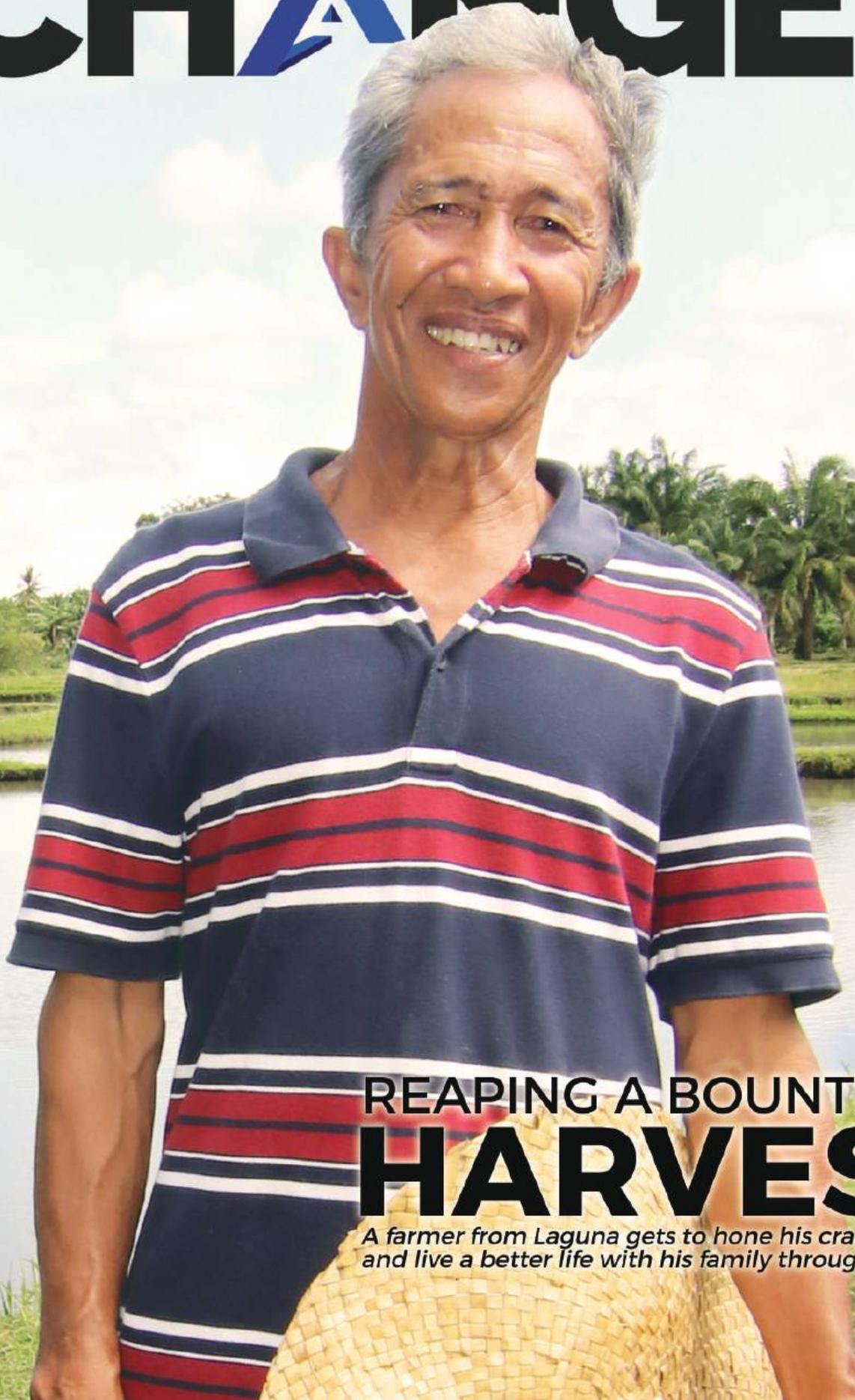


JANUARY 2019

14TH ISSUE

# CHANGED



## REAPING A BOUNTIFUL **HARVEST**

*A farmer from Laguna gets to hone his craft  
and live a better life with his family through CRTD*



Philippine Business for Social Progress is the largest business-led NGO at the forefront of strategic corporate citizenship and business sector leadership, contributing to sustainable development and poverty reduction. Established in 1970, PBSP remains a consultant and partner of choice of companies and donors.

PBSP scales up impact by adopting the Collective Impact strategy to solve large, complex, systemic problems. PBSP organizes Platforms for Collective Engagements (PlaCEs) to ensure alignment and sustainability of initiatives by multiple stakeholders.

Responding to the changing landscape of CSR, PBSP's brand of corporate citizenship taps into the core business competencies of companies and promotes inclusive business as a strategy. PBSP also continues to strategically engage companies through social investment, responsible business practices, and philanthropy.

PBSP creates sustainable solutions to societal problems in its core program areas which are Health, Education, Environment, and Livelihood and Enterprise Development. It also provides off-the-shelf options for engagement of companies and their employees.

With a proven track record, PBSP provides end-to-end services in development consulting which include project and grants management, events and backroom management.



## ABOUT THE COVER



On the cover is Rodrigo Martillan, a farmer who spent more than 20 years of his life working for the Center for Rural Technology Development (CRTD). His rich experience in his work and opportunities given by CRTD enabled him to send his children to school, develop his craft, and tend his own farm that helped improve his life.

The magazine "CHANGED" features stories of inspiring people in social development whose lives were changed either through their involvement in projects undertaken by PBSP with its member-companies, partners, and donors, or through interventions in the communities we serve. The A in "CHANGED," is represented by the delta sign ( $\Delta$ ) which is also a mathematical symbol for change.

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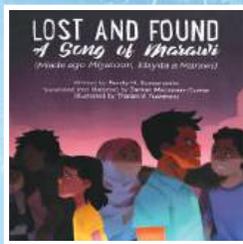
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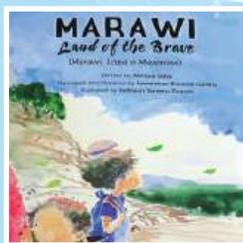
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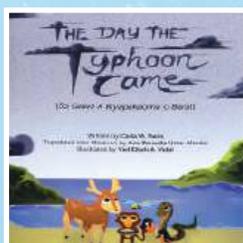
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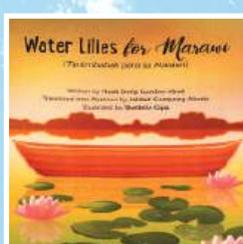
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**ROSARIO FERNANDEZ** hopes to be a more effective barangay health worker to mothers in Minuyan, Norzagaray, Bulacan.

# MOTHERHOOD DUTIES

*A doting mother, caregiver and barangay health worker helps care for other moms in her community*

**J**uggling career, duties at home and her passion for helping is not easy, but Rosario Fernandez has got it all figured out.

