pupils in selected IP schools in Region XII, the literacy rate increased from 58 percent to 88 percent, on average, between 2016 and 2018. The initiative addressed a very specific and urgent need of the young B'laan learners.

The students were also more appreciative of their own language, culture, and tradition as it was integrated and mainstreamed in the educational system that they are exposed to. Mitch, a Grade 2 pupil from the Calay IP School in Malapatan, Saranggani, shared: "Because of the Flalok project, I was able to understand my culture and realize that I should be proud of it. Learning has been made easy and I am now confident to participate in class discussions because I fully understand all the stories and lessons being read and taught by my teacher."

Volunteer Blaan teachers also noted the impact of the use of indigenous dialect. As Ms. Lorna Padua, the Flalok Focal Person for South Cotabato, explained: "The medium of instruction is very important...Flalok as an MTBMLE intervention program has brought about a big difference in the Blaan children's oral language development. For one, the kids understand the lessons. On top of that, they identify with the lessons because the content is also indigenized. They see their environment, their clothing, and their stories in the lessons. It gives them the self-confidence to speak and be more participative."

Educating by Saving a Tradition

Documenting Flalok and looking back at the lessons of its cultural roots has produced good results for the young Blaan learners. Not only did it add value by recognizing an indigenous learning tradition, it also served as a precedent in looking at other indigenous communities' traditions as contributions to learning. Indeed, the Flalok story has proven that much can be learned by starting at the language of teaching.

The success of the program is attributable to its holistic approach at involving key stakeholders, especially the ICCs. The experience showed how a bottom-up approach in implementing a project through the harmonized collaboration of the public, private, and civil society sectors is possible. The initiative later attracted more resources for the reprinting of the Flalok big books, and even received support for the extension of the program.

The bold move to put an oral tradition into writing did not only contribute new knowledge, but also new renditions in terms of educating young learners. It did not only revive a tradition, but also immortalized stories that capture the culture and tradition of the Blaan indigenous community.
This way, it recognized and celebrated their cultural identity and offered the possibility of making it known to the world through reading. The initiative saved Flalok as a tradition and ensured education for future Blaan generations.

EDUCATION

JUST TEaCH: BREAKING DOWN TEACHING BARRIERS WITH TECHNOLOGY

Scenario 1: Students residing in conflict-affected areas in Maguindanao and North Cotabato, Mindanao. Escalating armed fighting has displaced their families to areas considered inaccessible by local education providers. The "lucky" ones who are still able to attend formal school are greeted by inadequate facilities and learning materials. Despite the drop in literacy rates, teachers still have to comply with the zero dropout policy.

Scenario 2: Adult students with visual impairments or complete loss of sight. Learners are struggling with low motivation and lack of facilities. Instructors find their skills and knowledge inadequate to teach their adult students. On top of these, they lack the one thing these people need: Braille literacy.

Scenario 3: The Department of Education (DepEd) plans to train over 200,000 Kinder to Grade 3 (K-3) teachers using the face-to-face (F2F) cascade training method. This is part of its Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy (ELLN) program to improve the skills of K-3 students. Training will be done during school breaks, covering 4,000 teachers per year. With any luck, all K-3 teachers would be trained in about 50 years.

Educators in the Philippines have much to contend with. Challenges in the education sector mirror the Philippines' development issues, including poverty, armed conflict, and inequality. Addressing these tough problems amidst limited human and capital resources requires thinking outside the box.

Three Scenarios, One Solution

Access to learning resources no longer needs to be restricted to a privileged few because of technologies for inclusive education. Attesting to this are the experience of USAID Phil-Am Fund grantees, namely: Integrated Mindanaoans Association for Natives, Inc. (IMAN); Resources for the Blind, Inc. (RBI); and Foundation for Information Technology Education Development, Inc. (FIT-ED).

Through the USAID grant, RBI was able to produce Braille literacy assessment tools to measure adult Braille literacy courses. They also acquired modern Braille technology, printing facilities, and developed an Adult Braille Literacy Instruction Module (ABLIM). This module was designed to focus on learner motivation given their assessment findings. RBI piloted the modules in select Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Vocational Rehabilitation Centers (VRC), DepEd Alternative Learning System (ALS) centers, NGOs, and Persons with Disability Affairs Offices (PDAO).

Another USAID grantee, IMAN utilized technology in implementing the iREAd Project, which stands for Innovations for Rural Education Advancement. The program that caters to students who are unable to attend formal schooling and who are constrained with inadequate school facilities. The 'in-school' intervention included the provision of tablets and projectors for the instructional use of teachers. The software installed in computer tablets provided an interactive way of learning. Visuals and sounds complemented traditional teaching methods. The 'off-school' intervention consisted of mobilizing community facilitators and training them in alternative delivery modes (ADM) of teaching instruction. Then, they conduct learning sessions in conflict-neutral zones (i.e., Madrassas, or Islamic religious schools) and barangay halls in community learning centers to reach out to students who were displaced.

Technology was also the answer to DepEd's ambitious ELLN program. With the assistance of the USAID Phil-Am Fund, FIT-ED was able to pilot a digital version of the program called ELLN Digital. This translated the 10-day face-to-face training to a self-instructional multimedia courseware that can be used any time during the school year. Online trainings via webinars were also held for e-Learning Facilitators (eLFs) who supported school-based Learning Action Cells (LACs). Distribution of learning modules in a compact disc (CD) format and the conduct of webinars were envisioned to be a cost-effective and faster alternative to face-to-face training. The technology infrastructure and skills requirements of the courseware have been kept to a minimum in order to ensure maximum scalability, especially in rural and remote areas where internet connectivity is poor. From the 50 years required by the face-to-face training method, the project hopes to train all K-3 teachers on Basic Literacy in just three (3) years.

Tech for Teach

The RBI USAID grant was able to directly benefit 200 adult blind students in the five (5) DSWD VRCs, and train 35 Braille instructors from the municipal PDAOs, ALS centers, and select NGO members. Last March 29-April 2, 2016, during one of their hands-on trainings on the use of the instructional module and equipment, participants were provided with a computer set, a printer, Braille translation software, screen reader, electronic Braille display, computerized Braille embosser, and a Perkins Brailler. Most of the participants were first-timers in handling such equipment. "I used to dream of having this kind of equipment, and now it has already become a reality," one of the adult blind participants quipped. By the end of the USAID grant, RBI was able to spearhead the establishment of the Philippine Braille Accessibility Network (PBAN) for the promotion of Braille and assistive technology as tools for literacy, information, and communication of people with visual impairment.

In June 2017, during the turnover of the solar power system, computer, LCD projector, printer and tablets, Mr. Efren Mantawil, District Supervisor of Kabacan West District, is very much thankful to the USAID for bridging the gaps on education. "We are very fortunate for the opportunity to be a beneficiary of this program and, rest assured, we will utilize the computers and other gadgets given to our school for the advancement of Moro education. No words can express my gratefulness with this support," said. Mantawil. The iREAd Project was able to help 303 school children in its five (5) target elementary schools in terms of being able to identify sounding letters. For the off-school intervention, 299 out-of-school children successfully completed the ADM learning sessions. The introduction of digital tools also enthused and encouraged the attendance of the students.

ELLN Digital was piloted in 240 public elementary schools and benefitted 4,074 K-3 teachers, 368 LACs and LAC facilitators, and 42 eLFs from 31 school divisions and 11 regions. Participating schools were given the ELLN Digital courseware and five (5) storybooks, as well as guidance in organizing teachers into LACs. Master copies of the courseware and toolkit have been turned over to the pilot schools and divisions, and to all 17 DepEd Regional Offices. Last August 28, 2018, the DepEd, in partnership with FIT-ED, has already held an ELLN Digital Course National Launch to orient public schools on the use of the courseware. Ms. Rose Villaneza, Chief of the Bureau of Learning Delivery under DepEd, noted that "a technology-supported model has given us a way to amplify our resources and give our teachers the professional development they are entitled to, as much as they are tasked with providing the best learning experience for our nation's children."

Malala Yousafzai, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize 2014, and the subject of the book I Am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban, said: "One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world." If that's true for a pen and a book, then what more when teachers are equipped with the right technologies? Truly, technology can help educators in the Philippines to better fulfill their crucial role of helping the marginalized and the youth to reach their dreams. Armed with proper support and training, educators can shape the future for the better.

GOVERNANCE GRANTEES

• Antique Federation of Non-Government Organizations, Inc. (AFON) • Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) • Jaime V. Ongpin Foundation, Inc. (JVOFI) • Naga City People's Council (NCPC) • Young Public Servants (YPS)

GOVERNANCE

RETURNING GOVERNANCE BACK TO THE PEOPLE

Bad Governance Thrives when Good People Don't Participate

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are the key pillars in exacting accountability from the government. Their ability to engage in governance processes, however, is hampered by a multitude of factors, including the lack of capacity and knowledge, access to spaces for participation, availability of information, and even something basic such as the lack of organization. Fewer chances for people's participation increase the possibilities for corruption in government, as officials can abuse the discretion given to them in spending public resources without the fear of being monitored and held accountable.

Four (4) CSOs sought to strengthen people's participation in the governance process. The Jaime V. Ongpin Foundation, Inc. (JVOFI) wanted to explore ways to effectively protect the Amburayan River and get ahead of the conflicts that arise from using this shared critical water resource. The Antique Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations (AFON) wanted to harness the "energy, dedication, and experience of CSOs which have succeeded in pursuing transparency and accountability through various programs." The Naga City People's Council (NCPC) aimed to replicate its experience on the effectiveness of people's participation in governance in other LGUs. The Young Public Servants (YPS), on the other hand, saw the lack of youth participation in elections and worked on the thesis that productive communities start from having active citizens. These are among the governance grants supported by USAID to build people's capacity for effective participation in governance.

Enabling People's Participation

The JVOFI has been actively involved in saving the watersheds in Benguet and saw the need to extend their work to cover the Amburayan River, which crosses three (3) provinces, including Benguet, La Union, and Ilocos Sur. Through the grant, the JVOFI worked with different government agencies and LGUs, the academe, and IP communities to get the Amburayan River declared as a Water Quality Management Area (WQMA). The grant enabled the IP communities to protect the river and its watershed and established the mechanisms for the sustained participation of the LGUs, CSOs, and NGAs in protecting the river.

AFON, a network of NGOs in Antique organized in 1989, used the grant to establish a People-Led Monitoring and Evaluation System (PLMES) in nine (9) municipalities. The PLMES was designed to cover various aspects needed to support people's participation in monitoring, such as: (1) a clear legal basis for participation (i.e., Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and knowledge of legal frameworks for participation); (2) knowledge of the budget and project cycles of government projects; (3) capacity to constructively engage the government; (4) training on social accountability and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) concepts; and (5) the use of the People's Monitoring Board (PMBs) to track project progress and secure resources to conduct monitoring activities.

The NCPC was created through the Naga City's Empowerment Ordinance in 1995, and receives regular financial assistance from Naga City for the continuing participation and capacity enhancement of NGOs and POs in the city. It implemented a United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) project that helped create a People's Council in six (6) of the 15 municipalities in the Metro Naga Area. The USAID Phil-Am Fund grant supported the creation of a People's Council in seven (7) more municipalities. The NCPC worked beyond just organizing to help the People's Council (PC) and the CSO representatives to view themselves, and be viewed by other stakeholders, especially elected government officials, as equals in the process of governance.

The YPS was established in 2006 to harness the perspectives and energies of public servants aged 35 years old and below in cultivating democratic citizenship, increasing awareness on good governance among the youth, and providing avenues for the youth's voice in governance. The USAID Phil-Am Fund grant supported the YPS program called Youth Vote Philippines (YVP), which aimed to convince the youth to vote and be part of the discourse on elections. The YPS provided the youth with a platform for discourse, giving them the opportunity to share their insights and opinions on social issues. By partnering with the media, for example, they can amplify this voice to reach the national stage.

Gains of Participation Gaining Ground

The declaration of the Amburayan River as a WQMA is the first initiated WQMA in the country, and is made more significant by the fact that it was a CSO that led the process. The JVOFI initiative also built the capacities of IPs to protect the river and its watersheds. More than 100 IP community members from Region I and Benguet were trained by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to become Environment and Natural Resource Officers (ENROs). These IP community volunteers were trained to become paralegals and forest patrollers, enforcing national forestry and wildlife laws. The DENR ended up deputizing 78 volunteers from more than 30 indigenous peoples (IP) organizations from Region I and Benguet.

Through the USAID grant, AFON was able to mobilize 270 trained local monitors from different civil society organizations (CSOs) to implement the PLMES on 225 publicly funded projects in nine (9) municipalities. AFON's work in organizing Project Monitoring Teams (PMTs) in the LGUs helped increase the number of publicly funded projects and services that were implemented and completed, leading to a better perception of the LGUs' transparency and accountability. The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) tapped the PMTs to conduct monitoring and evaluation (M&E) work for the Bottom-Up Budgeting (BUB) of the government of Antique. Partner LGUs have also made plans to continuously engage the CSO monitors either through the allocation of a budget for monitoring, the direct hiring of monitors as Job Orders (JOs), or as participants in various Municipal Development Council (MDC) meetings and fora.

There are now 14 People's Councils in Camarines Sur, seven (7) of which are supported by the Phil-Am Fund, with three (3) more municipalities asking the NCPC for assistance in organizing their People's Councils. The value of people's participation, as modeled by the NCPC, has clearly gained traction from both the local CSOs and the LGUs themselves. In the seven (7) municipalities, the NCPC was able to organize and reactivate CSOs in various sectors, such as people with disability (PWD), solo parents, lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender (LGBT) community, women, farmers, fisher folks, and indigenous people (IP). People's Council members are now able to influence LGU work that directly impacts their lives. People's Council members now make up most of the CSO membership in the Local Poverty Reduction Action Team (LPRAT) in all the municipalities. This has widened the venues for people's participation in local government, resulting in the implementation of People's Council and LGU projects that benefit the sectors in the form of skills training, livelihood projects, as well as institutional development activities.

The YPS campaign engaged 17,000 Filipino youth who participated in fora and learning events, and in holding their own local youth participation activities. It organized 24 Social Conversations in the National Capital Region (NCR) and 34 in other provinces, and successfully established 15 local chapters nationwide. Major media outlets such as ABS-CBN and GMA7 recognized the YPS' role as an electoral-reform advocate and partnered with the YPS for their coverage of the 2016 National Elections. This partnership allowed the YPS to bring the youth advocacy and perspective in the elections.

Giving the ball back

The governance projects supported by the Phil-Am Fund recognized the importance of strengthening people's participation to achieve their development outcomes. Whether to increase political participation in the exercise of voting or in government decision-making processes, in exacting accountability through monitoring and evaluation activities, and in becoming partners to protect natural resources, enabling effective participation became valuable in seeing results. It also returns the power to govern back to the people—where it rightfully belongs.

GOVERNANCE

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION: HOLDING HANDS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

The government alone cannot solve intractable social problems that are often products of social, economic, and political failures. The private sector, civil society organizations (CSO), communities, and different levels of government play important roles in crafting sustainable solutions. Multi-stakeholder participation is critical in achieving wide-reaching outcomes like raising the corporate governance standards in a country, protecting thousands of acres of critical natural resources, or strengthening the effective working relations of government project implementers and citizen monitors.

USAID, through the Phil-Am Fund, supported the multi-stakeholder projects of CSOs to achieve good governance outcomes. These grantees understood that, to achieve their development objectives, different stakeholders need to buy in, become partners, and commit.

Securing Stakeholder Buy-in for Good Governance

The Jaime V. Ongpin Foundation, Inc. (JVOFI) worked with critical stakeholders to protect the Amburayan River that crosses three (3) provinces in two (2) regions. A single institutional mechanism, the Water Quality Management Area (WQMA) designation, became the unifying point to bring the different stakeholders together and clarify their respective roles and responsibilities in protecting the river. The JVOFI worked with the three (3) provincial governments, 15 LGUs, four (4) academic organizations, 11 government agencies, the business sector, and the indigenous peoples (IPs) that depend on the river and its watersheds. The different stakeholders sealed this partnership by signing a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) in 2014, a month after a multi-stakeholder consultation was held. The JVOFI supported this multi-stakeholder partnership by: (1) holding periodic stakeholder meetings; (2) engaging stakeholders to be a part of the field work and the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities; (3) holding stakeholder planning workshops and events; (4) putting up a tool for constant communication; and (5) institutionalizing stakeholder participation through legal documents, such as Executive and Administrative Orders.