The daily routine for this caregiver and barangay health worker (BHW) at Minuyan Health Center in Norzagaray, Bulacan starts when she wakes up at 5 a.m. to cook breakfast, and help her husband and children prepare for work and school. Then she performs household chores. At 8 a.m. onwards, Fernandez goes to Sapang Palay where she works as a caregiver for a bedridden patient. On Thursdays, she spends her day at the health center to assist mothers and babies in their check-up, orient residents on family planning consultations and do record-keeping for the Center.

When asked how she manages all these, Fernandez answers with a simple smile, she just loves caring for people.

## **HUMBLE BEGINNINGS**

The sixth in a brood of 10, Fernandez grew up in a poor family. Her father worked as a driver while her mother is a housewife.

“Growing up, I saw how hard it was for my parents to provide for all of us. Having many children also means you need more money to be able to meet the needs of your family. But even when we had financial difficulties, we were still able to push through. Eight of us were able to graduate. We also learned how important it is to help each other,” she shared.

With a heart set on helping others, Fernandez took up midwifery in college. “We used to do community service and volunteer work when I was an intern.

Then, after graduation, I worked as an assistant at a lying-in clinic,” she said.

Though passionate with her profession, her failure to pass the licensure exam dampened her spirits and made her decide not to retake the exam. Instead, she continued working at the lying-in clinic.

When Fernandez got married at 23 years old and had her first child, she stopped working to focus on her family. “When I became a full-time mom, I really missed going to work. It felt like there was something missing. But since my husband worked abroad, I had to look after our two children,” she said.

## **GOING BACK TO WORK**

When her husband came home in 2016, Fernandez went back to work. Her first job was a street sweeper while her husband worked as a construction worker. Then, she applied for a job as a caregiver.

While this work could be taxing for some, for Fernandez, it wasn't enough. “I wanted to use my skills and knowledge as a midwife at our health center but since I'm also a caregiver, I cannot work full-time. So, I became a BHW instead,” she said.

As a BHW, she had difficulties adjusting to her work. “Even though I have a degree in midwifery, there were many things about reproductive health that I still don't know. For instance, when I was still studying during the 1990s, injectable contraceptives were not yet available,” she shared. “Thankfully, PBSP and Republic Cement Services Inc. offered a training on Safe Motherhood, so I was able to refresh my knowledge and also learned new things about

family planning, caring for mothers and their babies,” she said.

Fernandez cited that one of the challenges of being a BHW is informing parents about responsible family planning and safe motherhood.

“Sometimes it's hard to teach parents about family planning techniques because they are skeptical of its safety and effectivity. There are even instances when people would doubt our knowledge and experience and compare us with obstetricians and gynecologists,” she added.

## **HONING HER CRAFT**

Fernandez was among the 22 BHWs who attended the training of trainers for the Safe Motherhood Caravan. Through the training, she learned the importance of safe motherhood as well as the skills and knowledge needed to ensure the safety of mothers in their communities. She also became abreast on the latest information on maternal and child health services, and reproductive health.

This training aims to help BHWs carry out their tasks. PBSP also conducts Safe Motherhood Caravans in various barangays in the country to educate women of reproductive age on life-saving maternal and child health services.

“The training helped me become more acquainted with my job as BHW. It helped me become more knowledgeable in caring for the mothers in our community, and in being a good mom to her children, too. I try my best to share what I learned so I can help others, because being a mother is not as easy as it seems,” Fernandez said.

# NURTURE AND NOURISH

*A mother strives to create a healthier family through a feeding and nutrition assistance from PBSP*

**H**ow can you feed seven children with just PhP250 a day?

This has been the daily dilemma of Merlinda Alonso who depended on his husband's earnings as a laborer for their needs. She would usually set aside PhP100 for their daily expenses, and use the other PhP100 to buy two kilos of rice. The remaining PhP50 would be used to buy salt, dried fish, condiments, and whatever viand she could buy at a cheap rate, enough for three meals.

"It was easier when they were just children because we could just focus on our food first. But now, they've all grown up and so did their needs. We need to bring them to school. They need school supplies, food, fare. Fitting all of those needs with my husband's salary is really hard," Alonso lamented.

It is painful for Alonso to see her children lose weight, but her husband's income simply could not provide them with the healthy food that they needed. She considered working to help augment their budget but with seven children and the youngest still at three years old, she could not simply abandon them for work.

To make ends meet, Alonso and her husband had to sacrifice some expenses so they can all eat and save a little for the children's studies. Instead of rice, they would buy corn grits. Instead of dried fish, they would pair their corn with salt. Still, it wasn't enough. So Alonso had to tell her children to take turns in going to school.

"We had to sacrifice, because if we wouldn't, where would we go?

Especially nowadays, the prices for commodities had gone up," said Alonso who resides in Barangay Buhisan, Cebu City.

## **NOURISHING THE BODY**

The family's fate turned for the better when PBSP, as part of its Collective Impact Strategy, chose to improve the nutritional status of wasted children in their barangay through an intensive supplemental feeding program. For the feeding, the organization prioritized indigent beneficiaries, one of whom is the youngest son of Alonso.

While feeding programs were not new to them, she knew PBSP meant business when it started with getting the initial weight of her son to monitor the progress of his weight.

Since Alonso's family lives in one of the most mountainous areas of Brgy. Buhisan, it was challenging to visit the barangay hall every day for her son's lunch. Still, Alonso made sure that her son would always be present in class so he could get the nutrients he needs in one meal. It also made it easier for her to encourage her youngest to go to school after every feeding activity, something that she is grateful for.

Through the continuous feeding sessions, Alonso's child now gained three kilos from his initial weight and is now getting closer to his ideal weight.

"On his first meal, my son had rice, fruits, vegetables and meat. It was the largest and most complete meal he has ever eaten in his life, and I am so thankful that he has experienced that with PBSP's feeding program," she exclaimed.

## **FOOD ALWAYS ON THE TABLE**

It was the additional lessons aside from the feeding that made Alonso feel that the project is one of the best she's ever been a part of. Before the actual feeding started, PBSP met with the mothers to orient them on preparing healthy meals for their families without spending a lot.

Every feeding session, she should be present so she could properly look after her child. It also gave her an opportunity to see how food is prepared for their children. At times, they also took turns in cooking the meals, under the supervision of the local nutritionist and health worker. This gave her hands-on experience in preparing nutritious food.

The best gift she received from the project was the provision of free tools and seedlings they could use in setting up their own backyard gardens. By teaming up with two more mothers, Alonso learned how to plant and grow vegetables and other nutritious crops for their meals from the additional training of PBSP.