Before 2014, the corporate governance performance of Philippine publicly listed companies (PLCs) was very poor. Philippine corporations ranked poorly in the assessment of the ASEAN Corporate Governance Association, and only three (3) percent of the Philippine PLCs scored 80 points and above in the ASEAN Corporate Governance Scorecard (ACGS).

Raising corporate governance standards was a task that the Institute for Corporate Directors (ICD) knows cannot be done just by one sector or actor. The ICD knew that, to fulfill its mission, it required the cooperation of the regulatory bodies, the private sector, and governance advocacy groups. Using the mandate given to the ICD as the appointed domestic ranking body to promote good corporate governance, the ICD turned to the regulatory bodies to secure the participation of companies in the assessment. The ICD worked with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), the Institute of Internal Auditors Philippines (IIA-P), and the Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA) to conduct the assessment. To popularize the ACGS with insurance companies, the ICD worked with the Insurance Commission (IC); for government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), the ICD worked with the Governance Commission (GC).

The Antique Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations (AFON) was established in 1989 to ensure that CSOs are engaged in government development projects. Its People-Led Monitoring and Evaluation System (PLMES) emphasized constructive engagement in dealing with government agencies to secure their buy-in to encourage citizen monitoring of publicly funded projects. The objective is to make the LGUs realize that monitoring is not "fault finding" but a means toward improving service delivery and project implementation. This constructive engagement is set forth in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the AFON, its NGO partners, and the LGU and NGAs. AFON orients the different stakeholders on constructive engagement during a stakeholder forum that also serves as a venue to advocate for the project and consult the different groups. This MOA facilitates the exchange of information and the clear understanding of the roles and functions of each stakeholder in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities.

Concrete Results

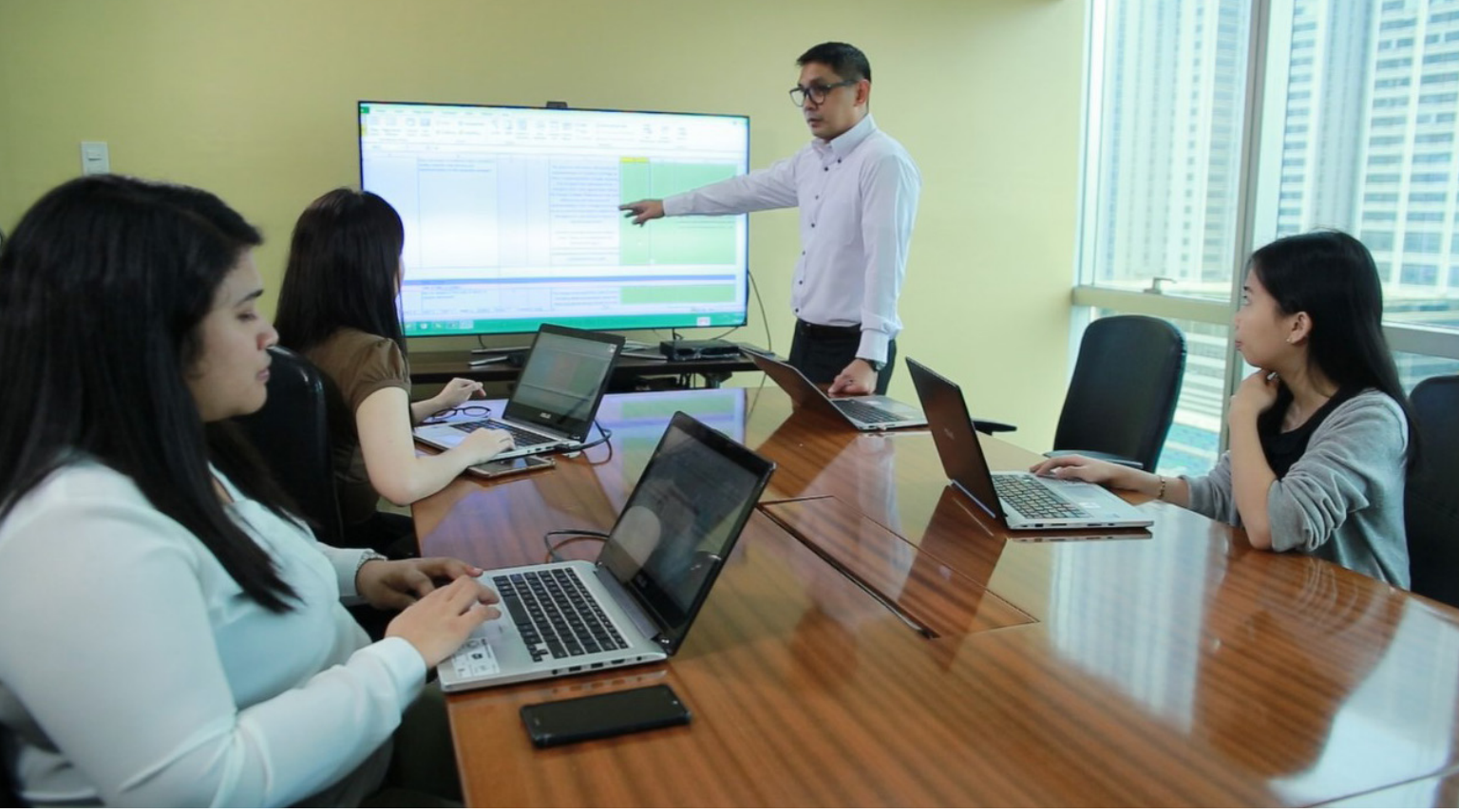
In January 2018, the JVOFI achieved a monumental feat—getting the Upper and Lower Amburayan River declared as a Water Quality Management Area (WQMA) through a proposal developed by a multi-stakeholder initiative. This CSO-initiated WQMA proposal was developed by three (3) provincial governments, 15 local government units (LGUs), 11 national and regional offices of different government agencies, the business sector, four (4) academic institutions, and the indigenous peoples (IP) communities that live in the river and its watersheds. This declaration secured the establishment and budget allocation for a structure that will protect the river. JVOFI's work has become a model, and a booklet on its Best Practices was printed as a reference for similar projects. When the project ended in June 2017, a Sustainability Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed by the Governors of Benguet, La Union, and Ilocos Sur, and the Regional Directors of the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) and in Region I. The signing was witnessed by 79 project partners that sealed the commitment of the LGUs as the backbone of protecting the Amburayan River through the WQMA. The project also formalized sustainability plans and an M&E framework for stakeholders to monitor the progress of the 10-year WQMA plan.

Because of the push from the regulatory bodies, the ICD was able to expand the assessment beyond the PLCs and a total of 482 companies were assessed: 254 PLCs, 104 GOCCs, and 124 insurance companies. The result is a marked improvement in the performance of the country in the ACGS. During the second year of the project, seven (7) made it to the ASEAN Top 50 PLCs, while 11 companies made it in 2017. Seventeen (17) percent scored 80 points and above in the 2017 ACGS. More than the scores, ICD's work placed more Philippine companies in the sights of investors, especially in the ASEAN region, which benefits the country's economy.

The good relationship set by AFON, its partner NGOs, the LGUs, and the NGAs resulted in the monitoring of 225 publicly funded projects and services, the organization of 270 monitors, and the establishment of 270 People's Monitoring Board (PMB) in the participating municipalities. Constructive engagement also opened opportunities for AFON's PMTs to become monitors for other government partners, including the BuB program and the DSWD's Kalahi projects. The monitoring project resulted in better working relationships between the CSOs, community members, and the LGUs; increased transparency and accountability in the LGUs; and, ultimately, benefited the people through more completed services.

Many Hands Make Good Governance Possible

The development objective of the governance projects supported by the USAID Phil-Am Fund is to see improvements in the governance performance of key agencies that provide services to the people. These USAID grants aimed for outcomes that require the commitment of different stakeholders to achieve successful completion and sustain the positive gains beyond the project. Securing the commitment of different stakeholders through binding agreements became critical to these grantees before any other activity was implemented.



GOVERNANCE

SENDING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

Communication and Visibility Tools for Good Governance

Gaining and sustaining citizen interest in good governance initiatives is the persistent challenge faced by organizations that implement projects aimed at improving government accountability, transparency, and integrity. These projects deal with abstract concepts like democracy and social accountability, with results largely felt after the project's implementation period. For the governance initiatives funded by the USAID through the Phil-Am Fund, the use of communication and visibility tools was crucial in keeping project beneficiaries and stakeholders engaged until the results were felt.

The Jaime V. Ongpin Foundation, Inc. (JVOFI) faced the challenge of engaging government and community stakeholders across two (2) regions for a project that covered 130,000 hectares of the Amburayan River and its watersheds. The Antique Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations (AFON) needed to convince LGUs and its citizens that a People-Led Monitoring and Evaluation System (PLMES) works and should be sustained. The Young Public Servants (YPS) sought to bring the youth agenda on the minds of voters and candidates. The Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) aimed to influence publicly listed companies (PLCs) in the country to improve their corporate governance standards.

Sustaining Awareness for Active Participation

AFON installed 270 People's Monitoring Boards (PMBs) in strategic areas in target barangays, which allowed the project to highlight relevant data, issues, and interventions from different partners. The PMBs tracked the progress of 225 government projects and informed the public of relevant data indicators that may represent concerns, issues, and gaps about the projects. The JVOFI, on the other hand, coordinated work on the Water Quality Management Area (WQMA) proposals to ensure that all stakeholders are on the same page when it comes to water quality data, project progress, and each stakeholder's contribution to getting the Amburayan River designated as a WQMA.

Youth Vote Philippines (YPS) relied on a strong communications campaign to educate youth voters and encourage them to participate in social conversations, voter education caravans, public fora with candidates, and election fora. YPS brought its youth vote campaign in strategic venues where many Filipino youth converge, like gaming tournaments and summits. The Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) used a customized ASEAN Corporate Governance Scorecard (ACGS) and information, education, and communications (IEC) materials to bring insurance companies, Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs), Mutual Benefit Associations (MBAs), and commercial banks into the ACGS, even if the original target are Philippine publicly listed companies (PLCs) only.

Numbers Show Hard Work

Effective communication and use of visibility tools were necessary to make the governance projects known by relevant stakeholders. The ICD brought their corporate governance primer, IEC materials, and ACGS sheets to more than 1,958 directors and executives. The ICD also conducted IEC campaigns to convince the regulators to support the ACGS and to encourage the participation of companies. The ICD also customized the ACGS tool to fit non-PLCs and produce a wider effect in improving corporate governance in the country. These efforts resulted to seven (7) PLCs joining the ASEAN Top 50 PLCs in 2016, and to 11 PLCs joining the list by the third year of the project in 2017.

In Antique, the 270 barangay-level People's Monitoring Boards (PMB) installed by AFON in nine (9) covered municipalities served as the communication tool to share updates on the government projects being monitored to a wider public. The PMBs were crucial for promoting transparency and accountability, and for highlighting relevant data, issues, and interventions by different partners on the projects being monitored. Aside from the PMBs, the PLMES introduced other participatory and improvement-oriented monitoring tools such as the People's Score Card (PSC), which keeps track of government project inputs, expenditure, and the quality of implementation, and the Partner's Evaluation Score Card (PESC), a self-assessment tool of the government implementing partner.

The YPS not only encouraged the youth to vote and engage in meaningful discussions to learn about the candidates and share a youth agenda, it also encouraged the youth to join the government workforce and take part in governance through the Bagumbayani Initiative. During the youth vote campaign, YPS was able to reach more than 17,000 Filipino youth

nationwide, and the Bagumbayani Initiative received 22,000 applications for the 3,500 government positions available.

The JVOFI hosted a website (www.amburayanriverbasin.com) that centralized and made available all project data and information to all stakeholders, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability and facilitating decision-making processes. Constant communication was a key to sustaining multi-stakeholder participation. For three (3) years, the JVOFI conducted three (3) provincial consultation meetings, nine (9) municipal consultation meetings, and 27 barangay-level consultations. IEC materials were developed to communicate the project's progress. The IEC materials were identified and developed during two (2) workshops by the project technical working groups (TWG) and included information kit folders, brochures, notebooks, t-shirts, calendars, 13 outdoor signages, and 18 indoor water quality monitoring boards. The 13 outdoor signages were installed in strategic areas identified by the DPWH and the LGUs, while the 18 indoor monitoring boards were turned over to three (3) PLGUs and 15 MLGUs for installation in their LGU compounds.

Communicating for Common Understanding and Appreciation

Communication and visibility in these governance projects were the key to sustaining stakeholder participation in the project activities. In the case of AFON, it was important to sustain the good relations established with the LGUs and to show the communities the importance of their participation in monitoring government projects. In the experience of the JVOFI, political conflicts were realities that the project had to contend with, but constant and effective communication ensured transparency in the project activities and the receipt of data that were scientifically collected. The website, IEC materials, and the constant presence of project stakeholders on the ground sustained the interest of all critical stakeholders in seeing through the completion of the WQMA proposal and requirements.

The ICD needed the regulators to push greater participation, but it was necessary, in the first place, to develop the IEC materials on why corporate governance is needed to convince the regulators and the companies to participate. These IEC materials were constant fixtures in consultation meetings, workshops, orientations, and exclusive trainings that the ICD conducted. YPS, on the other hand, made full use of the youth's creative spirit, the media, and a mix of communications tools to organize the youth and bring its message across a wide public. These communications and visibility activities were crafted and designed to appeal to the youth and capture their interest.

Without a conscious effort to plan for communication and visibility, and the use of tools to report project activities and progress, citizens and stakeholders could have lost track of progress and interest. The USAID, through the Phil-Am Fund, has recognized the importance of communicating achievements and has required these projects to submit stories of interests as well. Communication and visibility have become key development pathways towards achieving the USAID grantees' development goals.

MOVING THE PATHWAYS FORWARD:

Lessons for Future Design and Programming of Development Assistance

In this section, several lessons and cross-cutting ideas from the various pathways discussed are identified. These lessons can contribute to advancing the pathways to development and provide some ideas and inputs for the future design and programming of related development assistance.

1. Development interventions could be more effective if they proceed from awareness, to learning, to action

Technical assistance projects can focus inadvertently on the technical or technology transfer aspects and miss out on other critical dimensions that would make the technology or solution work more effectively. The projects funded by the Phil-Am Fund do focus on the technology aspects as well but combine the technical assistance with awareness raising and capacity building. In general, the approach could be described as starting from awareness, then moving to learning, then creating action. This path was shown to generate effective buy-in and commitment from the critical stakeholders in the grantees' activities.

Most of the projects invested heavily on awareness raising, may they be initiatives on anti-trafficking in persons (ATIP), economic growth, biodiversity, governance, and education. In the ATIP projects, awareness raising was critical to the entire process, targeting the youth and the community as crucial stakeholders, along with the local governments and other government agencies. This ensured that community members and the youth share a common understanding of the knowledge and skills needed to address ATIP. In biodiversity conservation, awareness raising focused on the importance of environmental conservation and watershed management and on the role of conservation enterprises and biodiversity champions. Biodiversity conservation initiatives raised people's awareness on the urgency of planting trees and using local species. Awareness raising in the education interventions influenced key decision-makers, such as the tribal elders, and the story tellers to support and enable the marriage of information technology and traditional storytelling. For the economic growth activities, awareness raising opened the minds of the indigenous people on their own empowerment potentials as active participants in the business cycle.

2. It is crucial to understand the larger system or the larger context where the intervention is situated

Across thematic areas, the importance of seeing the larger system or the bigger context was highlighted. The awareness and recognition of the larger environment was crucial in the participants' understanding of the activities, and their consequent actions and decisions. For example, in the interventions on economic growth, a critical aspect of the pathways' effectiveness is how the targeted groups were made aware of the value chain for their product, or the market system where they need to determine the most effective way of participating and optimizing the opportunities that are present. This made it possible for the community and the groups to actively participate and enhance their position or exert influence in the processes involved in the value chain.

Participants in the biodiversity conservation activities understood their roles and functions, and their responsibilities as stewards and champions, within the larger ecological context where biodiversity needs to be conserved and sustained over time and over generations. This realization of the larger resource context was also evident in the conservation efforts to sustain a river and its related watersheds. In the ATIP interventions, it is the awareness that interventions need to cover the whole process, from awareness raising, prevention, detection, prosecution, to recovery.

3. Non-state institutions can broker the needed partnerships, collaboration, and network building

Non-state organizations could serve as catalysts to build networks and link institutions, organizations, or groups to address a common development challenge. Drawing from their strengths and networking skills, they can create networks where there is none, or link players that otherwise would not have been linked. The pathways to development showed how different approaches to partnerships and network building could be applied.