Since the establishment of their gardens last July, she and her groupmates have already harvested tomatoes, *okra*, eggplant, bananas, chili peppers, *malunggay*, and string beans from their backyard farms. Now, Alonso has enough ingredients to prepare healthier dishes for her family without spending a penny for it.

"I feel happy. I feel I have become a better mother to my children because I can now provide better nutrition for them, which they deserve. I thank PBSP for giving me this opportunity to help my family become healthier and provide food on the table every day," she said.



**THROUGH PBSP'S** feeding program, Merlinda Alonso was able to establish a backyard garden with three more mothers, where she has grown and harvested nutritious crops she used in preparing her family's meals.



**WITH THE** help of the ARCHES project, Sarinang Kasang Guinta effectively carries out her duties as a midwife and teaches family planning to her Muslim patients.

# GIVING GENUINE CARE

*A midwife who works in poor communities brings better services to patients through the ARCHES project*

**A**s a midwife, Sarinang Kasang Guinta is a regular witness to her patients' pregnancy complications. There was a time she attended to a patient who has retained placenta where both the mother and fetus were at risk of hemorrhage and infection.

"They usually call me when the traditional birth attendant could not handle the situation anymore. There was a time a pregnant woman was already shivering. Because of that, I did not hesitate to refer the patient to the hospital. If I would buy a dextrose for her, it would consume more time and effort. Sometimes, there is no supply in the area. Therefore, going to the hospital was the most practical option than giving birth in the birthing clinic," said Guinta.

The midwife serves Barangays Dados and Makir in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao.

"I could understand the reason of the patients. They have no money. That was why they still attempted to give birth at home even though they knew it was dangerous. Transportation costs – around PhP800 to PhP1,000 one-way fare from far-flung barangays like Dados to the hospital – are also expensive, especially at night. They also do not have PhilHealth Insurance but I tell them that they should not worry because emergency PhilHealth is always available for indigent patients," she shared.

## **TEACHING FAMILY PLANNING TO MUSLIMS**

Problems like high expenses in relation to pregnancy and having many children can be solved

through family planning. The ARCHES Project or "Improving the Availability of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao" funded by the European Union and Oxfam had assisted communities in Makir and Dados in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao.

"I first met the staff of the ARCHES Project two years ago. They work at the Barangay Health Station (BHS) of Makir. They helped me conduct a lecture on family planning. I like their lecture because my patients need it. The residents of Makir were mixed. Some were evacuees from the Mamasapano Clash in January 2015 and are staying in small houses that are close to each other. Each household has many children," said Guinta.

The Rural Health Unit (RHU) received various kinds of assistance from the ARCHES Project such as trainings on placing etenogestrel birth control implants, and the provision of instruments, delivery tables and Doppler fetal monitors.

"I like the Doppler because it can detect the heartbeat of a fetus. I would just place it on the tummy of a pregnant woman and I could already tell if the fetus is okay or not. The heartbeat should be detected below or near the pelvis in order to tell if it would become normal delivery or not. If the heartbeat would be detected above, the fetus would become breeched or not in proper position," she said.

## **CHANGES IN THE COMMUNITY**

Through ARCHES Project, Guinta

became more effective in carrying out her duties and responsibilities, and in bringing positive changes to her patients which are mostly Muslims.

"We were able to reach more patients because of the project. The lectures on family planning were helpful because it has fatwa or a ruling on a point of Islam. Before, they thought that family planning would mean abortion. Through ARCHES, they realized that it is in fact, helping families become empowered by encouraging birth spacing. Many mothers are also able to spend more quality time with their children, and even find time for themselves by practicing good hygiene," she shared.

## **A JOB WELL DONE**

With her patients gaining new knowledge, Guinta's job has become easier. She has also become good at her craft.

"I became more open-minded and effective as a midwife. I do not need to force them to embrace family planning anymore. I just give them enough time to absorb their new learnings. Most of them have not finished school because of poverty, hence the limited knowledge. That is why in my many years of dealing with my patients, I have learned to be patient and sensitive to their needs. We need to understand their situation," she added.

All these have endeared Guinta to the communities she serves. The people even look up to her with respect and high regard because of her genuine concern and love for their families.

# IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

*A mother of 16 who lost three children learns the importance of family planning*

**S**aripa Aman was not able to finish Grade 1 because of poverty. At the tender age of 15, she was forced to marry a person she did not know at all.

"My aunt, who took care of me, arranged my wedding to an older neighbor who tended a coconut farm. It took me more than a year before I felt comfortable being a wife. My uncle performed a ceremony to remove my fears. They cleansed me with water just like taking a bath," said Aman who lives in Barangay Dados in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao.

After five years, Aman got pregnant. She was not able to go for check-ups because they had no money and were far from hospitals.

"I was only monitored and massaged by a traditional birth attendant. I could not eat well because I was having nausea every time I ate rice. I was thin that time. I just gave birth at home," she added.

## **THE CHALLENGES OF HAVING MANY CHILDREN**

After nine months, Aman became pregnant again. Her frequent pregnancies continued until she gave birth to a total of 16 children. She could not even remember their birthdays anymore. Unfortunately, three of her children did not survive.

"There was a measles outbreak not more than 10 years ago. My two-year-old child got skin rashes then suddenly died. After four days, my five-

year-old followed the same fate. I was helpless. I had no money. The hospital was far from us. It was so painful to lose two children. I was so affected by their death that I could not do simple things like prepare food for my family for some time," said Aman.

It took her a long time to get over her grief. But the same fate struck her 16th child in August 2018.

"When I was about to give birth, the traditional birth attendant could not help me at home because I was very weak. That was why my husband accompanied me to a birthing clinic. From the birthing clinic, I was transported to Maguindanao Provincial Hospital. While inside the ambulance, the midwife prevented me to push and crossed my legs. Upon arrival at the hospital, they told me that my baby died. It was my first time to be brought in a facility," said the forty-something Aman who is not even sure about her age.

## **FAMILY PLANNING AS A SOLUTION**

In September, Aman's place was reached by the ARCHES Project or "Improving the Availability of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao" funded by the European Union and Oxfam and implemented by PBSP. The project provided Aman and her husband counseling sessions on family planning.

"From what we've learned during the sessions, I realized it is already dangerous for me to give birth

because of my age and condition. So, we studied the various methods," she said.

After reviewing her options, Aman first tried an implant but it didn't work because of hypertension. Finally, she and her husband decided on availing ligation.

"I made this decision because I already have so many children. I am also alarmed by the danger brought by my previous labor," she said.

For her, it was already a matter of life and death.

## **BEING A BETTER MOTHER**

Now, Aman feels more empowered. She is assured that she can have all the time she needs to take care of her family.