There were interventions that focused on target groups or individuals that, traditionally, were considered as passive recipients and spectators in the development process. The interventions sought to empower these individuals and groups to become active participants in the process. For example, indigenous peoples' groups were assisted to become active participants in biodiversity conservation and economic growth. The youth were engaged as partners in anti-trafficking in persons and in promoting clean elections.

Other interventions sought to create partnerships and networks among stakeholders and facilitated the consensus on how to achieve a stated goal. This could be seen in the ATIP interventions and in the governance activities. The experience from the activities and interventions could also provide the needed momentum to create a network to support the sustainability of the intervention that was introduced. This could be seen in the case of the interventions to adapt the Braille system, in the creation of an institutional mechanism to save a river and its related watersheds by way of a water quality management area, or in the formation of a network of CSOs and the reactivation and strengthening of inter-agency councils for ATIP.

4. Non-state initiatives could provide proofs of concept, stimulate local government interest, and generate institutional commitment

The activities supported by the Phil-Am Fund showed how non-state initiatives could also benefit local governments, and how local governments could be engaged as critical partners.

Initiatives by non-state actors, such as the grantees under the Phil-Am Fund, can assist local governments in various ways. The initiatives could provide proofs of concept, enable local governments to link with other critical stakeholders, strengthen existing local government initiatives, or serve as entry points for local governments to take up the initiatives and adopt decisions to sustain them after the Phil-Am Fund support has been completed.

State institutions, such as local governments and national government agencies, have inherent aversions to risk. Examples of these are the risks that policy design and program implementation may not lead to the desired results or outcomes, and the need to avoid unwanted results arising from deviations from procedural standards, among others. Non-state initiatives can be treated as proofs of concept, which will enable local governments to assess the risks involved or lessen the chances of program failure. Local governments may consider supporting development initiatives, such as the ones highlighted here in this publication, as a way of testing propositions and of managing the risks of implementing new initiatives.

By their nature as state institutions, local governments and national government agencies carry resources and policy instruments at their disposal, which they are mandated to use to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development. Examples of these are their annual budgets, their law- making and regulatory powers, and their organizational structures and networks for implementation. The various

initiatives funded by the Phil-Am Fund showed the various entry points where government resources and policy and program tools could be used effectively. Particularly, the role of the government in ensuring the institutionalization and sustainability of some of the initiatives by way of enabling legislation, directing resources to support operational requirements, and providing support to volunteer work.

5. Lastly, strategic financing, like venture capital, could bring innovation to work

Lastly, like venture capital, the Phil-Am Fund could be considered as strategic financing, as it leveraged the availability of financing to enable capable partners to explore solutions drawn from and focused on the community to address defined development problems. Three (3) critical elements appear to have worked for the Phil-Am Fund: (1) a feasible and defined scope of the development issues to be targeted; (2) a partnership with capable non-state organizations whose expertise and networking potentials were made evident in their proposals and in the implementation of the interventions; and (3) ideas or approaches that respond to the scope of development issues earlier identified.

USAID, through the Phil-Am Fund, recognized the fundamental role of civil society organizations in making development more broad-based and inclusive. Experience from the field shows that the "Journey to Self-reliance", which USAID is committed to pursue, starts at the community level. For they are better informed of their local context and are best positioned to address challenges faced by fellow Filipinos. The experience and interventions shared in this publication show how initiatives that strengthen capacity of local groups and organizations pave effective pathways for development and self-reliance.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACGS	ASEAN Corporate Governance Scorecard
ADSDPP	Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan
AFON	Antique Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations
ALS	Alternative Learning System
ARESTO	Aquatic Reconnaissance Enforcement Spatial Tracking Operation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATIP	Anti-Trafficking in Persons
AVPL	Allah Valley Protected Landscape
BALAOD Mindanaw	Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw, Inc.
BCAT	Barangay Council Against Trafficking
BCPC	Barangay Council for the Protection of Children
BFP	Biodiversity Fellows Program
BIPAC	Bukidnon Indigenous Peoples Advisory Council
BOI	Board of Investments
BROAS	Beach Resort Owners Association of Sariaya
BSP	Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
BTMHKAC	Bukidnon Tagoloanon Mulahay Ha Kabukalagan Agriculture Cooperative
BUB	Bottom-Up Budgeting
C3MC	Candis 3 Marketing Cooperative
CADT	Certificates of Ancestral Domain Title
CAFA	Cabadbaran Farmers Association
CAR	Cordillera Administrative Region
CBST	Community-Based Sustainable Tourism
CCPV	Community Child Protection Volunteers
CDO	Cagayan de Oro
CFHRR	Child and Family Healing, Recovery, and Reintegration
CLB	Children's Legal Bureau
CLUP	Comprehensive Land Use Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DA	Department of Agriculture
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DepEd	Department of Education
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DUCKEGG	Duck Enterprise for Employment Generation and Growth
EG-ER Program	Eco-Guardians and Eco-Rangers Program
ELLN	Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Program
ENRO	Environment and Natural Resource Officers

F2F	Face-to-Face Cascade Training
FIT-ED	Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development, Inc.
FLUP	Forest Land Use Plan
FORGE	Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors, Inc.
GOCC	Government-Owned and Controlled Corporation
GPS	Global Positioning System
HARIBON	HARIBON Foundation for the Conservation of Natural Resources, Inc.
HVCC	High Value Crop Companies
ICC	Indigenous Cultural Community
ICD	Institute of Corporate Directors
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
IIA-P	Institute of Internal Auditors Philippines
IMAN	Integrated Mindanaoans Association for Natives, Inc.
IP	Indigenous People
IPRA	Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act
IRDFS	Integrated Rice-Duck Farming System
ISACA	Information Systems Audit and Control
JVOFI	Jaime V. Ongpin Foundation, Inc.
K-3	Kinder to Grade 3
KABATA	Kabataan Batok sa Trapiking ug Abuso
KAFA	Kauswagan Farmers Association
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
KFI	Kennemer Foods International
KMAC	Kibalabag Matanus Agriculture Cooperative
LCPC	Local Council for the Protection of Children
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
LGU	Local Government Unit
LPRAT	Local Poverty Reduction Action Team
LRT	Local Research Team
LSB	Local Special Body
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAO	Municipal Agriculture Office
MBA	Mutual Benefit Associations
MDFI	Maguindanaon Development Foundation, Inc.
MEAT	Management Effectiveness Assessment Tool
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MTBMLE	Mother Tongue-Based Multi-Lingual Education
NATRIPAL	Nagkakaisang mga Tribu ng Palawan, Inc.
NCIP	National Commission for Indigenous Peoples
NCPC	Naga City People's Council
NCR	National Capital Region
NGA	National Government Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

NLNP	Naujan Lake National Park
NSMNP	Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park
NTFP-EP	Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Program
OSEC	Online Sexual Exploitation of Children
PAMP	Protected Area Management Plan
PARFUND	Philippine Agrarian Reform Foundation for National Development, Inc.
PC	People's Council
PCREA	Participatory Coastal Resources and Ecological Assessment
PDAO	Persons with Disability Affairs Office
PEF	Philippine Eagle Foundation, Inc.
PESC	Partner's Evaluation Score Card
Phil-Am Fund	Philippine-American Fund
PLC	Publicly Listed Company
PLMES	People-Led Monitoring and Evaluation System
PMB	People's Monitoring Board
PMT	Project Monitoring Team
PNP	Philippine National Police
PO	People's Organization
PPA	Project Partnership Agreement
PREDA	People's Recovery Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation, Inc.
PSC	People's Score Card
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
PTRI-DOST	Philippine Textile Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology
PWD	Persons with Disability
RBI	Resources for the Blind, Inc.
RFI	Roxas Foundation, Inc.
RIACAT	Regional Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
SEDMFI	Surigao Economic Development and Microfinance Foundation, Inc.
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SIPLAS	Siargao Islands Protected Landscapes and Seascapes
STOP	Stop Trafficking of Persons
TAMACO	Tamaraw Salt Producers Cooperative of Occidental Mindoro
TLDFI	Tribal Leaders Development Foundation, Inc.
TNIQUE	Tagasuri ng Isda sa Quezon
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VRC	Vocational Rehabilitation Centers
WFFISH	Wildlife, Forestry, and Fisheries Indicator Spatial Hub
WQMA	Water Quality Management Area
YPS	Young Public Servants
YVP	Youth Vote Philippines

MARCH 2019

Annex D

Phil-Am Fund Grants Manual

GRANTS MANUAL

Philippine-American Fund
AID 492-C-13-00016

22 September 2016 (Revised)

This document was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and was prepared by the Gerry Roxas Foundation for the Philippine-American Fund Project, under contract number AID 492-C-13-00016.

GRANTS MANUAL

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ATIP	Anti-Trafficking in Persons
AWFP	Annual Work and Financial Plan
CAP	Corrective Action Plan
CLB	Children's Legal Bureau
CO	Contracting Officer
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
EY	Ernst & Young
ESR	Environmental Screening Report
FMO	Financial Monitoring Officer
FMR	Financial Monitoring Report
FMS	Financial Management Specialist
GAD	Gender and Development
GM	Grants Manager
GMO	Grants Management Officer
GMT	Grants Management Team
GPH	Government of the Philippines
GRB	Grants Review Board
GRF	Gerry Roxas Foundation
GUC	Grants Under Contract
LOE	Level of Effort
LOP	Life of Project
MEO	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NUPAS	Non-US Organization Pre-Award Survey
OEd	Office of Education
OEDG	Office of Economic Development and Governance
OEECC	Office of Energy, Environment, and Climate Change
PFG	Partnership for Growth
PRA	Pre-Award Risk Assessment
RCA	Recipient Contracted Audit
RFSC	Regional Financial Services Center
RLA	Regional Legal Advisor
ROAA	Regional Office of Acquisition and Assistance
RMAP	Risk Management Action Plan
RPO	Regional Program Officer
SGV	SyCip Gorres Velayo & Co.

STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

ABOUT THE GRANTS MANUAL[1]

The Grants Manual will be the Gerry Roxas Foundation's (GRF) guide to operate and implement the Phil-Am Fund grant facility. It will be reviewed by the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) and approved by the Contracting Officer (CO). It covers all aspects of grant making, from solicitation, screening of applications, vetting of qualified grant recipients, monitoring progress, and closing out grants. It also includes aspects related to the management and administration of the contract.

1. INTRODUCTION

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has awarded the Gerry Roxas Foundation (GRF) a five-year contract to manage and implement a grant facility called the Philippine-American Fund, or the Phil-Am Fund. The Phil-Am Fund will finance local activities that support broad-based, inclusive, and sustainable growth in the Philippines and will help address the constraints to growth as identified in the Partnership for Growth (PFG) Initiative. The PFG is an initiative between the United States Government (USG) and the Government of the Philippines (GPH) that aims to support the latter achieve its high growth potential by creating a more transparent, predictable, and consistent legal and regulatory regime; fostering a more open and competitive business environment; strengthening the rule of law; and supporting fiscal stability.

The Phil-Am Fund will complement the support being given by the USG to the GPH in advancing the goals of the PFG, and in supporting other key goals of the USAID in helping the Philippines achieve a stable, prosperous, and well-governed status. By providing grants to local civil society and private sector organizations, USAID Philippines also hopes to contribute to achieving the goals articulated in the USAID Forward reform agenda.

1.1 Goals and Objectives of the Project

The Phil-Am Fund, along with planned technical assistance across the areas of anti-trafficking in persons (ATIP), economic growth, governance, education, and environment, will assist the Philippines in achieving the goal of moving from a low-growth path to a higher, sustained, and more inclusive growth trajectory at par with other high-performing emerging markets in the Asia-Pacific. The Fund seeks to empower a broad range of non-state institutions to identify and design local, community-based projects that promote inclusive and broad-based development.

[1] The Grants Manual was originally submitted and approved on September 2013. This is a revised manual that incorporates changes in the contract of the Phil-Am Fund as a result of Grant Modification 6 issued on Dec. 28, 2015.

1.2 Strategic Priorities

Subject to the availability of funds, the Phil-Am Fund will issue grants that support inclusive and sustainable growth under the following five (5) broad categories:

Category 1: Promotion of New Business and Entrepreneurship through Economic Growth Grants. This category aims to stimulate more business start-ups by supporting strategic initiatives that promote competitiveness, innovation, and the development of the entrepreneurial spirit in the economy as key drivers of broad-based, inclusive economic growth. Activities that can be supported can include those that expand the availability of venture capital and other non-bank financing for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and enhance business networks and public-private partnerships.

Category 2: Advancing Integrity and Transparency through Governance Grants. This category will promote effectiveness, integrity, transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in the advocacy of reforms in government institutions and public policy reform processes. At the end of the projects under this category, the USAID expects to see greater political and economic competition from an empowered civil society that advances the public interest.

Category 3: Combating Trafficking in Persons. This category will support the efforts of non-state organizations to improve, strengthen, and sustain efforts to protect Filipinos against trafficking, illegal recruitment, and other forms of labor or sexual exploitation through expanded prevention, stronger enforcement, and enhanced protection of victims.

Category 4: Combating 'Last-Mile' Challenges to Literacy through the Innovative Use of Technology. This category of the Phil-Am Fund will provide grants for innovative, scalable, cost-effective, and transformative technology-based solutions to solve select 'last-mile' challenges to both early-grade and adult illiteracy. At the end of the project under this category, the USAID expects to see strengthened human capital through a more literate adult and early-grade child population.

Category 5: Improving Natural Resource and Environmental Management through Biodiversity Conservation Grants. This category will support activities that protect the natural systems that support human well-being and ensure the long-term resilience of local communities. At the end of the project under this category, the USAID expects to strengthen environmental resilience and sustain inclusive economic growth by improving the conservation and management of natural resources.

1.3 Scope of Work

The estimated period of performance of the Phil-Am Fund contract is Aug. 5, 2013 to Aug. 4, 2018.

The responsibilities of the GRF in managing the Phil-Am Fund encompasses three (3) broad areas of activities:

a. Establish a grant-making facility to provide funding to qualifying recipients, referred to as grantees, through a local, competitive process;

b. Integrate the overall strategy, allocations, and management of the USAID grant-making activities in the areas of governance, economic growth, counter-trafficking in persons, education, and biodiversity; and

c. Manage and administer the grant facility on behalf of the USAID.

Subject to the conditions under ADS 302.3.4.13, the GRF will execute grants with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Grants will be locally competed and is subject to the conditions of ADS 302.3.4.13, copied below:

302.3.4.13 Grants Under Contracts (GUCs)

Effective Date: 07/28/2014

a. Subject to the conditions discussed below, the Contracting Officer may enter into a direct contract (including a task order) that allows the USAID contractor to execute grants with non-governmental organizations (non-profits or for-profits) and partner government entities (also known as partner government implementing entity as defined in ADS 220). This Grants Under Contracts authority is allowable only after the following clearances and approvals have been obtained:

- *Clearance from the cognizant General Counsel or Resident Legal Officer and the CO; and*
- *Approval, in writing, from the Head of the Contracting Activity (HCA) for the specific contract for which it would be allowed.*

b. Additional Requirements for GUCs Providing Funds to Partner Government Entities.

(1) In exceptional circumstances, GUCs to partner government entities to provide funds may be authorized if they meet the conditions, requirements, and approvals below. This requirement does not apply to GUCs that are solely in-kind grants, technical assistance, or other activities by the recipient to or for the benefit of a partner government entity. Note that COs do not have the authority to execute grants to a foreign government; ADS 103.3.5.1.c delegates such authority to AAs, and as further delegated.

(2) Prior to obligating funds into a contract for any GUC to a partner government entity that provides funds for activities that the entity will implement (excluding "in-kind" grants, technical assistance, and other activities provided to or on behalf of the partner government entity), the CO must verify that these types of GUCs have been approved either in:

- *The Project Appraisal Document (PAD) (or PAD amendment) (covering the specific GUC requirements stated in ADS 201.3.15.4); or*
- *A Determination and Findings, in accordance with paragraph (3) below.*

(3) If the OU has not addressed GUCs to partner government entities in the PAD (or PAD Amendment), the OU must prepare a D&F that documents:

(i) The results of a pre-financing assessment conducted under ADS 220.3.3.1 and 220.3.4.3 that complies with all statutory assessment requirements; a risk mitigation plan to address any weaknesses identified in the assessment; and how all identified weakness will be mitigated in the GUC that provides funds to a partner government entity;

(ii) How a GUC that provides funds to a partner government entity is consistent with any other decisions and results under the Public Financial Management Risk Assessment Framework (PFMRAF), if any (see ADS 220);

(iii) How a GUC that provides funds to a partner government entity will contribute to sustainability other than in cases where immediate development results outweigh sustainability goals; and

(iv) That there are no alternative means to achieve the foreign assistance purpose other than through GUCs issued by the USAID prime awardee to a partner government entity.