"Before, I already knew about family planning but I did not do anything about it. I learned that family planning is important not only for economic reasons. I need to take care of my remaining 13 children and send them to school. My eldest child, now 24, is working as a backhoe operator. But I still have small children, three of whom are still in preschool. Out of five daughters at home, only one can help me in household chores. I have a Grade 4 daughter who is babysitting our Barangay Captain's child on weekdays. She is going home on weekends and offering to teach me how to read and write," Aman shared.

Aman wants to learn to read and write because she wants to work abroad to give her family a better life. But right now, her priority is her children. She also hopes to help others by promoting family planning.

"I want to tell other mothers, especially new ones, that family planning is important. I am a late bloomer. But in the end, I still did it because it is the only way I can think of to improve my condition and secure my family," said Aman.



**SARIPA AMAN** learns the importance of family planning and maintaining her reproductive health through the ARCHES project. . .

# THE GIFT OF READING

*A teacher helps produce good readers through the help of Citi Philippines and PBSP*

In a room filled with Grade 3 kids, Teacher Mina Arnesto listened as one of her students read a storybook in front of the class. When she finished, she threw some questions to gauge if they listened and clearly understood the story. Hands went up and her students echoed their answers simultaneously. All of them answered correctly.

She smiled and beamed with pride at her class which just a few months ago, used to have difficulty in reading and comprehension.

## **A CHILDHOOD DREAM**

It was Arnesto's childhood dream to become a teacher. She would even assume the role of one with her playmates during their many role-playing games. She got the inspiration for this from her cousin who is now a principal and is good in teaching children. This motivated her to do well in school and pursue a career in the academe.

Arnesto has spent five years from her 16 years in the teaching profession at the Sto. Niño Elementary School in Marikina City. Prior to her stint there, she taught at three private schools which gave her a good experience. However, something was missing. She realized that she wanted a teaching position that would enable her to really help people. And this, she found, at Sto. Niño.

## **THE POWER OF STORIES**

Arnesto, a reading coordinator at Sto. Niño Elementary School in Marikina City, used to be burdened with the low reading skills and comprehension of some 3,000 students. With the lack of books and adequate funds to purchase reading materials, she

and co-teachers had a hard time addressing these issues.

Through the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), the students underwent a reading test to determine their performance in reading and comprehension. They found out that most of them have low readability skills.

"We found out that many students in third grade have the readability level of a first grader. We even had students in fourth grade who have the readability level of a second grader," Arnesto revealed. "As teachers, we have to help these students improve their reading and comprehension. We really needed storybooks to encourage them to read."

So when Citi Philippines and Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) donated reading nooks and 3,600 illustrated children's storybooks with English and Filipino translations to the school, Arnesto, her fellow teachers and students were overjoyed. Every classroom in the school was given its own reading nook.

"The children were very happy. You could see how excited they were to read the storybooks. Several of them would even try to get ahead of others in reading the books. Some of the storybooks already have worn-out pages because the students read it again and again," she shared.

As part of the school's reading program, Arnesto encouraged her students to keep a reading journal. "Every Monday and Friday, the kids would write a mini-book report in their reading journal. They write

about what they understood in the story, who the characters are, where, when and why the story happened," she added.

She also printed tarpaulins with an illustration of an *Ibong Adarna*, a legendary magical bird based on a Filipino epic poem with the same title. Three princes must capture the bird known for its melodious voice, to be able to inherit the throne. The children would fill up this *Ibong Adarna* with 'feathers' made from colored strips of papers. The children would then write about the five Ws of the story in its "feathers."

"We came up with this strategy to further encourage the students to read. It motivates them when they see their work displayed in class. It's also fulfilling to see those who used to struggle in understanding the stories now being able to answer questions about the books," she said. Inspired by the impact of the nooks and books on her students, Arnesto wrote a story on proper waste disposal and care for bodies of water. Her entry "Si Tina at ang Ilog Marikit" won third place (Division level) in a story-writing contest of the Department of Education.

"I've been here for five years and I'm really happy that I get to teach the children. I'm also working on my PhD in Education Management so I can become better in handling classes and the kids. Seeing how the reading nooks and books were able to motivate our students is really inspiring. In fact, one of our students even won in a reading competition through the help of the reading nooks," Arnesto said.



**MINA ARNESTO**, a reading coordinator of Sto. Nino Elementary School in Marikina City, uses creative strategies to improve the reading skills of her students.



**RIGLA SANTILLAN** is pursuing her dream to be a welder to help her family, through the scholarship assistance of the Olango Challenge.



# THE BEST GIFT

*A Senior High School welding scholar makes it her mission to do well in school to give a better life for her family*

**F**or Rigla Santillan, what is more painful than being poor is being incapable of doing anything about it.

This is a burden she carries every time she would see her mother slave herself in the wee hours of the morning making seashell accessories just so she could give something for their daily allowance.

Santillan is the sixth in a brood of 10. They used to be 13, but three of her siblings succumbed to unidentified illnesses since their family could not afford to bring them to hospitals. Her father works as a motorcycle driver while her mother also takes on other daily jobs. With lots of children to feed, money was scarce every day.

Her five older siblings got families of their own as soon as they finished school. This disappointed her mother and drove Santillan to make a vow to be the breadwinner for the family someday.

“My mother would sometimes lament how all her hard work ended up in vain because my older siblings seemed to not look back and help us. I don’t want to see my mother in any more pain so I want to help her,” the 19-year-old student from Olango island said.

She decided to take Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW) as her strand as soon as she reached Senior High School (SHS) so she could find better work opportunities outside of the country. Her first year was not easy though. As the only female in class, she had to prove that she was capable of doing the tasks that require a lot of physical strength.

Santillan would also often go to school without food and allowances just so her siblings can have theirs. One time, she lost focus and got herself hurt because she went to school hungry and dazed.

This school year, Santillan was privileged to be a part of a scholarship program offered by PBSP through the proceeds of its open-water swimming event called the Olango Challenge. It was the dream she wanted for herself and 199 more scholars.

## TAKING CHANCES

As soon as Santillan heard that PBSP was looking for potential scholars for their educational assistance program, she immediately asked her teachers what to do so she could be considered. She was among the first to fill up the forms, and also the first to cry when she learned that she was chosen to be a scholar.

Santillan received monthly allowances for her food, transportation, and school projects. PBSP also provided tools and equipment for her SMAW class to give them more hands-on experience in welding.

She knows the chance of being a scholar in an island community is hard to get, so Santillan makes sure that the assistance given to her does not go to waste. Aside from giving her undivided attention in school, she also participates in activities that would improve her skills. She makes sure that all her practical work is at par with her male classmates so she can be one of the best students in class.

Now, Santillan is not only a successful scholar but a proud holder of a National Certificate for SMAW, an achievement she also earned through the support of the project.

With her monthly allowances, Santillan was able to save up for the future. She plans to start working on processing any documentary requirements for her possible employment. Then she hopes to work after graduation so she could gather enough experience for a job overseas, and finally help her family.

Through her immersion, she also got to meet a possible employer who plans to hire her and some of her classmates after graduation. It was the best thing that happened to her so far. She knew this would help her get closer to achieving her dreams.

“I want to do well because I want to help my mother. She is all I could think of, and how I badly wanted to make the most of my scholarship so I can at least unburden her with my needs. If I can be the best student that I can be, then I can meet my dreams,” she said.

# KEEPING FAITH

*A school principal in a conflict-stricken town helps his teachers and students rise again*

**A**fter the 2016 elections, the terrorist group, Maute brothers, captured Butig National High School in and attacked the town. There were about 60 to 70 Maute combatants who occupied the school. This was the third time they attacked Butig, Lanao del Sur.

"We heard a lot of gunshots and bomb explosions. All the buildings in our school were burned. Most of my teachers were crying. I also cried because the school is supposed to be a place for students to learn," recalled Paisal Ronda, the principal of Butig National High School (BNHS) in Butig, Lanao del Sur.

At that time, many parents thought that it was already the end of the school. Some residents got scared because they thought the entire town would be captured by the terrorists.

"Some parents already lost hope during the war. They thought their children could not go to school anymore. But the army was able to contain the situation. The war only lasted five days but nothing was left in our school. All our blackboards and chairs were destroyed. Most of my students were evacuated to safer areas in other nearby towns because there were still airstrikes to the hideout of the Mautes. We also received threats in text messages telling us never to return home in Butig. But we were given new hope because of the help of the government and NGOs," Ronda shared.

## **RISE FROM THE RUBBLE**

After the war, classes were conducted on the stage, with the students sitting

on the floor. The three sections of her Grade 7 classes were reduced into one.

Ronda heard that the Maute brothers were still recruiting teenagers to stage a bigger war, including Piagapo and Marawi City. They were offering PHP30,000 for every recruit.

"We really forced ourselves to finish the school year 2016 to 2017. My teachers immediately returned to service so the Mautes could not recruit our students. We even borrowed the vehicle of our Mayor so we could go house to house and convince the parents to let their children go back to school. We also begged for help. The teachers donated for school repairs, along with the local government who helped us repair the roof of our two-storey building which was burned during the war. The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) also constructed nine classrooms," he shared.

BNHS started to be fully functional again when more interventions came from various agencies.

"Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) provided us reference materials like storybooks and curriculum guides. They also donated armchairs which we shared with Bayabao Central Elementary School. I was the one who transported the first set of items from Iligan City and Cagayan de Oro City going to my town in Butig. The 49th Infantry Battalion (IB) provided me free transportation for the armchairs," Ronda said.

Aside from that, some companies, through PBSP, also pitched in to help improve the school.

Philam Life Insurance is funding the ongoing construction of our two school buildings, adding five classrooms. PLDT, Inc., meanwhile, donated a computer laboratory, complete with desktop computers, comfort rooms, furniture and fixtures.

Today, BNHS is now a bigger and better school with a nine-classroom school building.

"I'm sure our school would even be more attractive once the two school buildings of Philam Life Insurance and the computer laboratory of PLDT would be completed. Our school is changing a lot in terms of facilities. From 300 students, our enrolment increased to 500, and we are expecting more in the next years to come because the new facilities can attract more children.

## **STAYING OPTIMISTIC**

Ronda never lost hope despite what happened to his school. He remained calm and became more optimistic.

"My mindset changed. I thought we could never be reached by others because we are located in the hinterlands and are exposed to threats. I realized that if someone would find a way like what PBSP did, we could accomplish our goals. Distance and threats are not a hindrance if we are willing to do it. I also realized that other people have not forgotten to help us in Butig," he revealed.

Ronda is thankful for all the blessings they received. He felt that they were saved from the hands of the terrorists because of the collective efforts of their school and everyone who helped.



**PAISAL RONDA**, the principal of Butig National High School, helps his community recover from the armed conflict through livelihood interventions.

# A PRECIOUS RESOURCE

*A Grade 6 student learns the importance of potable water*

**F**or sixth grader Kenneth Vinluan and his family, boiling water for drinking had become a daily routine for them because they do not have potable water. They only relied on a water pump for their water needs.

With most households owning water pumps and artesian wells, faucets were very rare in their barangay. However, even those with faucets were faced with a dilemma: the water was unsafe to drink and during the rainy season, there would be even particles floating in it.

It wasn't until August 2018 that Vinluan got to experience drinking water straight from the faucet. This was made possible through the potable water system donated by Coca-Cola Foundation and the Philippine Business for Social Progress at Diket Elementary School in Umingan, Pangasinan where he studies.

## **A GIFT FOR THE CHILDREN**

The eldest of two siblings, Vinluan would get up early each day to prepare for school. His home is located near the mountains, which is quite a distance from his school. He would walk for 30 minutes to get to school every day. Apart from his notebook and study materials, Vinluan also brings a bottle of boiled water with him that he drinks sparingly so it could last him the entire day in school.

"Just like at home, our school has no safe drinking water. For as long as I can remember, all of us students would bring our own drinking water to school every day," Vinluan shared.

The school's only water source, a water pump, is only used for cleaning. Its water would become rust-colored from time to time, especially during

the rainy seasons. They would sometimes find worms and dirt in the water, as well.

"When our water bottles would run out, we would go to our classmate's house to fetch drinking water. Some of our classmates had mineral water while others also boil water," Vinluan said.