(4) If the cumulative amount of GUCs to partner government entities exceeds USD10 million for the duration of a prime contract award, the Operating Unit must complete a Congressional Notification with the pre-financing assessment results (see ADS 201 and ADS 220).

(5) All D&Fs must be cleared by the RLO/GC, CO, and M/CFO/Mission Controller. The D&F must be approved by the Mission Director for GUCs under Mission executed contracts, and by the cognizant Pilla Bureau Assistant Administrator, in consultation with the relevant Regional AAs, for GUCs under USAID/Washington executed awards. The OU must provide a copy of the signed D&F to the CO to be included in the contract file.

(6) After 07/28/2019, in addition to the clearances above, all D&Fs must be approved by the Bureau AA and the AA for Management. It is USAID policy to increase its direct assistance to partner governments to achieve sustainable development results. As such, no prime award may contain GUCs that provide funds to partner government entities unless a D&F specified in 302.3.4.13 b (3) above is approved by the cognizant Bureau AA (in consultation with relevant Pillar or Regional AAs, as applicable) and the AA for Management and provided to the CO.

c. The grant program under the GUCs authority must meet the following conditions:

(1) Award Amount Thresholds

- *Non-Governmental Organizations: The total value of an individual grant to a U.S. NGO must not exceed USD100,000. This limitation does not apply to grant awards to non-U.S. NGOs.*

- *Partner Government Entities: The total value of all GUCs that provide funds (as opposed to in-kind assistance) to a partner government entity (for example, ministry, municipality, district, etc.) must not exceed USD300,000 for the duration of the prime contract.*

(2) It is not feasible to accomplish USAID objectives through normal USAID contract and grant awards because either:

- *Executing several small grant activities is particularly difficult for the responsible USAID Mission or office; or*
- *The grant program is incidental and relatively small in comparison to the other technical assistance activities of the contractor.*

(3) USAID must be significantly involved in establishing the selection criteria and must approve the recipients. USAID may be less significantly involved when grants are quite small and are incidental to the contractor's technical activities.

(4) Applicable Policies

(i) Non-Governmental Organizations. USAID must ensure that the requirements that apply to USAID-executed grants (including the agency policies regarding construction activities in ADS 303, Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations, applicable standard provisions in ADS 303, and ADS 308, Awards to Public International Organizations) are also applied to grants that a USAID contractor executes.

(ii) Partner Government Entities. For GUCs that provide funds to partner government entities, the contractor must be required to:

- *Incorporate into the grant all required terms and conditions from the prime contract award specifically relating to GUCs, and those regarding audit, monitoring and oversight by the prime recipient. This is not subject to deviation.*

- *For additional information on applicable standard provisions see ADS 303.3.21. When questions arise concerning the appropriate provisions for GUCs, the CO must consult with the cognizant attorney in GC or the cognizant RLO on the terms and conditions of the GUC before approving a GUC providing funds to a partner government entity.*

(5) USAID must retain within the contract the ability to terminate the grant activities unilaterally in extraordinary circumstances.

d. USAID does not authorize contractors to execute or administer cooperative agreements on its behalf. USAID does not require HCA approval when a contractor will only be managing or administering grants already awarded by USAID. COs must not award contracts in which the contractor disclaims liability for any GUCs it awards on USAID's behalf.

2. ROLES AND DEFINITIONS

2.1 The USAID Grants Review Board (GRB)

The Grants Review Board (GRB) is responsible for leading the process of determining the priorities and approaches for grants to be solicited under the Phil-Am Fund, and for providing guidance in the selection of winning applicants. The GRB consists of designated members of the USAID technical staff in economic growth, governance, education, or environment; the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR); and from the Gerry Roxas Foundation's (GRF's) side, the Chief of Party (COP).

The GRB, through the COR, provides oversight to the GRF in achieving the objectives of the grants under the Phil-Am Fund. This includes providing guidance on the entire grant-making process, from design to award, to monitoring and close-out.

2.2 USAID Contracting Officer (CO)

The Contracting Officer (CO) is the only person authorized to make or approve any changes in the requirements of the Phil-Am Fund contract and, notwithstanding any provisions contained elsewhere in this contract, the said authority remains solely in the Contracting Officer (CO). Changes made at the instruction of any person other than the Contracting Officer (CO) shall be considered to have been made without authority, and, as such, no adjustment shall be made in the contract terms and conditions, including the contract price.

2.3 The Contracting Officer's Representative (COR)

The Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) is responsible for providing technical directions to the GRF in implementing and managing the Phil-Am Fund. Technical directions are defined to include:

- Written directions to the GRF which fill in details, suggest possible lines of inquiry, or facilitate completion of work;
- Provision of written information to the GRF which assists in the interpretation of drawings, specifications, or technical portions of the work statement;
- Approval of activities to be financed under the Special Activities Fund (SAF); and
- Review and, where required, provision of written approval of technical reports, drawings, specifications, or technical information to be delivered. Technical directions must be in writing and must be within the scope of the work as detailed in the Phil-Am Fund Grant Agreement.

In addition, the COR is authorized by designation to take any or all action with respect to the following, which could lawfully be taken by the Contracting Officer (CO), except any action specifically prohibited by the terms of this contract:

a. Assures that the GRF performs the technical requirements of the contract in accordance with the contract terms, conditions, and specifications and, when necessary, guides the GRF in correcting observed deficiencies;

b. Maintains all liaison and direct communications with the Phil-Am Fund Chief of Party (COP) as the GRF's official representative for the facility. Written communications and documents with the contractor shall be signed as "COR," with a copy furnished to the Contracting Officer (CO);

c. Monitor the contractor's production or performance progress and notify the contractor in writing of deficiencies observed during surveillance, and direct appropriate action to effect correction. Record and report to the Contracting Officer (CO) incidents of faulty or non-conforming work, delays, or problems;

d. Obtain the necessary security clearance and appropriate identification if access to government facilities is required. If to be provided, ensure that government-furnished property is available when required; and

e. Accepts and approves all deliverables submitted by the Phil-Am Fund and facilitates the payment process.

2.4 Gerry Roxas Foundation (GRF)

The Gerry Roxas Foundation (GRF) is the main contractor of the Phil-Am Fund facility. The facility is placed at the level of "Programs" within the GRF's organizational structure, where the Executive Director (ED) has direct oversight. Being part of the GRF organization, the Phil-Am Fund Team strictly adheres to the GRF Code of Ethics. As the contractor for managing the grant facility, the GRF will provide the following support to the Phil-Am Fund:

a. ***Direct technical support*** by the ED to the COP in key grant-making processes such as the review of proposals, endorsement to the USAID, grants monitoring, and close-out.

b. ***Provision of Office and Logistical Facility.*** The GRF houses the facility within its main office at the Araneta Center, Quezon City, a place strategically located and highly accessible to potential partners and grantees. For its provincial reach, the GRF provides offices in Roxas City in the Visayas, and in Davao City for its Mindanao grant-making activities.

c. ***Financial Management Support.*** To ensure the integrity of its financial transactions, the GRF provides the following support to the Phil-Am Fund facility:
    - Treasury management and administration;

- Opening and management of bank accounts dedicated to the Phil-Am Fund;
- Funds monitoring, including releases to the GRF for operating expenses and those released to sub-grants;
- Funds management that includes cash management, working capital management, and real-time updating of cash position;
- Accounting support that includes providing cash balances, recording of expenditures, and processing cash advances;
- Bank reconciliation; and
- Asset and property management.

d. ***Technical Support.*** The Executive Director (ED) provides direct oversight to the facility as one of the major programs of the GRF. The Phil-Am Fund shall be included in the regular updating and monitoring of the GRF. The GRF invites the Phil-Am Fund's Chief of Party (COP) to the regular meeting of its Executive Committee (ExeCom) for discussions not only on project updates but also on issues of support, complementation, and synergy. The regular meetings ensure the continuous flow of information and the quick resolution of problems and issues when they arise.

e. ***Knowledge Management.*** The GRF dedicates a channel of information for the Phil-Am Fund, where the latter can access the available resources of the GRF. The GRF assists the Phil-Am Fund in capturing lessons learned and knowledge developed during the grant-making process. The GRF will also provide a dedicated physical and electronic repository of its data and shall assist the facility in processing its data, transforming them into dynamic knowledge products that will help the Phil-Am Fund achieve its goals and objectives. The GRF's Knowledge Management (KM) supports the Phil-Am Fund in developing its knowledge products by linking the facility to its own resources, thereby reducing the learning curve and preparations of the Phil-Am Fund for such products. Finally, the GRF includes the Phil-Am Fund in its communications, targeting more support for its projects or inspiring actions that will complement its prescribed activities.

f. ***Reporting.*** As the contractor of the Phil-Am Fund, the Executive Director (ED) of the GRF signs off all major reports submitted to the USAID. The GRF provides additional support in ensuring that all contractual obligations are met in a timely manner.

2.5 SyCip Gorres Velayo & Co. (SGV)

SGV is the principal institutional partner of the GRF in managing the Phil-Am Fund facility. SGV provides technical assistance in the review of proposals, conduct of pre-award survey, review and retooling of sub-grantees' financial and management systems,

and the risk assessment of the Phil-Am Fund facility. SGV ensures that financial management systems are in place prior to sub-grant awards. SGV is expected to add value to the GRF'S internal strengths in managing the facility, as well as improve grantees' awareness of the importance of good governance, risk management, and controls in the management of donor funds.

2.6 The Grants Management Team (GMT)

The Grants Management Team (GMT) comprise of key personnel whose functions include representation and coordination with the USAID, as well as deliberation and discussion of major decision points which address the needs of the facility and its grantees. The GMT is comprised of the GRF Executive Director (ED), GRF Finance Director (FD), Chief of Party (COP), Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP), Grants Manager (GM), Financial Management Specialist (FMS), and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (MEO).

2.7 The Executive Director (ED) of Gerry Roxas Foundation (GRF)

The GRF, as the contractor of the Phil-Am Fund, authorizes its ED to represent and bind the GRF to its commitments under the Phil-Am Fund, as expressed in the Grant Agreement. The ED, upon the advice of the Chief of Party (COP), is the only person designated to authorize any changes in the Grant Agreement. If the grantee makes any changes at the behest of any person other than the ED, the change shall be considered made without authority and, as such, no adjustment shall be made in the grant terms and conditions, including cost.

In circumstances where the requested changes will require additional resources or significant re-programming that will depart from the original design approved by the GRB, the CO and the GRB's review and approval will be required.

2.8 Chief of Party (COP)

The Chief of Party (COP) provides oversight in managing the Phil-Am Fund grant-making mechanisms, including directing resources and other necessary support that will help in achieving the objectives of the grant. This function includes providing direction in identifying and managing risks, capacity building for grantees, sustainability, and knowledge management. The COP consolidates the issues and concerns of the Grants Management Team (GMT) in monitoring all grants and other support activities under the Phil-Am Fund, and then submits recommendations to the GRF ED for appropriate action, including, but not limited to, grant modifications. The COP also represents the Phil-Am Fund in the USAID Grants Review Board (GRB).

Specifically, the COP performs the following functions:

a. ***Phil-Am Fund oversight.*** Plans, directs, and oversees the management of facility activities in accordance with the USAID operations policies and procedures, the program description, approved work plans and budgets, and contractual agreements. In collaboration with other key personnel and GRF leadership, the COP leads the development of annual work plans and budgets for approval by the USAID. The COP ensures that the facility is making progress towards its objectives and that it is building results that contribute to the goal and objectives of the Phil-Am Fund.

   The COP manages the facility and its team using a participatory, adaptive management approach. The COP ensures that management systems are established. The COP administers the program and ensures that all activities are coordinated effectively and are well integrated with other relevant USAID-funded initiatives. With support from the GRF and the Phil-Am Fund Team, the COP ensures that the program complies with donor policies and regulations. With the support of the Grants Manager (GM), the COP ensures the establishment and effective management of a grant facility. The COP also collaborates with the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (MEO) in tracking the Phil-Am Fund's performance and compliance to its own contractual obligations.

b. ***Financial management.*** With the direct support of the Financial Management Specialist (FMS), the COP ensures the establishment of financial management systems for the program to adequately meet financial management needs and donor regulations and policies. The COP monitors accounting, administrative, and operational procedures, standards, and policies for the Phil-Am Fund, including grants. In collaboration with the Financial Manager, the COP prepares and submits regular financial reports to the USAID in accordance with the procedures established and agreed upon by the GRF and USAID earlier.

c. ***Building partnerships.*** The COP establishes and maintains effective working relationships with the Phil-Am Fund COR and other relevant USAID representatives from the facility's thematic priorities and contributors, COPs of other PFG projects, GRF leadership and staff members, grantees, local resource partners, stakeholders, beneficiaries, and other relevant organizations in the country, including government partners.

2.9 Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP)

The Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) provides support to the COP in leading the Grants Management Team (GMT) in managing the grant-making mechanism, especially in the supervision of technical and financial support provided by the GMT to grantees. The DCOP ensures that oversight provided by the GMT to grantees are consistent with the provisions of the GRF contract and USAID rules and regulations. The DCOP will also ensure that all resources required in moving grants and its support activities are available

when and where they are needed, and in synchronizing personnel movements for the efficient and effective utilization of Phil-Am Fund resources. The DCOP will also assist the COP in setting up capacity-building support and mechanisms for both the Phil-Am Fund staff and its grantees. The DCOP acts as the alternate of the COP in the Grants Review Board (GRB).

2.10 Grants Manager (GM)

The Grants Manager (GM) will be primarily responsible for designing a grant-making mechanism that will deliver USAID's planned technical assistance for the Philippines to achieve a higher, sustained, and more inclusive growth. The GM will lead the whole grant-making process that starts with drafting and issuing the grant solicitation paper, processing, awards, grants monitoring, and close-out. The GM will also work closely with the Financial Management Specialist (FMS), the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (MEO), and the facility's institutional partner, SGV, for grantee activities and financial tracking. The GM is also responsible in organizing pre-bid conferences, site validation, and appraisal missions.

The GM will also initiate discussions on the effectiveness and efficiency of the various processes that support the grant-making work of the Phil-Am Fund, gather lessons, and submit recommendations to the COP and the GRF on how to further improve the grant-making process and strategies. The GM works closely with the M&E Officer in providing regular updates on grantee projects.

The COP designates the GM to be the main liaison between the Phil-Am Fund and the grantees. The GM is also expected to lead the provision of technical support to the grantees.

2.11 Financial Management Specialist (FMS)

The Financial Management Specialist (FMS) is primarily responsible for implementing financial policies and controls for all aspects of accounting and financial systems for the grants administration function of the facility. The FMS will support efforts at ensuring the integrity and capacity of grantees in receiving and managing funds from the facility. Among other functions, the FMS will collaborate with the GM in monitoring the status and movement of grant funds of individual awards.

2.12 Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (MEO)

The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer will be responsible for sustained monitoring and evaluation (i.e., formative and midterm evaluations) that informs management decisions by assessing whether grant activities are being implemented as planned, reaching targeted groups, and achieving expected outputs and outcomes. The MEO will lead the development of the Phil-Am Fund Performance Management Plan (PMP), which

describes the facility's agreed-upon framework of goals, outcomes, and outputs for the project or activity, along with defined indicators, baselines, and targets, each gender disaggregated where appropriate. The PMP will also include a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan that describes the evaluative work that the Gerry Roxas Foundation, Inc. (GRF) will conduct for its own management decision-making, institutional learning, and accountability purposes.

The MEO will also ensure that proper monitoring and evaluation is carried out at outcome level and will provide input to extracting and capturing lessons learned. The MEO will also provide support to donor reporting to ensure that reports cover outcome indicators and strategic information on the results and impact of interventions.

2.13 Grants Management Officer (GMO)

The Grants Management Officer (GMO) will assist the Grants Manager (GM) in the grant-making process, which starts with drafting and issuing the grants solicitation paper, processing, awards, grants monitoring, and close-out. The GMO assists in supervising the monitoring activities of the Regional Program Officers (RPO) and in tracking the progress of grantee Work and Financial Plans (WFPs) and the provisions of the Grant Agreement.

2.14 Financial Management Officer (FMO)

The Financial Management Officer (FMO) will assist the Finance Management Specialist (FMS) in implementing financial policies and controls for all aspects of accounting and financial systems for the grants administration function of the facility. The Financial Management Officer (FMO) also assists in supervising the monitoring activities of the Financial Monitoring Officers (FMO) and tracking grantee transactions based on the approved grantee Work and Financial Plans (WFPs) and the provisions of the Grant Agreement.