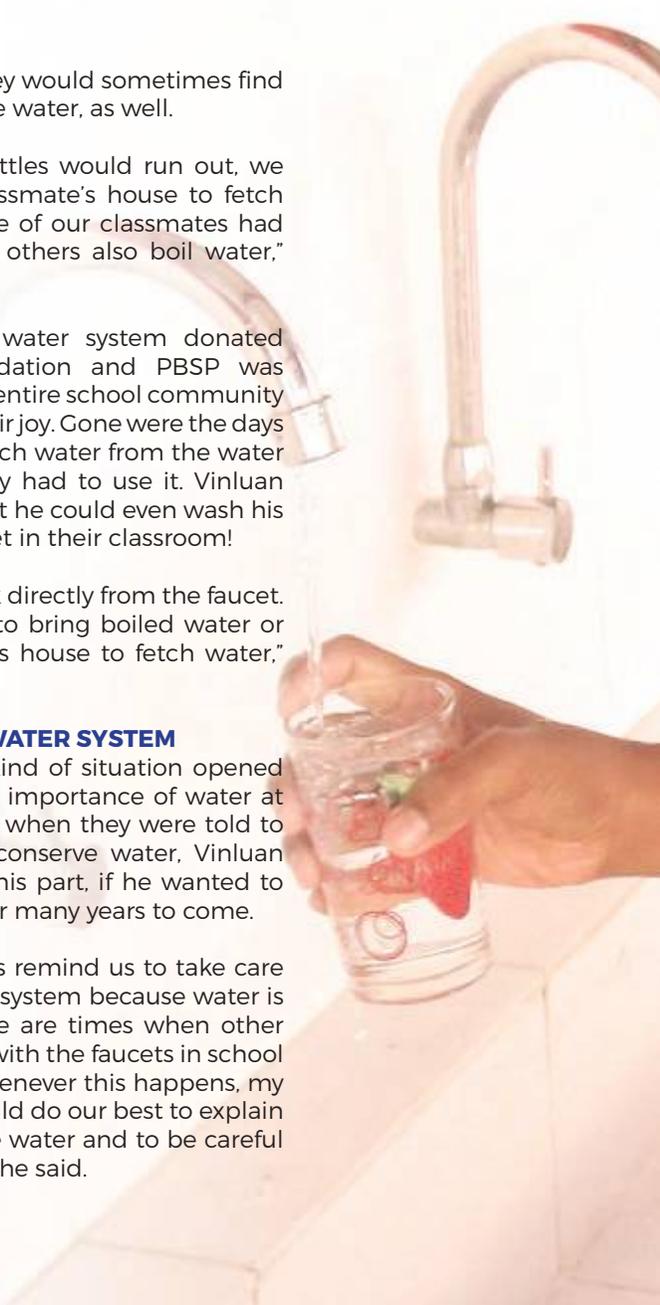
When the potable water system donated by Coca-Cola Foundation and PBSP was installed, he and the entire school community could not contain their joy. Gone were the days when they had to fetch water from the water pump whenever they had to use it. Vinluan could not believe that he could even wash his hands from the faucet in their classroom!

"We could even drink directly from the faucet. We no longer need to bring boiled water or go to our classmate's house to fetch water," he happily said.

## **MAINTAINING THE WATER SYSTEM**

Growing up in this kind of situation opened Vinluan's eyes to the importance of water at a very young age. So when they were told to help maintain and conserve water, Vinluan knew he had to do his part, if he wanted to enjoy this privilege for many years to come.

"Our teachers always remind us to take care of the potable water system because water is very important. There are times when other children would play with the faucets in school and waste water. Whenever this happens, my classmates and I would do our best to explain to them not to waste water and to be careful in using the faucets," he said.





**KENNETH VINLUAN** and his fellow students at Diket Elementary School in Pangasinan now enjoy the benefits of potable water.



**NOW SERVING** 80 households, PBSP's potable water system is being managed by the Talisay Fisherfolks Association under the zealous leadership of Bantayan resident Reynalod Batuhan.

# A COMMUNITY BRIMMING WITH WATER

*With PBSP's post-disaster interventions, a waterless community is now one of the leading water service providers on Bantayan island in Cebu*

**T**he common adage “water is life” is the mantra of Bantayan island resident Reynaldo Batuhan.

Such was their need for clean water before that he would trek two kilometers every morning and endure the 30-minute wait at the long line of fetchers—all for just two containers of water to bring back to his family.

He would have wanted more water but for everyone to get a share from their only source, each resident was limited to only two containers a day. In the Batuhan household that has four children and two adults, a member was only allotted three glasses for drinking so their supply would last for a day.

“It was worse during the Lenten season because the well would dry up. We were not only fasting on food, we were also fasting on water,” the father from Barangay Talisay, Sta. Fe shared.

Batuhan has a dug well but it was located close to a sanitation facility that he could not use it for his children. It became even more unreliable when Super Typhoon Yolanda destroyed it in 2013. But while the typhoon brought devastation on the island, it also brought many NGOs that offered post-disaster assistance. PBSP was one of them and when it asked Batuhan what they needed, he immediately asked for a potable water system for the community.

“Yes, we also needed livelihood, but I know many NGOs can give that to us. For me, it was only PBSP that can give us a proper potable water system, so I grabbed the chance,” he said.

## **SAFE WATER FOR USE**

PBSP helped Batuhan and his neighbors form the Talisay Fisherfolks Association (TFA) which would then be responsible for the maintenance of the new facility. The project trained TFA on how to map out their own water distribution system, install and maintain the necessary pipework, and facilitate water testing for potability.

When the level 3 water system was finally completed, Batuhan could not believe it actually offered a direct line from source to households.

“It was a joyful experience because I finally saw my grandchildren use a shower when taking a bath. It was something that I never got to experience as a child so I feel so blessed that I am able to help grant this kind of blessing to them,” he enthused.

To maintain the facility, PBSP taught TFA how to create a sustainability plan for it. Aside from assigning an operations manager and a team for installation and maintenance, TFA charged every household PhP150 for the installation of a water connection, and PhP140 monthly fee for the water use. From their earnings, TFA was able to expand their services from 50 to 80 households.

“Unlike our commercial district, there is actual water that they can use. And unlike the commercial service providers, we offer cheaper rates,” Batuhan said.

## **RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION**

While Batuhan and his community now enjoy direct access to potable water, he knows TFA should be more responsible in maintaining the facility.

TFA would organize regular inspections on all the pipes to avoid possible leaks. Regular water test and application of chlorine are also done to maintain water potability. It closely monitors each household so it does not go beyond the maximum limit of water consumption. Those who do not follow would find their lines cut until they become responsible consumers again. Part of maintaining the water system is to nurture its source so this year, TFA plans to plant native trees in their community.

“Our consumers paid for uninterrupted access to water, so it is our duty to ensure that. But just because we have this privilege to have immediate access to water doesn't mean we have the right to abuse it,” Batuhan added.

With the careful leadership of Batuhan and TFA's systematic plans, TFA is now enjoying the benefits of its success. If its plans go well—which include the purchase of an additional tank to expand its service to 200 households—TFA is well on its way to becoming one of the most successful water service providers on the island.

# THE FATHER OF FORCHACU IV

*A former army officer found a new community to continue his advocacy*

**M**ajor William Dormitorio was arrested for attempting to join a coup against the Philippine government in Northern Mindanao in October 1990.

“When I was still the commander of the 67th Infantry Battalion (IB) in Marawi City, we (together with the commander in Iligan City) organized a press conference declaring support to the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa (RAM). Because of that, we were relieved of our duty. Thirty-six of us marched to Cagayan de Oro City presenting our irrevocable resignation. It was disapproved except mine. I insisted to resign because I could not serve a government where the army was divided,” recalled Dormitorio, now 69 years old.

After his career in the army, a friend from the government offered him a job as officer-in-charge at a 43,000-hectare military reservation in Bukidnon. The area called Forchacu IV also became his hideout in the 1990s. The former battalion commander received death threats at that time because he caught some lawless elements in Marawi City.