2.15 Regional Program Officers (RPO) – Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao

For the technical aspect, the Regional Program Officers (RPOs) will closely work with grantees to ensure that the requirements for the monitoring, recording, reporting, and documentation of grant-related activities are properly complied with. The RPOs provide guidance in project implementation and validate project reports submitted by grantees. The RPOs prepare quarterly progress reports to the Grants Manager (GM).

2.16 Financial Monitoring Officers (FMO) – Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao

For the financial aspect, designated Financial Monitoring Officers (FMOs) will make sure that financial recording systems and procedures are maintained in accordance with all laid-down requirements in the Grant Agreement. The FMOs also ensure that a clear

audit trail is maintained. The FMOs also provide technical assistance to grantees in the preparation of requests for cash advances and financial reports. The FMOs provide periodic financial updates to the Financial Management Specialist (FMS).

3. USAID GRANT TYPES

There are three (3) types of grant instruments that may be utilized under the Phil-Am Fund, namely:

- Simplified Grant;
- Fixed Amount Award and
- Standard Grant.

The Phil-Am Fund GM and FMS will recommend the type of grants to be used, based on the information provided by the proponents in their concept papers, full proposal submissions, and the results of the SGV pre-award surveys and risk assessment. The Phil-Am Fund will also consider the type of grant, size of the award, and the grantee's financial capability in determining payment terms. The COP endorses the grant instrument to be applied for GRF approval.

The USAID Contracting Officer (CO), through the COR, provides consent to the choice of grant instrument for the Phil-Am Fund grants. The following are the grant mechanisms that may be used for the Phil-Am Fund grants:

3.1 Simplified Grant (Modified from ADS 303)

This type of grant will be used only when the grant meets the following conditions:

a. The assistance instrument is a grant, not a cooperative agreement.

b. The total grant amount does not exceed USD150,000.

c. The recipient will not purchase any goods or services, except as authorized under the grant agreement.

d. The recipient has signed pre-award certifications as required in 303.3.8.

e. The grant requires the recipient to allow the Phil-Am Fund access to its records for up to three (3) years after the end date of the grant, and the recipient will refund the Phil-Am Fund for any funds it receives for any costs that did not meet the terms and conditions of the grant.

f. The Phil-Am Fund will reimburse only those direct costs that are identified in the grant agreement.

g. The Phil-Am Fund may modify the Simplified Grant format as long as the agreement includes the applicable standard provision for related costs in the small grant award, and if the support of international travel or the purchase of equipment is necessary for the performance of the grant.

h. The grant must be included in any audit required by the Phil-Am Fund.

3.2 Fixed Amount Award

The FAA instrument allows performance based on milestones without monitoring the actual costs incurred by the recipient. The FAA is appropriate for supporting specific projects when the facility is confident that a reasonable estimate of the actual cost of the overall effort can be established, and the Phil-Am Fund can define accomplishment of the purpose of the grant through defined milestones. It is essential that the facility has enough cost information to allow for the negotiation of a reasonable estimate of the actual cost of the milestone.

Because payments under FAAs are based on the achievement of milestones, the structure of the payments is very important. The Phil-Am Fund pays the recipient a set amount when it accomplishes a milestone. FAAs are shorter, less complicated, fixed payments tied to deliverables and governed by the following conditions:

a. Total grant must not exceed USD500,000;
b. All allocable costs must be identified in the grant agreement;
c. International air travel and indirect costs are not allowable costs;
d. All purchases must meet the rules governing local cost financing;
e. Grantee receives payment on a reimbursement basis (i.e., no advances);
f. Programmatic accomplishments or results in establishing grant milestones can be easily identified and quantified;
g. Limited risk that there will be changes to the program; and
h. Adequate cost (i.e., historical or unit pricing) available to determine and negotiate the fixed price of the grant.

3.3 Standard Grants

The Standard Grant instrument may be used if one or more of the following conditions apply:

a. The Phil-Am Fund grant covers the cost of the entire activity, where the grant does not include co-funding.

b. Grant budget includes programmatically necessary international travel and/or negotiated indirect costs.

c. Depending on approved grant authority to the Phil-Am Fund, the range of individual grant amount may be set at the Philippine peso (PhP) equivalent of USD100,000 to USD500,000.

d. Non-expendable equipment with a value of USD5,000 or higher may be authorized by the Phil-Am Fund. However, equipment must meet rules on source and origin.

e. The grant may be incrementally funded.

f. The grant may include sub-agreements. The grantee will comply with all standard provision requirements regarding awarding and managing sub-agreements. The grantee is responsible for determining sub-award qualifications and monitoring sub-award compliance with required provisions. The GM reserves the right to request documentation of sub-award compliance with programmatic and financial grants requirements.

Increased grantee financial accountability and reporting accompanies the use of the Standard Grant format, as the provision and reconciliation of advances entails more sophisticated and detailed grantee financial reporting.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE GRANTS UNDER THE PROJECT

The core values of the GRF are Integrity, Service, and Excellence. These values guide the foundation in fulfilling its mission of creating opportunities for leadership, catalyzing communities for change, and generating innovations in development. These are the same values that the GRF will use to guide the Phil-Am Fund core staff, employees, contractors, and grantees in achieving and delivering the results committed by the Phil-Am Fund. The GRF shall maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct governing the solicitation, selection, awards, monitoring, and oversight of the Phil-Am Fund.

In addition, the GRF will conform to ethical standards of conduct as prescribed by USAID laws and regulations, as well as by the GRF's policies and procedures. If any officer, employee, or contractors under the Phil-Am Fund project or grantee becomes aware of any allegations of unethical conduct and prohibited acts described below, the individual is obligated to immediately inform, orally or in writing, the Phil-Am Fund Chief of Party (COP) of such alleged conduct. The Chief of Party (COP) is authorized by the GRF to investigate any such allegations and take appropriate action to remedy, correct, mitigate, or otherwise resolve the unethical conduct or prohibited acts.

Offenders may also be subject to criminal prosecution under the U.S. Criminal Bribery and Illegal Gratuities Statute and the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Ethical standards of conduct applicable to the Phil-Am Fund grantees and their officers, employees, consultants, and sub-grantees include understanding and complying with rules against personal conflict of interest, as well as avoiding fraud as defined and explained by the USAID Office of Inspector General (www.usaid.gov/oig/).

The definition of conflict of interest is as follows:

a. ***Organizational or Personal Conflict of Interest.*** No employee, officer, or agent of the Phil-Am Fund project, the grantee, or sub-grantee shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a grant or sub-grant supported by USAID funds if a real or apparent conflict of interest would be involved. Such a conflict may arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, or partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a real or perceived financial or other interest in the organization selected for award.

b. ***Anti-Kickback and Bribery.*** The officers, employees, and agents of the Phil-Am Fund project, the grantee, or sub-contractors shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, grantees, sub-contractors, or third parties.

4.1 Conflict of Interest Between SGV, Phil-Am Fund Personnel, and its Grantees

a. Part of SGV's role in the Phil-Am Fund includes the provision of technical assistance in the review of proposals, conduct of pre-award survey, review and retooling of grantees' financial and management systems, and risk assessment of the Phil-Am Fund facility. In cases where there are potential conflicts of interest on potential grantees as audit clients, SGV will formally declare and confirm such association prior to the conduct of the pre-award survey. SGV will issue a formal letter from the appropriate management personnel and will be provided to the GRF, which states that the activities to be conducted by SGV on its audit clients are either prohibited or not, for independence purposes, under applicable Ernst & Young Independence Policy, regulatory and/or professional standards.

b. For the Phil-Am Fund personnel, GMT members sign a confidentiality and conflict of interest certification to declare and confirm association with applicants for project funding before the desk review of received applications. GMT members with potential conflict of interest will inhibit themselves from deliberations for the subject application.

5. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Conditions for Eligibility

Applications will be accepted from Philippine private, for-profit and non-profit organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including private universities, research organizations, professional associations, faith-based and community

organizations, and other similar special interest associations. Only one (1) application will be accepted per legal entity or organization.

At the time of the submission of applications, applicants must fulfill the following minimum eligibility criteria:

- At least three (3) years of continuing operation as a legal entity;
- With full-time project, administrative, and financial personnel; and
- At least two (2) audited financial statements with accompanying Statement of Management Responsibility (2013 and 2014).

Selection of grant awards will be based on the evaluation criteria presented in the Application Guidelines. Selected applicants will go through the Phil-Am Fund appraisal process that includes site validation, assessment of technical feasibility and organizational capacity, and risk and negotiation to determine the best value. The Cost Application will be assessed in terms of the proponent's capability to accomplish the grant objectives within the cost proposed and cost reasonability. Other assessment criteria are allocability, allowability, cost effectiveness and realism, adequacy of budget detail, and financial feasibility.

5.2 Procurement of Commodities and Services

5.2.1 Ineligible Commodities and Services

The following commodities and services may not be procured by the Phil-Am Fund and its grantees, based on ADS Reference 303mab:

- Military equipment;
- Surveillance equipment;
- Commodities and services for support of police or other law enforcement activities;
- Abortion equipment and services;
- Luxury goods and gambling equipment; or
- Weather modification equipment.

5.2.2 Restricted Commodities

The following are restricted commodities based on ADS Reference 303mab. Procurement of the following commodities will require prior approval from the GRF Executive Director:

- Agricultural commodities;
- Motor vehicles;
- Pharmaceuticals;

- Pesticides;
- Used equipment;
- U.S. Government-owned excess property; or
- Fertilizer.

5.3 Required Certifications

The applicant must submit the statutory and regulatory certifications and representations required by ADS 303.3.8 (refer to ADS Reference 303mav) which are maintained in the award file. Below are the following forms and certificates:

a. Applicant Representation;
b. Certificate of Recipient;
c. Authorized Individuals;
d. Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);
e. Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number;
f. Letter of Credit Number;
g. Procurement Information;
h. Type of Organization; and
i. Past USAID Projects.

In the check on the registration on the System Awards Management (SAM) website (https:/www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/##11), the result should reveal no active exclusions.

Concurrent verification should also generate no negative hits for the applicant under:

a. Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) list of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (http://www.treas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/sdn); and
b. United Nations Security Sanctions Committee website. (www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/consolist.shtml).

6. GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

The process begins with the issuance of the solicitation guidelines and the call for applications. To establish a competitive environment for selecting grants, the Phil-Am Fund will encourage many potential applicants to respond to the call for applications.

In general, the grants management cycle goes through the following general processes:

- Solicitation;
- Proposal Processing;
- Pre-Award Risk Assessment Survey;
- Awarding;

- Monitoring and Administration; and
- Close-out.

Grant Solicitation

The grant solicitation guidelines should be approved by the USAID prior to its official release and advertisement. Once approved, the contractor will utilize the following avenues to introduce the Phil-Am Fund and the funding opportunities made available by the mechanism:

a. Posting and advertising the solicitation using a multi-media approach:
   - Advertisement in major broadsheets;
   - Posting in the GRF website;
   - Announcement in the Phil-Am Fund microsite;
   - E-mail blast to all partner and network organizations; and
   - Cross-posting in the GRF partner networks.

b. ***Solicitation conferences.*** To bring the Phil-Am Fund mechanism to as many potential grantees as possible, the GRF will conduct pre-bid conferences initially in the three (3) major island groups of the country and in targeted areas, if needed. The pre-bid conferences will provide the venue for person-to-person and for more detailed discussions of the Phil-Am Fund structure, opportunities, mechanisms, and priorities. It will also serve as a venue to stimulate ideas that could be developed as eligible activities under the Phil-Am Fund.

The pre-bid conferences will be as inclusive as possible and will employ local languages to eliminate communication barriers. Through the conferences and call for applications, the Phil-Am Fund will also announce the deadline for the receipt of full proposal submissions from applicants.

An invitation to develop concept papers[2] and full proposals does not constitute an award, and the Phil-Am Fund reserves the right to fund any or none of the proposals submitted.

6.1 Stage One: Full Proposal Submission

The Phil-Am Fund will invite applicants to submit a complete Technical and Financial Proposal using prescribed templates contained in the application. The guidelines contain information needed to guide applicants in proposal writing. It includes information on priorities, grant ceilings, results framework, indicative activities, timeframe, and the evaluation criteria.

The application is divided into two parts: (1) the Technical Application, and (2) the Cost Application. The Technical Application must be specific, complete, presented concisely,

[2] The Phil-Am Fund used a two-tiered approach in proposal processing for its first grant cycle. During the solicitation, the GRF invited the submission of concept papers. The concept papers were assessed based on their alignment with the Phil-Am Fund goals, innovativeness, and potential to contribute to the USAID Phil-Am Fund development goals. Only those concepts that were selected were invited to submit full-blown proposals. The initial stage of concept paper solicitation prolonged the review process. In succeeding grant cycles, the process was eliminated.

and responsive to the instructions found in this guide. It must clearly demonstrate the applicant's knowledge of the problem(s) they intend to address and the operational strategies in implementing solutions to the identified problems. The application should clearly demonstrate the applicant's technical expertise in the category they are applying for.

The Cost Application should provide the necessary details and supporting information on the funding needed by the project. The cost presentation must include a complete analysis of each line item cost and budget notes to explain budget assumptions. The applicant is expected to provide an unlocked or unprotected Microsoft Excel file of the detailed budget, broken down to specifics, with narratives explaining the basis for the estimate for each category of cost in complete detail to facilitate the determination of cost realism. Cost Applications should follow the prescribed format.

The applications must be submitted in both printed and electronic form. As funds for the five (5) categories are not always available, applications will be processed and prioritized based on the availability of funding and will be reviewed on a "first come, first served" basis.

Printed copies of proposals should be submitted in sealed envelopes with the name and address of the proponent to the following address:

THE GRANTS MANAGER
The Phil-Am Fund, Gerry Roxas Foundation
11th Floor Aurora Tower, Araneta Center, Quezon City 1109
Email: usaid.philamfund@gerryroxasfoundation.org

Applicants should ensure that the printed and electronic files they submit are identical in form and substance. Any questions concerning this solicitation must be addressed to the Grants Manager.

6.2 Stage Two: Review of Full Applications

Following the receipt of full applications, the GMT performs the following steps to properly document the review process:

a. The Grants Manager, with the Grants Management Officer, shall perform the following procedures upon receipt of the concept papers:
   - Logging application packages by order of receipt;
   - Assigning reference number for tracking;
   - Opening physical and digital envelopes for each of the applications received. The file will contain all the documents relevant to the proposal, including communications, reviews, and copies of meeting minutes where the proposal is mentioned; and

- Writing of acknowledgement letters to those who submitted applications and informing them of the next steps to be taken using standard letters.

b. After recording all submissions, the Grants Manager, with assistance from the Program Associate, will perform an initial review of submissions based on completeness and eligibility.

- Applications are checked if the following documents are enclosed in the package:

    i. Technical Proposal
        1. General Information;
        2. Overall Technical Approach;
        3. Management Structure;
        4. Institutional Capability and Past Performance;
        5. Environment, Sustainability, Gender, and People with Disability (PWD);
        6. Eligibility Checklist; and
        7. Results Framework.

    ii. Cost Proposal
        1. Budget Summary;
        2. Budget Details; and
        3. Budget Notes.

    iii. Registration Documents
        1. DTI/SEC/CDA Certificate; and
        2. Latest General Information Sheet.

- Incomplete submissions will automatically be dropped from the review process.

- The Grants Manager then comes up with a shortlist of applications for the desk review of the GMT.

c. Once the submissions have been properly documented and organized, the GMT, with SGV Representatives and STTAs, if any, will review applications based on their technical merits. The evaluation criteria for the review of applications is provided in the Application Guidelines.

d. During the meeting, the GMT ranks applications and decides on the applications that will proceed to the next phase of the evaluation process, the field validation. Scoresheets are accomplished by GMT members as the basis for ranking applications. Proponents whose applications did not pass the technical assessment will be informed of the decision. Their respective application folders will be closed and archived.

e. The GMT also prepares a list of questions on each application to be addressed during field validation. These questions form part of the Data Capture Form.

The USAID COR will be informed of the schedules of meetings related to proposal deliberations and invited to participate in the review.

Table 1. Criteria for Desk Review of Technical Applications

Clarity and Consistency of Results, Objectives, and Activities	• Does the proposal clearly define the problem/objectives and how the proponent intends to address them through project activities? • Are the project goals/objectives, outcomes, outputs, and activities logically consistent? That is, will activities deliver the outputs resulting in outcomes that will contribute to the goals/objectives?
Strategic Positioning	• Does the project (i.e., objectives, activities, etc.) contribute to the preferred indicators in the funding category? • Will the project create sustainable entities/structures that will continue to pursue its goals and objectives even after the Phil-Am Fund grant ends? • Is the project scalable and replicable so its impact can be increased in the future? • Does the proponent mobilize other institutions (i.e., donors, implementers, etc.) as partners in project design and implementation? • Does the proposal present new approaches and methodologies?
Organizational Capacity in the Proposed Project	• Does the applicant have enough capacity/experience to implement its proposal? • Does the applicant have enough capacity/experience to implement its proposal?

6.3 Stage Three: Site Visits and Background Check

After a shortlist of applicants for field validation has been determined, the GMT will conduct office visits and field validation of applications. SGV also conducts due diligence checks to ensure that applicant organizations and personnel are not listed in any exclusions list.

STTAs may be engaged to assist the GMT in the review of proposals and the conduct of site visits.

6.3.1 Office Visit

The office visit seeks to establish the management capacity of the applicants and ensure the commitment of board members for the implementation of the proposed project. The visit will include the following activities:

- Meeting with representatives of the applicant, especially members of the Board of Trustees, the Executive Director, the organization's technical people who prepared the application, and other officers of the organization.

- Review of minimum documentary evidence of capacity as listed in the Solicitation Guidelines:

    1. Administrative Manual;
    2. Operations Manual;
    3. Code of Ethics;
    4. Human Resource Management Manual;
    5. Strategic Plan;
    6. Accounting and Finance Manual;
    7. Procurement Policies and Procedures; and
    8. Disaster and Risk Management Plan.

- Discussion of both technical and financial details of the application based on the Phil-Am Fund's evaluation criteria, as prescribed in the Solicitation Guidelines.

The office visit will help determine if the applicant has the technical and financial capacity to manage a potential Phil-Am Fund grant.

6.3.2 Field Validation

Field validations are conducted to assess the feasibility, social acceptance, and participation of target beneficiaries in proposal preparation. The field visits focus on the following:

- Technical feasibility and appropriateness of proposed activities in the local setting where the activities are planned to be implemented. This includes conducting ocular inspection in the specific sites where the project will be implemented and ensuring that the proposed interventions will not negatively harm the target areas;
- Level of awareness and participation of target beneficiaries in the application preparation;
- Level of acceptance or openness of target beneficiaries to the proposed activities;
- Sense of ownership of communities of the overall initiative; and
- Target beneficiaries/partners' knowledge of the applicant's capacity, credibility, and integrity.

The GMT will document findings during the office and field validation activities. These will form part of the Memorandum of Negotiations. Responses of applicants are also documented in the Data Capture Form.

6.3.3 Due Diligence Checks

Aside from the usual review of technical feasibility and the proponent's capacity to implement, the GMT, with SGV assistance, performs due diligence checks to ensure that applicants and their proposed personnel are not in any exclusions list of international organizations. The names of applicants and their proposed personnel will be checked based on the following exclusions lists:

- System for Awards Management Exclusions;
- Al Qaeda Sanctions List of the United Nations;
- Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List of the Office of Foreign Assets Control;
- Accused parties involved in the Priority Development Assistance Fund scam; and
- Accused parties involved in Malampaya Fund scam.

The COP immediately informs the CO of any hits in the exclusions lists.

6.4 Stage Four: Grants Management Team Deliberations

Following the field validation and due diligence checks, the GMT will once again deliberate to decide on the applications to be endorsed for the review of the USAID Grants Review Board (GRB).

a. The GMT member or STTA assigned to perform the field validation prepares a project summary to present an overview of the proposal. Project summaries and data capture forms will be submitted to the GMT before the set schedule for deliberations.

b. During the deliberations, the GMT member or STTA assigned will present the overall objectives and activities of the application, address questions raised by the GMT members before field validation, and make final recommendations if the application is for approval, deferral, or rejection.

c. After the presentations, the GMT members will vote to determine which applications will be endorsed to the GRB.

d. The COR may be invited to observe the deliberations.

e. Proponents whose applications did not pass the technical assessment will be informed of the decision. Their respective application folders will be closed and archived.

f. Project summaries for applications that passed the GMT deliberations will be finalized by the Grants Manager and sent to the GRB one (1) week prior to the agreed upon schedule for the GRB meeting.

6.5 Stage Five: Grants Review Board Meeting

The GRB will provide overall direction of the Phil-Am Fund in selecting grant recipients. From the results of the GMT deliberations, the GRF shall recommend grant applications to the GRB for approval. Chaired by the COR, the GRB shall also be comprised of the contractor's Chief of Party (COP) and the designated USAID technical staff. The procedure for the GRB review and voting is as follows:

- The COR will preside on the voting process. The COR will read the name of the organization and the project title. No presentations will be made as the GRB members should have read the project summary sheets provided a week earlier.
- Questions should only be those that will sway the vote made by a voting member.
- Where there are more applications listed than can be funded due to a limited budget, the GRB will rank all approved applications by indicating them as Pass or Low Pass.
- The voting members of the GRB are: COR, COP, and the Directors of OEDG, OECC, and OED.
- PRM, RFSC, ROAA, and RLA members serve an advisory role.

The voting members of the GRB will decide which applications will move on to the next steps of application processing. Proponents whose applications did not pass the GRB review will be informed of the decision. Their respective application folders will be closed and archived.

6.6 Stage Six: Pre-Award Risk Assessment

The Pre-Award Risk Assessment (PRA) is conducted to ensure that financial, organizational, and other risks in a grant award are identified, and that corresponding measures are recommended to manage those risks. It seeks to determine the level of financial and managerial capacity of possible grantees in managing USAID funds in

accordance with the Automated Directive System (ADS) 303 of the USAID. The result of the pre-award risk assessment will also determine the most appropriate method of financing and the degree of support and oversight needed under the potential Phil-Am Fund award.

6.6.1 PRA Process

The Pre-Award Risk Assessment (PRA) is a simplified process based on the Pre-Award Responsibility Determination of the USAID provided in ADS 303.3.9. It involves the evaluation of risks in terms of financial and managerial controls to handle a Phil-Am Fund award and manage grant funds. The PRA covers the following areas:

1. Legal Structure;
2. Financial Management and Internal Control Systems;
3. Procurement Systems;
4. Human Resources Systems;
5. Project Performance Management; and
6. Organizational Sustainability.

Under the PRA, the applicants are rated according to the following matrix:

Rating		**Definition**
1.00 – 1.50	Inadequate	Key deficiencies and significant weaknesses (SW) not remediable before award.
1.51 – 2.50	Below Adequate	Some deficiencies and SW not easily remediable before award.
2.51 – 3.50	Adequate	Deficiencies and SW remediable before award.
3.51 – 4.00	Strong	There are no deficiencies or SW.

Corresponding level of risks of the scores above are in the table below:

Rating		**Definition**
1.00 – 2.00	High Risk	Large gap in achieving many key business objectives.
2.01 – 3.00	Moderate Risk	There are gaps in achieving some key business objectives.
3.01 – 4.00	Low Risk	Manageable challenges in achieving key business objectives.

The PRA process starts after the GRB approves the technical applications endorsed by the GMT. It is composed of three (3) main activities:

a. ***Desk Review.*** All submitted requirements included in the full application package of the applicants are inspected and reviewed to initially assess the applicant's background, governance, policies, procedures and practices, management structure, personnel composition, and other factors that would contribute to its managerial capacity to handle grant funds.

b. ***Field Visit.*** The PRA Team will visit the administrative offices of the applicants to address or clarify the associated risks (i.e., weaknesses or deficiencies) identified during the desk review phase. The field visits comprise of various procedures such as: (1) interview with the Board of Directors/Trustees and personnel; (2) inspection of sample reports and accounting records; (3) testing of computerized and manual accounting systems; (4) review of minutes of meetings; and (5) observing office practices and decorum. In certain cases, key project partners, beneficiaries, and partner organizations will also be interviewed.

c. ***Report Writing.*** The findings and recommendations will be written in the PRA Report. The PRA Report will be submitted to the GMT for review and approval. The report will also form part of the Memorandum of Negotiations of each applicant.

   If an applicant is awarded, the report will be forwarded for their review and concurrence. Upon receipt of the PRA Report, grantees are given the opportunity to clarify observations, and confirm the findings and recommendations of the GMT and SGV. The report will serve as the basis for the preparation of grantee Corrective Action Plans (CAPs).

The PRA results determine the mode of financing for each grant. If a grantee scored 2.50 or lower in the PRA, the grant will be funded through a modified cash advance arrangement. On the other hand, if a grantee scored 2.51 or higher, funding will be provided under the regular cash advance method. Grantees may also be advanced to the cash advance method, from the modified cash advance arrangement, following their compliance to the CAP recommendations.

6.6.2 Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

The Corrective Action Plan (CAP) contains the grantee's plan of action to comply with the PRA recommendations and requirements. Upon submission of the CAP, the PRA Team reviews the plan and classifies recommendations as first and second priorities.

The first-priority recommendations are expected to be implemented within 90 days from the time of the award. Addressing the first priorities would enable the

grantees with weak or inadequate capacity to upgrade from modified cash advance to regular cash advance. However, failure to address the first priorities within the allotted period will revert the organization's mode of financing to cash reimbursement.

Second-priority recommendations are those that may be addressed by grantees during project implementation. Addressing CAP recommendations improves the grantee's organizational and financial capacity to manage USAID grants.

6.7 Stage Seven: Final Technical and Cost Negotiation

For application approved by the USAID Grants Review Board, the GMT executes the following actions:

a. The GRF will send formal communications and next steps to the proponents of GRB-endorsed applications. The letter will also contain comments of the GRB and the GMT on the technical applications and the guidelines for GMT negotiation.

b. The GRF and SGV will conduct the PRA. The pre-award visit of the GRF will assess the project management capacity, while SGV will assess the financial and organizational capacity of the applicant. The results of the Pre-Award Survey will determine the method of financing recommended for the applicant, including special award conditions, to address risks.

c. The GMT will conduct final technical and cost negotiation with the GRB-approved applicants. The negotiation will discuss issues and comments raised by the GRB and the GMT and review the cost realism of each application. Revised submission of grantees will serve as the basis for the GRF final offer.

d. Following the acceptance of the final offer, the GMT prepares waivers and certifications required for funding specific USAID grants:

- ***Initial Environmental Examination.*** The GMT, in coordination with the applicants, will prepare Environmental Screening Reports (ESR) for all proposed applications for funding. Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plans (EMMP) will also be prepared for applications with potential environmental risks. The GRF will approve all ESRs and EMMPs developed and submit final copies of the document to the USAID for reference.

- ***Use of Notwithstanding Authority.*** The GRF will draft a waiver for the use of notwithstanding authority for applications that will provide training

and other assistance to law enforcement activities or personnel. The waiver will be submitted to the COR for review and approval.

- ***Agricultural Procurement Memorandum.*** The GMT will draft a memo for all agricultural and planting goods and services to be procured using grant funds. The agricultural procurement memorandum will be submitted to the COR for review and approval.

- ***Bumpers and Importation Sensitivity Analysis.*** For grants with potential impact to U.S. industries, an importation sensitivity analysis will be prepared by the GRF. The study will be submitted to the COR for review and approval.

- Required certifications as provided in ***Section 5.3***.

e. The GRF will also prepare the Memorandum of Negotiations (MemNeg) for individual applications endorsed to the CO for approval. The memo documents the process of technical and financial reviews and negotiations undergone by each application. Changes from the original application are also recorded in the MemNeg.

Reasonability, Allocability, and Allowability of Cost Applications will be reviewed based on the checklist presented below. The checklist serves as a guide in analyzing proposed Cost Applications, as well as determining the ability of the applicants to effectively manage grant financial assistance. For each cost category, the cost analysis should answer these questions:

Consideration	Yes, No, N/A
Determine Allowability of Cost Except where otherwise authorized by statute, costs must meet the general criteria for allowability.	
Are the costs proposed necessary and reasonable for the performance of the Phil-Am Fund award?	
Do the costs conform to any limitations or exclusions set forth in these principles?	
Are costs consistent with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both the Phil-Am Fund-financed activity and other activities of the non-Phil-Am Fund entity?	
Are costs treated consistently as direct cost with the organization's allocation procedures?	
Are all costs adequately documented?	

Consideration	Yes, No, N/A
Determine Cost Reasonableness A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. The question of reasonableness is particularly important when the non-federal entity is predominantly federally funded.	
Are costs generally recognized as ordinary or necessary for the operation of the program for proper or efficient performance of the Phil-Am Fund award?	
Do the costs reflect sound business practices?	
Do costs reflect market prices for comparable goods or services for the geographic area?	
Did the applicant significantly deviate from its established practices?	
Is the proposed number of days or units reasonable?	
Are the prices comparable with forecasted AFAE estimates?	
Are the prices comparable with the market research (LCP, per diem)?	
Are the prices comparable against other applicants?	
Are the prices comparable against previous applicants?	
Determine Allocable Cost A cost is allocable to a Phil-Am Fund award or other cost objective if the goods or services involved are chargeable or assignable to that federal award or cost objective in accordance with relative benefits received	
Are the costs specifically for the federal award?	
Do the costs benefit both the federal award and other work of the non-federal entity?	
Can the costs be distributed in proportions that may be approximated using reasonable methods?	
Are the costs necessary to the overall operation of the applicant's program?	
Are the costs assignable in part to the Phil-Am Fund award in accordance with the principles in this sub-part?	

f. A Memo to the CO will be forwarded by the GRF requesting approval to award the grant, including the recommended method of payment, and obligate funds for

implementation. The draft Grant Agreement between the GRF and the proposed grantee will be attached to the Memo to the CO.

g. Once the Memo to the CO is approved, the Grant Agreement will be signed by the GRF President and the authorized representative of the applicant. The Grant Agreement contains the final amount of grant award, the final technical application, and special award conditions and provisions for grant implementation.

Administering a Fixed Amount Award

Fixed amount (i.e., fixed price) awards are appropriate when the work that will be performed can be priced with a reasonable degree of certainty. A fixed amount award (FAA) provides several advantages for both the Phil-Am Fund and the grantee. It focuses on outputs and results, limits risk for both parties, and requires only limited financial and management capacity.

Aside from the process of negotiations for standard grants, administering FAAs include an additional procedure: defining milestones. Milestones are for a verifiable product, task, deliverable, or goal of the recipient. Milestones must be objectively verifiable, regarding completion and quantity, and within the grantee's control to successfully complete, as designed. Milestones will generally have three (3) parts: (1) a description of the product, task, deliverable, or goal to be accomplished; (2) a description of how the recipient will document the completion of the product, task, deliverable, or goal; and (3) the amount that the Phil-Am Fund will pay the recipient for the deliverable. Some milestones may also have dates indicating the expected or required completion date.

The negotiated schedule of milestones, deliverables, and payment tranches will be included in the Grant Agreement.

Example:

Milestone	Deliverable/ Documentation	Expected Completion Date	Amount
1. Survey in X Province	Survey Report	MM/DD/YY	USD1000
2. Training in X Province	Training or Activity Report	MM/DD/YY	USD1000

The award document should contain additional detail on what is expected for each milestone, as well as the contents of the documentation.

Risk Assessment for FAA

The Phil-Am Fund uses the FAA Entity Eligibility Checklist to assess the NGO's capacity and capability to accomplish the milestones. If the assessment identifies weaknesses or deficiencies in the organization that call into question the ability of the organization to complete the proposed activity, the Phil-Am Fund, as part of the risk assessment required in ADS 303.3.25, should document the weaknesses and deficiencies and describe the mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate risk(s) of failure to the organization and the GRF. Mitigation measures include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) capacity-building technical assistance, including, but not limited to,

financial management and procurement functions; or (2) increased monitoring visits to confirm adequate progress on milestones.

The checklist will be included in the Memo to the CO to be submitted prior to the awarding of grants.

6.8 Stage Eight: Grant Awarding

The following procedure is undertaken once the Contracting Officer (CO) has provided consent to award the grants through the Memo to the CO:

a. The GRF will send formal communications to the proponents notifying them of the schedule for grant signing.

b. Grant Packages will be prepared to include the following:
   - Grant Agreement;
   - Final Technical and Cost Proposal;
   - Standard Provisions; and
   - Branding and Marking Plan.

c. The GRF will organize a signing ceremony where partner organizations and the GRF, represented by the President, will both sign the Grant Agreement. Representatives from the USAID will also be invited to witness the signing of the Grant Agreements.

The Grant Agreement

The Grant Agreement provides information on the effective grant period, budget, technical and cost proposal, deliverables, reporting requirements, termination conditions, and other special considerations of the application. The Phil-Am Fund prepares copies of the Grant Agreement to be provided to the grantee and the USAID.