“The area was a dangerous place before. The people in the area left because of massacres. The crops in the community were harvested by outsiders. The cattle were taken by bandits from Lanao and sold in Marawi City. When I entered the area, I brought with me retired and inactive soldiers who wanted to do farming. I organized the community and trained a Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU). This is the place where I wanted to establish a new community and continue my advocacy,” he said.

Later on, the community around the Kibaritan Military Reservation in Kalilangan, Bukidnon became peaceful because of Dormitorio. His

dream to establish a community free from corruption was realized.

He also joined politics as a Councilor in Kalilangan (from 2004 to 2013), so he could introduce further reforms.

## **SECURITY AND HEALTH RISKS**

However, in spite of Dormitorio's efforts to maintain peace and order in Forchacu IV, a new threat arose in the boundary.

“The New People's Army (NPA) penetrated Barangay Dominorog in Talakag, Bukidnon which is just four kilometers away from us. In November 2017, they ambushed a road in the area killing a four-month-old baby and injured others. They also abducted a cop. I was the one who told them to release the cop through negotiations we held in a church,” he said.

Apart from security risks, the community were also exposed to health risks because they did not have access to clean water for their household use.

“We only used rainwater for handwashing. We got our drinking water from a nearby spring in Dominorog. So, I used my truck to transport water. Some residents hitch with me while others use their motorcycles. But some who could not afford a ride just to hike to the water source. So far, the NPA have not touched my people since we are not their target. I also have friends near the water source who could look after my people,” shared Dormitorio.

## **ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY**

Fortunately, the community and its school received a water system project from Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines through Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP).

“PBSP first helped us several years ago by capacitating the Kalilangan Oil Palm Growers Association (KOPGA) through a project worth Php500,000. This time, PBSP brought in Coca-Cola Foundation that rehabilitated our water system. The new water system does not only supply water to Forchacu IV Elementary School but also to the community. My people do not need to fetch water in Dominorog anymore,” said Dormitorio.

The people can already access potable water from the tap stand station in the community. The students, meanwhile, can enjoy the benefits of clean, potable water from their drinking and handwashing station at the school.

These interventions, along with Dormitorio's reforms, have improved the lives of the people and kept them safe and secure.

“I think the community already has basic services like food and water. As farmers, we do not need to buy food because we produce our own. The people also believe in me. Politicians cannot buy our votes because we do not get hungry. The people have absorbed my advocacy in rejecting any form of political patronage and corruption,” revealed Dormitorio.

As for himself, he feels a greater sense of fulfillment in helping the community than in his previous career in the army.

“I could possibly become a general if I chose to return in the military service before. But I prefer to be influential in making the farmers more productive. I am happy to see their families eat three times a day and their children going to school. I also want to encourage more people to become farmers in our community,” said Dormitorio who hopes to transform the area into an independent barangay someday.



**BEFORE PBSP** and the Coca-Cola Foundation installed a potable water system in their community, William Dormitorio would fetch and transport water from a spring four kilometers away.



**RODRIGO MARTILLAN** has become a well-rounded farmer through his more than 20 years of work experience at PBSP's Center for Rural Technology Development in Laguna.

# REAPING A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST

*A farmer from Laguna gets to hone his craft and live a better life with his family through CRTD*

**P**lanting is never easy – this is the essence of Felipe de Leon’s song “Magtanim ay ‘Di Biro” which describes the tiresome task of planting rice. The Filipino folk song became well-known in 1960’s and was attributed to the everyday life of a farmer and how Filipinos raise their children and family through agriculture.

The song’s lyrics perfectly depict the plight of 65-year-old farmer Rodrigo Martillan from Calauan, Laguna. He hails from Bicol but spent his teenage years as a farmer in Nueva Ecija where he also started his own family. Martillan used to earn a meager income as a “porsyentuhan” or farm worker hired by landowners to plant and harvest rice and only gets a percentage from his produce.

But he has new lyrics to add to the song as his life changed when he got hired as a farmer in the Center for Rural Technology Development (CRTD) in Calauan, Laguna.

“We had to leave Nueva Ecija because life was really difficult there and my earnings from farming were not enough to feed my family. I don’t know why but I think my luck is here in Laguna. I was first hired as a cleaner and grasscutter in CRTD. Then later on, a friend offered me a regular job. At first, I was really skeptic and a bit hesitant, because I did not finish school, and I did not know anything about what they do here,” Martillan shared.

### LEARNING THE ROPES

Established in 1979 by PBSP, CRTD was built to respond to the needs of the country’s agriculture sector. For almost 40 years, PBSP-CRTD has devoted its efforts in developing, testing, validating, and disseminating appropriate technologies to respond to the needs of partner-farmers, extension workers, agriculturists, researchers, and other clients.

“My first tasks (projects) here were piggery, poultry, and livestock farming. CRTD trained me and even sent me to

trainings in other areas. When I got used to these tasks, I was given other projects to work on. These included planting different kinds of vegetables and collecting fresh milk from cows. I also worked with a CRTD staff for the inventory and harvests reports, and selling of our produce,” he said.

In his long years of service, Martillan evolved from being a regular rice farmer into a multi-skilled employee who learned how to run and maintain a farm, as well as sell their produce. He was also taught how to find alternative sources of income and livelihood.

“One thing that made me really happy is that I learned how to record all our produce and sales. I will not be able to learn it if I did not work here. I might just be feeding the animals that I was tasked to take care of but I probably would not know if we are earning or how are we earning from it. That’s the best thing about CRTD, you will learn a lot of things. You will enjoy working because of the good relationship you have with other employees and the management,” he said.

### SUSTAINING THE LESSONS LEARNED

In the long run, Martillan became a well-rounded farmer. He left CRTD in 2005 but he remained as a consultant and caretaker to the two-hectare farm and fish farm. Because it was his passion, Martillan opted to return to the Center after just months of resting and worked there for three more years. CRTD wanted him back because of his expertise in the farm, especially in taking care of the cows and harvesting of fresh milk.



*“When I retired, I just took care of my farm, it's just beside CRTD. I also started my own small piggery and vegetable garden. I learned how to do all of it because of CRTD. My house is just near the Center so I come to visit from time to time. They still call me to conduct trainings for visitors, farmers, and students from nearby schools and provinces. It felt like I never really retired. I am happy to be needed. Whenever neighbors ask for help about farming, I am always ready to help as CRTD was to me for more than 20 years.”*



At that time, he was producing 50 liters of fresh milk every day from his cows to give to CRTD which became one of the suppliers of fresh milk to UPLB and dairy businesses in Laguna and Manila.

Just like in other professions, retirement is inevitable, but Rodrigo Martillan's farmer hands did not stop from helping the Center and his neighbors.