6.9 Stage 9: Post-Award Orientation

After the signing of the grant, the GMT conducts a post-award orientation to help grantees understand the requirements of implementing a USAID grant. Representatives from the USAID may be invited to the orientation to discuss special topics such as Environmental Compliance, Fraud Prevention, Trafficking in Persons, Performance Management, and Monitoring and Compliance. USAID Representatives also discuss requirements for Gender and Disability Reporting and Branding and Marking.

During the orientation, the GMT assists grantees in the following: (1) securing their account in the Data Universal Numbering System of the USAID; (2) setting up the AuditPal Accounting System and the Financial Management System for the project; and

(3) drafting their Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Reporting Requirements are likewise discussed.

7. SPECIAL PROVISIONS IN GRANT MAKING

The following provisions apply to any grant to be awarded under the Phil-Am Fund:

a. The USAID, through the CO, retains the right to unilaterally terminate the grant activity (activities) in extraordinary circumstances.
b. The GRF is not authorized to execute or administer Cooperative Agreements on behalf of the USAID.
c. The requirements which apply to USAID-executed grants shall also apply to grants executed under the Phil-Am Fund.
d. The GRF shall award grants only to eligible organizations as defined in the contract. Subject to USAID approval, grants made under the facility will fund local, non-sovereign entities, such as private enterprises and civil society organizations (CSOs).
e. At the conclusion of the contract, the GRF shall consult with the CO and the COR for direction as to which records shall be transferred to the USAID.

8. GRANT IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT PROCESS

8.1 General Implementation Responsibilities

The GRF is the main contractor of the Phil-Am Fund facility. The facility is placed at the level of "Programs" within the GRF organizational structure, where the Executive Director (ED) will have direct oversight. Being part of the GRF organization, the Phil-Am Fund Team strictly adheres to the GRF Code of Ethics. As the main organization managing the grant facility, the GRF provides the following support to the Phil-Am Fund:

- ***Direct technical support*** by the ED to the COP in key grant-making processes such as the review of proposals, endorsement to the USAID, grants monitoring, and close-out.
- ***Provision of Office and Logistical Facility.*** The GRF houses the facility within its main office at the Araneta Center in Cubao, Quezon City, a place strategically located and highly accessible to potential partners and grantees. For its provincial reach, the GRF provides offices in Roxas City in the Visayas, and in Davao City for its Mindanao grant-making activities.

All grantees receiving funding from the Phil-Am Fund shall comply with the rules and regulations provided under ADS 303 which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Maintain accounting records, documentation, and data that support project transactions;
- Install and utilize the GRF AuditPal Computerized Accounting System to facilitate online real-time tracking of the facility;
- Follow USAID rules for the procurement of goods and services;
- Address USAID expectations and mandatory requirements concerning gender; and
- Subject the organization to regular monitoring visits and administrative checks to verify compliance with these regulations.

8.2 Financial Management and Control Systems

The following documents need to be submitted to the Phil-Am Fund prior to initial fund release:

- **The Direct Deposit Form**

  The Phil-Am Fund requires grantees to open a dedicated Phil-Am Fund bank account for fund transfers. The bank account must be a checking account supported by a Board Resolution electing the said bank and appointing signatories for the account. The Phil-Am Fund encourages that this bank account be opened at a local Bank of Philippine Islands (BPI) branch.

  Once the bank account is opened, grantees must submit the account details to the Phil-Am Fund using the Direct Deposit Form.

- **Detailed Annual Work and Financial Plan (AWFP)**

  An approved Work and Financial Plan (WFP) outlines the schedule of project implementation on a yearly basis. It is included as an attachment in the Grant Agreement. The WFP details the required activities, expected outputs, required resources, and expected timeline for completion based on the Grant Agreement. Grantees are expected to have an annual breakdown of the WFP based on the approved proposal.

  The Annual WFP (AWFP) follows the signing date of the Phil-Am Fund contract. The period of coverage of the AWFP starts in August and ends in July. The AWFP needs to be submitted 30 days after the contract effective date and should be reviewed by the Grants Manager (GM) and endorsed by the Chief of Party (COP) to the GRF for approval. The GRF forwards the AWFP to the USAID COR for approval. Succeeding Annual Work and Financial Plans (AWFP) are due at least 45 days prior to the start of the following project year.

The Annual Work and Financial Plan (AWFP) contains the following information:

a. Proposed activities;
b. Output per activity;
c. Time frame; and
d. Detailed budget.

- **Chart of Accounts**

  The Chart of Accounts is a list of the regular expenses related to grant implementation. It is a list of account titles that describe regular transactions under the project. Grantees are provided a template of the Chart of Accounts in the Grantee Toolkit.

8.2.1 Fund Requests

Funds requests are triggered by a Request for Cash Advance (RCA). The form contains the activity schedules and the corresponding funds needed. While the Cash Advance (CA) is made for three-month cash requirements, funds are released on a monthly basis subject to some requirements to be discussed below.

Grantees are required to submit a cash advance form that covers three (3) months of their fund requirements. Said funds will be released on a monthly basis. Succeeding CA requests will require Expenditure Reports and Transaction Registry as supporting documents. The RCA should be submitted at least 15 days of the preceding quarter, while the Expenditures Reports and Transaction Registry should be submitted on or before the fifth day of the succeeding month.

Grantees are encouraged to use the Electronic Payment System (EPS) for all Phil-Am Fund transactions.

8.2.2 Receiving Funds

The Phil-Am Fund transfers funds either through check deposits or telegraphic transfers. Bank charges, if there are any, are on the grantee's account and must be reflected in their financial reports.

Once received, the grantees are required to acknowledge the receipt of funds using their organization's letter head, supported by an Official Receipt (OR). While email acknowledgement is acceptable during or immediately after the receipt of funds, the letter and the Official Receipt (OR) must be sent to the GRF via courier or through the Regional Program Officers (RPOs).

8.2.3 Managing Funds: Setting up the Environment for the Grant Award Implementation

The GRF's institutional partner, SGV, conducts the Pre-Award Risk Assessment (PRA) Survey to determine the potential grantees' level of capacity and the risks associated with it in managing the award. Part of these controls are as follows:

8.2.3.1 Maintaining a Financial Management System

Once the grant is awarded, the grantee needs to maintain a sound financial management system which should:

- Include an acceptable accounting system;
- Include appropriate internal control procedures; and
- Meet the standards of fund control and accountability.

8.2.3.2 Acceptable Accounting System

The following basic standards need to be maintained to meet the Phil-Am Fund requirements for an acceptable accounting system:

- Accounting records are supported by documentation that, at a minimum, will identify the source and application of funds, and then record, classify, accumulate, and summarize all costs incurred under the grant;

- Accurate, current, and complete disclosure for each Phil-Am Fund-assisted grant in accordance with the reporting requirements indicated in the grant agreement; and

- Efficient procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds from the Phil-Am Fund to the grantee and the disbursement by the grantee whenever funds are advanced by the Phil-Am Fund.

8.2.3.3 Appropriate Internal Control Procedures

Internal control procedures are needed for three (3) main reasons:

- To prevent fraud and safeguard the assets of the organization;
- To ensure the accuracy and completeness of accounting records; and
- To promote operational efficiency.

The appropriate internal control procedures cover:

- Proper segregation of duties;
- Appropriate approving authority;
- Adequate documentation and recording system; and
- Internal checks and balance.

Grantees need to establish its internal control policies and procedures in writing. It is good practice to periodically review these written policies and modify them when necessary. The Phil-Am Fund will look for the following basic procedures for internal control:

a. Cash Receipts and Disbursements

The Phil-Am Fund requires grantees to keep a separate interest-bearing bank account for all Phil-Am Fund transactions. Grantees are also required to segregate duties between the persons receiving the cash or checks, releasing the checks, and recording the transactions. Bank reconciliations should be prepared monthly by persons other than the person doing the collection or issuance of checks.

All disbursements, except for Petty Cash and/or Revolving Fund, should be through checks. These disbursements should be supported by controlled, numbered vouchers. Cash receipts (i.e., advances/reimbursements from the Phil-Am Fund, employees, refunds, etc.) should be duly acknowledged by the issuance of Official Receipts (ORs) and deposited intact in timely basis.

All checks must be issued to specific payees. Grantees are required to have at least two (2) check signatories, have payments duly approved by an authorized officer, and have proper supporting documents.

All accountable forms such as official receipts, check vouchers, and checks are properly controlled, whether issued or cancelled. Grantees are required to stamp supporting documents for payments as “Paid” to avoid double payments.

b. Cash Advances and Liquidation

The Phil-Am Fund restricts the issuance of cash advances only for expenses within the scope of the grant. Grantees are not allowed to issue cash advances for personal use or any other expense not related to the Phil-Am Fund grant. Cash advances need to be duly approved by an authorized officer and need to be liquidated immediately after the completion of the activity for which the CA was made.

c. Payroll

Salaries and benefits charged to the grant should be in conformity with the budget approved by the Phil-Am Fund and board-approved personnel policy. Any change in salaries and benefits should have prior approval of the Phil-Am Fund.

Payroll documentation should be supported by daily time records (DTR).

d. Reasonability, Allowability, and Allocability of Costs

Review of the grantee's costs should always be based on applicable cost principles. These are the general rules:

- ***Reasonable***. Costs that do not exceed those which should be incurred by an ordinary prudent person in the conduct of normal business;

- ***Allocable.*** Costs which are necessary to support the objectives of the grant; and

- ***Allowable.*** Costs which conform to any limitations stated in the Grant Agreement and OMB Circular A-122 (Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations).

Some examples of unallowable costs are: advertising, uncollectible debts, entertainment, gifts, fines and penalties, interest, fund raising activities, investment management costs, losses on other awards, contingencies, and business or first-class airfare, unless specifically approved by the GRF.

Costs for ineligible and restricted goods are also unallowable:

Ineligible goods include: military and surveillance equipment, weather modification equipment, abortion equipment or services, luxury equipment and gambling goods, and goods with source or origin from "non-free world" countries.

Restricted goods include: pesticides, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, used equipment, U.S Government-owned excess property, agricultural commodities, rubber compounding chemicals, and plasticizers and fertilizers.

Restricted goods cannot be purchased without the prior written approval from the GRF Executive Director.

8.3 Mode of Payment

The grantees approved under the Phil-Am Fund may be funded through a cash advance, cost reimbursement, modified cash advance, or deliverable-based mode of payment. The method of financing is determined based on the results of the Pre-Award Risk Assessment Survey conducted by the contractor through SGV.

Grantees under the Cash Advance method of financing are provided with three-month rolling advances covering 30-day sub-periods of a 90-day period. Outstanding advances

to grantees are treated as disbursements. However, the grantee is required to monitor advances to be liquidated each month.

Grantees under the Cost Reimbursement method receives payment based on their submitted expenditures report, including the project transactions register. Grantees are expected to provide payments for project-related expenditures before the submission of the reimbursement request to the GRF.

For the Modified Cash Advance method, the grantee is provided with an initial working capital to cover expenditures for the first three (3) months covering 30-day sub-periods. However, this method of payment is subject to compliance with the special award conditions provided in the Grant Agreement. The special award conditions need to be addressed within three (3) months. Failure to comply with the special award conditions will revert the funding mechanism to Cost Reimbursement.

The contractor must liquidate the cash advance based on the grantee's actual expenditures. Advances of federal funds shall be deposited and maintained in insured accounts. The contractor must be able to account for the receipt, obligation, and expenditure under these cash advances, and interest earned on the advances provided cumulatively by the U.S. Government.

To ensure the integrity of its financial transactions, the GRF provides the following support to the Phil-Am Fund facility:

- Treasury management and administration;
- Opening and managing of bank accounts dedicated to the Phil-Am Fund;
- Funds monitoring, including releases to the GRF for operating expenses and for those released to sub-grants;
- Funds management, including cash management, working capital management, and real-time updating of cash position;
- Accounting support, including providing cash balances, recording expenditures, and logging cash advances;
- Bank reconciliation; and
- Asset and property management.

8.4 AuditPal Computerized Accounting System

The AuditPal Accounting System is a customized accounting software to facilitate the tracking of financial transactions and the generation of financial reports at the Phil-Am Fund facility level and grantee level. The system will enable the GRF to track and access the financial transactions of the facility and the grantees online and in real time during the life of the project.

As a sustainability mechanism and as part of the capacity-building intervention of the Phil-Am Fund, grantees will be trained to manage the system, including its expansion to other databases even after the Phil-Am Fund project implementation.

The software features include the following:

- AuditPal is based on the traditional process of accounting procedures which makes it a user-friendly system.
- AuditPal generates real-time reports.
- AuditPal is equipped with audit-trail features. Users can drill down from a summarized table, such as Trial Balance, and see underlying source documents. This can be used by the auditors in reviewing the data gathered by the system.
- AuditPal Expenditure Reports are tailored after the requirements of the USAID. From the encoding of transactions, necessary information are gathered and structured to be presented as reports that match USAID requirements.
- Other features:
    - ***Network-Ready and Multi-User Environment***. May work as a stand-alone program, as well as in a network environment, accessed by several users simultaneously.
    - ***Remote Network Ready.*** May work in a remote location using a stable internet connection.
    - ***User-Definable Chart of Accounts***. Users can define their own Chart of Accounts structure. There are four () levels which represents the accounts hierarchy.
    - ***User-Definable Subsidiary Ledgers***. Users can define Subsidiary Ledger groupings on the fly. Any accounts can be set up to handle a Subsidiary Ledger. There are no limits in the number of Subsidiary Ledger Accounts.
    - ***User-Definable Budget Line Items***. Users can define its budget line items, which is used to compare the budget to the actual expenditures.
    - ***User-Definable Financial Projection Templates***. Users can set up templates for financial projections for use in its financial monitoring.
    - ***Security and Audit Trails***. Built-in security system that categorizes user accessibility. An audit trail feature, pinpoints who created, modified, and when a transaction is made.

8.5 Grant Disbursement Procedures

8.5.1 Cash Advance Method

- A three-month rolling advance by the GRF is made to a grantee based on a cash advance request. A projected cash flow statement for each month is required.

- Outstanding advances to grantees are treated as disbursements. However, the grantee is required to monitor the advances to be liquidated.

- Grantees are required to report interest earnings and the period covered by the interest earnings in the cash advance request. Interest earnings may be retained for project purposes provided that the equivalent amount is recouped from cash releases in subsequent quarters. Interest earnings up to a maximum of USD250 per annum may be used by the grantee for administrative costs without accountability to the GRF.

Below are the detailed procedures for the cash advance payment method:

- The grantee prepares a request for cash advance showing the monthly breakdown of the budget line items required for the next quarter. Projected cash requirements for each quarter are based on the approved budget of the grant.

- The grantee submits to the GRF the quarterly cash advance request 15 days before the subject quarter, i.e., cash advance for the quarter of July to September 2014 should be submitted not later than June 15, 2014.

- Each request for an advance contains a projected cash flow statement showing the receipts and the projected expenditures for the upcoming period to be covered by the advance. The cash advance request must be supported by details of planned activities and their corresponding estimated cash requirement.

  The GRF will release only the immediate disbursement needs (i.e., normally defined as 30 days) of the grantees on a monthly basis. (Note: The grantee shall be required to submit the project transactions summary for the release of each tranche of cash advance.)

- The grantee will submit an Expenditure Report to liquidate the cash advance within five (5) days after the end of the quarter.

- The Request for Cash Advance is reviewed by the Phil-Am Fund GM and the Phil-Am Fund FMS and endorsed by the COP for approval. (Note: It is important to ensure the timely submission of expenditure reports to facilitate the processing of cash advance requests. The unliquidated amount will be deducted from the next period's cash advance request.)

8.5.2 Reimbursement Method

- The grantee will submit to the GRF the details of its quarterly planned activities and corresponding estimated costs on or before the 15th of the subject quarter. For example, for the quarter covering the months of July to September 2014, details of planned activities and costs must be submitted not later than June 15, 2014.

- The GRF shall make the reimbursement to the grantee upon request based on the submission of an expenditures report and the project transactions summary. The period for which reimbursements are requested should not be more than quarterly.

- This method allows the grantee to utilize its own working capital to finance work carried out under the agreement with the GRF.

8.5.3 Payment Procedures for Fixed Amount Awards

- The grantee will submit to their respective RPOs a billing invoice for every payment request. The invoice must specify the milestone, task, or deliverable for the billing being made. Attached to the invoice are supporting documents to verify the completion of the milestone.

- The respective RPOs will review the submitted documents. If deemed approved, the RPOs will endorse the invoice to the Grants Manager and the Finance Management Specialist for processing.

- The Grants Manager and the Financial Management Specialist will review the documents and sign on the Certificate of Acceptance section of the billing invoice. The GM will endorse the invoice for the clearance of the Chief of Party.

- The Chief of Party will review and endorse all documents to the GRF for payment.

- The GRF Executive Director will approve the request for payment.

8.6 External Audit

Monitoring and auditing of financial expenditures, reports, and other related documents are required to ensure that grantees adhere to USAID requirements, and that grant monies are used for their intended purpose as contained in the grant agreements between grantees

and the Phil-Am Fund. An allocation for the external audit will be built into the approved grant amount for individual projects.

8.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

The GRF will develop a Performance Monitoring Plan around the illustrative and required indicators identified for the Phil-Am Fund. Additional indicators and performance measures will be added as maybe required or deemed necessary in the course of grants development, implementation, and monitoring. The PMP will help the GRF establish a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the achievements of individual grants; collecting and analyzing performance information to track project progress against planned results; gathering lessons learned to aid in decision-making; and communicating results, both achieved and not. Desired outputs, intermediate results, outcomes, and impacts of individual projects will input into the PMP and will be scientifically measured and tested as they accumulate or build up during the course of project implementation.

The grantees are expected to develop their individual performance and monitoring plans and ensure that performance indicators are regularly monitored and reported to the GRF. The M&E Officer (MEO) will consolidate sub-grantee performance indicators and report overall progress to the USAID on a quarterly basis.

After signing the awards, and as grantees proceed to implement their projects, the GRF will initiate the monitoring process. Using the PMP as the Phil-Am Fund's monitoring framework, the GRF proposes to implement a two-track monitoring system: Technical Monitoring, and Financial Monitoring.

8.7.1 Technical Monitoring

Technical monitoring focuses on the timeliness and correctness of activity implementation under the Phil-Am Fund grants. It is also concerned with the build-up of results identified in individual progress reports, including the tracking and analysis of factors that either impede or facilitate project implementation.

The GRF will work out a project-specific PMP with individual grantees. Like the GRF Phil-Am Fund PMP, the project-specific PMP will set the parameters of project-level monitoring. It contains:

- Performance Indicators;
- Indicator Definition and Unit of Measurement;
- Data Source;
- Method or Approach of Data Collection or Calculation;
- Data Collection (i.e., frequency and person(s) responsible); and
- Analysis, Use, and Reporting (i.e., why and who).

The above PMP parameters will be set in the context where the project is intended to be implemented. The context includes the following:

- Latest available physical and socio-economic profiles;
- Demographic, natural, technological, and social trends; and
- Database or list of possible interested stakeholders.

The context sets the baseline for the project, while the PMP defines the project intervention. The GRF proposes to work with successful proponents to build project information and document changes or developments within the project context for submission to the USAID if an impact evaluation is desired.

Operationally, the Phil-Am Fund will field Regional Project Officers (RPOs) who shall be responsible for coordinating and updating work with individual grantees. The RPOs proactively keep track of project progress on a monthly basis vis-a-vis the agreed-upon milestones and the timing of delivery. The project-specific PMP will be the basis of regular visits and coordination meetings. The RPO will use agreed-upon forms as contained in the grantee toolkit.

Each Phil-Am Fund satellite office will have its own RPO. The RPOs organize information before submission to the GMT or to the GRF. The RPOs shall also facilitate effective and timely communications between the grantees, GMT, and the GRF. The RPOs will consolidate their reports on a quarterly basis and submit them to the GM for review and consolidation. Consolidated reports will be reviewed by the GMT and endorsed to the COP for appropriate action.

The GM discloses issues and concerns of grantees that need to be responded by the GMT. The GM will work closely with the RPOs in developing recommendations that would respond to specific concerns and include them in their submission to the GMT. Then, the GMT recommendations will be endorsed for the appropriate action of the COP.

Across GRF's monitoring efforts, it will ensure consistency with USAID's five (5) data quality standards: validity, reliability, precision, integrity, and timeliness. The GRF proposes to also use other modes of maintaining communication with the Phil-Am Fund grantees, namely:

- Conference calls;
- Emails;
- Website linkages;
- Text messaging; and
- Social networking accounts, where all grantees could participate in project-related discussions, share pictures, videos, and other project-related updates.

8.7.2 Financial Monitoring

The Phil-Am Fund shall maintain the highest standards for financial management systems to ensure that funds are handled in a responsible manner, which would encompass accounting systems, payment systems, financial analysis, internal control systems, and internal audit. Such standards include the following:

- Accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the financial results of the project in accordance with the USAID's reporting requirements.
- Records that identify adequately the source and application of funds for program and project activities.
- Effective control and accountability over all funds, property, and other assets. The GRF shall ensure that all project properties are adequately safeguarded and that they are used solely for authorized purposes.
- Comparison of outlays with budget amounts and benefits generated for all funds received.

The Phil-Am Fund will review the financial reports submitted by grantees to assess compliance with reporting requirements, and to verify grant fund utilization in terms of approved budget vis-à-vis grant agreement terms and conditions and in conformity with USAID standard provisions. The GRF will analyze the results of operations and financial performance of each grantee. The GRF will also monitor the procurement of commodities under the grant.

In terms of financial reporting, the Phil-Am Fund will follow USAID-prescribed schedules and forms. Each project file will also be assigned a grant-tracking form where the progress of individual projects in terms of tranche releases or provision of various support are recorded.

8.7.3 Audit

Pursuant to USAID rules, audits will be conducted on grants with expenditures of USD300,000 or more per fiscal year. The process will evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of controls to ensure the reliability and integrity of financial and operational information; effectiveness of operations; and compliance with rules and regulations, letters of instruction, and sub-agreements.

The Phil-Am Fund is expected to assist the USAID in providing data for impact evaluation. It is expected that the monitoring system will measure both quantitative and qualitative performance indicators. Based on an approved PMP, each grantee is required

to collect data and report on the results of the project on an agreed upon timetable. This process will be used to strengthen the capacity for monitoring of each sub-grantee.

The other level of monitoring is in the desk review of financials, where non-spending could also reflect non-completion of activities. Grant funds are released in tranches and are triggered by specific milestones or deliverables. Non-completion of deliverables would mean tranches will not be released and will alert the GRF of the delay in project implementation.

8.7.4 Monitoring Fixed Amount Awards (FAA)

Under the FAA, monitoring of the grantee and its activities are based on fixed-cost milestones and not tied to actual costs incurred for the milestone. RPOs should focus on the quality of deliverables and grantee performance during the monitoring of the FAA. To mitigate possible risks, the Grants Manager and the RPOs or other representative(s) are required to conduct site visits to ensure that satisfactory progress is being made and that milestones are being met. Validation visits will also check project impact to intended beneficiaries.

8.8 Reporting

Reports are periodically submitted to track the progress of the projects under the Phil-Am Fund. Below is the schedule of deliverables:

Type of Report	Due Date
Corrective Action Plan	Two (2) weeks after grant signing
Annual Work and Financial Plan	First AWFP: 30 days after grant signing Succeeding AWFP: At least 45 days prior to the start of each fiscal year
Monitoring and Evaluation Plan	At least 90 days after grant signing
Quarterly Progress Report	Within 10 days after the end of each quarter, specifically March, June, September, and December
Annual Progress Report	Within 10 days after the end of USAID's fiscal year (September)
Financial Reports (Request for Cash Advance)	At least 15 days before the beginning of each quarterly period

Type of Report	Due Date
Expenditures Report	Within five (5) days after the end of each month
TraiNet Report	Either submitted immediately after each training or attached to the Quarterly Progress Report
Commodity Inventory and Tracking Report	First report: Within 30 days after the first year of implementation of the grant Subsequent report: Annually, within 30 days after the anniversary of the effectivity date of the grant
VAT Tracking Report	Annually, no later than April 1 for the immediately preceding year ending December 31
Final Performance and Financial Report	Within 30 days after grant completion date
Close-out and Commodity Disposition Plan	At least three (3) months before grant completion date
Stories of Interest	Every end of the month
Gender and Disability Action Plan	90 days after grant signing
Co-Branding and Marking Plan	90 days after grant signing

Grantees are required to submit Quarterly Progress Reports (QPR). The QPRs are submitted to the RPOs for processing and validation. The RPO validates the technical portion of the report, while the financial portion of the QPR is validated by the FMO.

Validated reports are submitted to the Grants Management Officer (GMO) and the Financial Management Officer (FMO), respectively. The GMO and FMO work together to consolidate the grantee-level QPR and submit the consolidated report to the GM and the FMS for review. The reviewed QPR is forwarded by the GM to the Program Associate (PA) for proofreading and recording. The PA then endorses the QPR to the Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) for final review. The DCOP will then forward the grantee-level QPR to the Knowledge Manager (KM) for packaging and archiving.

The Knowledge Manager (KM) packages the QPR and sends it to the Chief of Party (COP) for clearance. Once cleared by the COP, the QPR is submitted to the USAID by the GRF Executive Director.

8.9 Communications Flow

Communication is key in the receipt and analysis of information from grantee to the Phil-Am Fund. The RPOs and FMOs serve as the first line of oversight. They monitor and audit the progress of the grants through their field visits and desk reviews. Grantees directly communicate with the RPOs and FMOs for any inquiries or issues, and all their requests for fund releases or budget modifications.

Grantees are required to send their concerns to the RPO assigned to them, with copy furnished to their assigned FMO. The request will be reviewed by the RPO and FMO before being endorsed to the GMT for action.

9. TERMINATION, SUSPENSION, AND MODIFICATION OF GRANTS

9.1 Termination and Suspension

Grants may be terminated based on the following reasons:

a. The prime contract between the USAID and the GRF is terminated for any reason;
b. Funding for the grant becomes unavailable;
c. It is determined that the grantee has materially failed to comply with the terms and conditions of the award; or
d. For convenience, when both the contractor and the grantee have agreed in writing that the continuation of the grant will no longer produce beneficial results.

In addition, the GRF may terminate a grant, in whole or in part, if extraordinary circumstances warrant it. These events include, but are not limited to, findings that the grantee or any of its employees, sub-grantees, or contractors have been convicted of a narcotics offense or have been engaged in drug trafficking as defined in 22 CFR 140 of the USAID, anti-trafficking in persons, or fraud. Because of such termination, the GRF may take any other appropriate measures, including, but not limited to, the refund or recall of any grant amount.

9.2 Termination Process and Procedures

a. Subject to the aforementioned instances when a grant may be terminated, the GRF may terminate a grant at any time, in whole or in part, upon written termination notice to the grantee. The termination notice must contain the reason(s) for termination, the effective date, and, in the case of a partial termination, the portion to be terminated.

b. The GRF shall collect all unexpended grant fund from the grantee within 30 days from the effective date of termination. Unexpended grant funds are funds which are not otherwise obligated by a non-cancelable, legally binding transaction applicable to the grant.

c. Should the funds paid by the GRF to the grantee prior to the effective date of the termination of the grant be insufficient to cover legally binding obligations to third parties by the grantee, the grantee may submit, within 90 calendar days after the effective date of termination, a written claim covering such recipient obligations. The GRF will determine the amount(s) to be paid to the recipient under such claim, in accordance with the provisions of the Grant Agreement on Grant Budget and Ceilings.

9.3 Modification

9.3.1 Facility-Level

All grant modifications, including price, shall require the written approval of the USAID Contracting Officer (CO).

9.3.2 Grantee-Level

Under special circumstances, the Phil-Am Fund grantees may request for grant modifications. The grantee, however, should be able to establish that the proposed modification is not due to the non-performance of their contractual responsibilities, but due to reasons unforeseen during the project development phase or beyond their control, like *force majeure*. In any case, all grant modifications should have written approval by the GRF Executive Director (ED).

9.4 Arbitration, or Award Decisions and Appeals based on ADS 303

The USAID GRB's decision to fund or not fund a proposal is final and not subject to review. Any information that may impact the GRB's decision must be directed to the COP. The Phil-Am Fund will individually notify each applicant in writing on the success of its application. Similarly, unsuccessful applicants will be given a formal letter informing them that their applications were not considered, explaining briefly the reason for rejection.

Within 10 working days after an applicant receives notice that the Phil-Am Fund will not fund its application, the unsuccessful applicant may send a written request for additional information to the Phil-Am Fund Grants Management Team (GMT).

The Phil-Am Fund's responses must be limited to the facility's interest in supporting the applicant's program, as described in the application, and in giving additional information that would be useful to the applicant in preparing future applications.

If the applicant has questions about the program or about the technical evaluation, process, accountability, and business considerations, the GMT will provide constructive feedback that may assist the applicant when developing papers in the future. The letter should explain the basis for the decision and the strengths and weaknesses of the technical application in terms of the published evaluation and review criteria.

10. GRANT COMPLETION AND CLOSE-OUT

10.1 Grant Completion Date

All grants supported by the Phil-Am Fund should end by May 2018 to give enough time for facility close-out.

General Guidelines

Project close-out refers to the end phase of the grant agreement. Grant close-out provides that a project and all its activities must cease and end at the end date of the grant agreement. A project may also be terminated and closed before the end of the grant period for various reasons, including security problems, changes in donor strategies, funding limitations, and poor project performance.

Close-out of projects should be carefully planned to ensure that all activities are completed before the grant completion date. Attached is a checklist that may assist grantees in planning for project closeout.

No later than 90 days prior to grant completion, the grantee shall develop and submit a close-out or demobilization plan to the Phil-Am Fund for COP clearance and GRF ED approval. A close-out/demobilization plan (i.e., administration, IT information, finance, procurement, and management, etc.) shall include the following:

a. A phase-out plan for operations that includes a schedule to address office leases, if any, bank accounts, utilities, cell phones, personnel notification, outstanding travel and social payments, and internet subscriptions, among others;
b. A delivery schedule for all reports and/or other deliverables required under the contract;
c. An illustrative property disposition plan of procured properties from the project funds;
d. Review of financial documents and contract files for audit purposes and final billing to the GRF;
e. Receipt of all final invoices and project performance reports;

f. Report on the estimated amount of funds not needed for the completion of the project; and
g. Report on compliance with labor laws, tax clearances, and other appropriate compliance matters.

10.2 Anticipated Project Close-out

At grant completion, grantees must ensure that end-of-project disposition regulations are closely followed and that all relevant GRF requirements are met. The grantee may consult with the RPO and the FMO for procedures regarding the disposition of equipment, termination of employees, reporting requirements, and on other points that need to be addressed.

10.3 Unexpected or Emergency Project Closing

In rare occasions, a contract is terminated earlier than anticipated. If this is based upon a decision from the GRF or the grantee, enough time to follow most, if not all, of the steps outlined for anticipated project closing should be ensured.

If an emergency or other contingency requires immediate project suspension or termination, consult the GRF to determine acceptable procedures. In case of grant termination, safeguard all project property until proper disposition is carried out. Remaining project funds must be kept safe or returned to the GRF, as appropriate.

10.4 End of Project Reporting

The grant agreement requires that a final performance report is submitted, regardless of the nature of project close-out. Important reference documents for this report include monthly, quarterly, and annual reports. Final performance reports need to be submitted to the GRF for comments 30 days prior to the agreement completion or termination date. The final report shall be re-submitted to the GRF no later than 30 days following the end of the contract.

Grantees may draft final performance reports before the end of the contract, for several reasons. First, the information required in drafting the final report is readily available from project files and reports. Full staff complement is also present before the project close-out phase. Staff time may also be provided to draft the report, considering no funds are available for drafting the final performance report, especially after project termination date.

10.5 Activities and Timeline for Project Close-out

Develop a project close-out plan and checklist. This plan should be prepared before the end of the project and revisited monthly to ensure that all close-out requirements are met. The process should include a review by the finance and HR personnel to assure that the

requirements of all functional areas are met. Grantees shall include their plans for the payment of required employee benefits and other final costs.

Grantees should also ensure that all deliverables are completed before contract completion or termination. The plan should include the following:

1. Review of financial records and contract files for audit purposes;
2. Update cost and analyze budget vis-à-vis work plans and determine if it would need realignment or Life of Project (LOP) extension;
3. Calculate and report on the estimated excess funds, or any amount no longer needed for the completion of the project;
4. A schedule of all final invoices payable to vendors and suppliers, and final billing to the GRF. Request in advance invoices from vendors and suppliers;
5. Review sustainability plan with other stakeholders, partners, or beneficiaries;
6. Arrange final technical meeting with stakeholders, partners, and beneficiaries; and
7. Resolution of any NUPAS findings and RMAP. Resolution of any audit and monitoring issues.

The planned process for project close-out must be documented and submitted to the GRF one (1) month prior to the end of contract. The attached checklist should guide grantees in preparing for grant close-out.