"When I retired, I just took care of my farm, it's just beside CRTD. I also started my own small piggery and vegetable garden. I learned how to do all of it because of CRTD. My house is just near the Center so I come to visit from time to time. They still call me to conduct trainings for visitors, farmers, and students from nearby schools and provinces on how to make longganisa, tocino, and salted eggs, and of course, poultry and dairy products. It felt like I never really retired. I am happy to be needed. Whenever neighbors ask for help about farming, I am always ready to help as CRTD was to me for more than 20 years," shared Martillan.

### PROMOTING AGRICULTURE

Martillan's more than 20 years of hard work and service in CRTD paid off when he was able to see his four children graduate from college. Two of them finished Engineering courses. One is ME (Mechanical Engineering) and the other, EE (Electrical Engineering). The other two are graduates of Hotel and Restaurant Management and Nursing Aide. If not for the Center, he would probably still be tilling some landlord's farm in exchange for a few bucks and sacks of rice that would definitely not suffice their needs.

This makes Martillan so thankful and appreciative of the help that CRTD brings not just to him but to a lot of people, especially in the agriculture sector. He hopes that young generations will also be educated and enticed to take agriculture as a career.

"Farmers feed us. If the young generations will continue to lose interest, agriculture will die and we will no longer have



**THE CENTER FOR RURAL TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT (CRTD)** is improving its facilities and services to reaffirm its niche in the sustainable agro-enterprise development sector. As a research and development center, it plans to provide innovative, integrated farming technologies to help reduce poverty and contribute to improving the health of Filipino consumers.

food on our table. We need to educate the young. Even though it was hard, I worked harder because I wanted my kids to finish school. I am not sure if my kids would want to choose farming or work here but I have to say, our life became better when we got here. I was given a permanent and stable job, I learned a lot of things aside from farming and I have my family living here with me so I never needed to go far places just to work. Indeed, our life changed. CRTD gave me what I cannot have anywhere else."

Today, PBSP-CRTD will re-affirm its niche in the sustainable agro-enterprise development by providing innovative, integrated farming technologies to help reduce poverty and contribute to improving the health of Filipino consumers. Rodrigo Martillan is just one of the many beneficiaries who had a better life after getting trained and employed in CRTD.



# VERMICOMPOST

## WHAT ARE VERMICOMPOSTS?

texturized, sanitized, and deodorized form of castings made up of organic matter that are extracted by earthworms



## WHY USE VERMICOMPOSTS?



- Provides plant with complete nutrition and contains all essential elements
- Affordable compared to petroleum-based fertilizers
- Hastens seed germination, plant growth, flowering, and fruiting
- Enhances soil structure by improving aeration/drainage, water and nutrient holding capacity
- Acts as slow release fertilizer to plants
- Contains important beneficial microorganisms and acts as a powerful biocide against diseases and nematodes
- Natural - no harmful effect to the environment
- Offers an effective solution to solid waste management problem
- Can be used in preparing Vermi Tea

## HOW CAN I USE VERMICOMPOST?

### VEGETABLES



apply 36 bags of vermicompost per hectare (12 bags as basal and 2 sidedressing of 12 bags)

### CORN



apply 36 bags of vermicompost per hectare (12 bags as basal and 2 sidedressing of 12 bags)

### FLOWERING PLANTS



apply 1kg vermicompost per square meter during land prep  
Sidedress during vegetative stage at a rate of 50-100/hill once a month

### FRUIT & PLANTATION CROPS



For young trees, incorporate 1 to 2 kgs vermicompost around the plant canopy (band application).  
Incorporate 4-5kgs vermicompost around the plant canopy when fertilizing mature/fruiting trees.

### POTTED PLANTS



Use 1 part vermicompost to 2 parts potting mix.  
Sidedress using in thick vermicompost



**Odorless**

**Excellent soil enhancer**

**Has very high mineral content and beneficial microbes**

## WHO WE ARE

Philippine Business for Social Progress established the Center for Rural Technology Development (PBSP-CRTD) to answer the needs of the country's agriculture sector. For almost 40 years, PBSP-CRTD has devoted its efforts in developing, testing, validating, and disseminating appropriate technologies to respond to the needs of partner-farmers, extension workers, agriculturists, researchers, and other clients.

Today, PBSP-CRTD re-affirms its niche in the sustainable agro-enterprise development. It shall provide innovative, integrated farming technologies to help reduce poverty, contribute to improving the health of Filipino consumers through affordable organic produce, and protect the environment with the use of sustainable approaches in farm production.

**Philippine Business for Social Progress  
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**ROSLYN CHAVEZ** lifts up her all-woman association with the timely intervention of PBSP. The livelihood program aims to improve and sustain the economic resilience of women in her community.

# WOMAN OF THE FUTURE

*A housewife from Bantayan island becomes a leader and entrepreneur through a livelihood intervention from PBSP and LWR*

One of Roslyn Chavez' biggest dreams is to have her own *sari-sari* store.

The 34-year-old mother of four from Bantayan Island, Cebu would always imagine herself waking early in the morning to open a store which would be fully stocked with items her community needs. With all of her children still studying, Chavez believes that earnings from a *sari-sari* store could help support her family, and augment the meager pay of her husband who works as a construction worker.

Her dream initially came true when she became a member and eventual leader of the Kaongkod Womens Livelihood Association (KAWLA). With their collective shares, the all-women organization was able to put up their own consumer store in 2015, where members take turns in administering every day.

But while occasionally running KAWLA's consumer store made Chavez feel what it was to realize her dreams, she also stumbled on a roadblock. She didn't know if the group is actually running the store right.

"Back then, I thought running a store was just simple, that we would start with a capital and recover that by our daily earnings. But I did not think of other expenses. Before we knew it, we were losing our funds. We did not understand how that happened when we were earning every day," Chavez explained.

She considers it divine intervention that PBSP came at the right moment and offered a livelihood opportunity that would solve all their worries. The program, financially supported by the Lutheran World Relief (LWR), aims to help women groups in Bantayan become economically resilient by providing them with skills and enterprise development trainings as well as capital for livelihood opportunities, organizational strengthening, and other business development services.

## SAVING UP FOR THE RAINY DAYS

One of the main reasons Chavez and other women organized KAWLA was to help their families earn additional income through the enterprises they generated. The project taught KAWLA how to properly manage their funds. Part of this was the creation of a community-managed savings and credit association

(CoMSCA), which offers a simple savings and loan facility in their community.

Through the CoMSCA scheme, the members provided contributing shares on a locked box with three keys each kept by one member. To ensure transparency, all transactions took place in front of all members and each entry was properly recorded.

Six months after setting up their CoMSCA savings, KAWLA was able to pool PhP100,000 worth of shares from their members. This enabled the group to provide at least PhP1,000 to members in need of emergency funds and offer member loans with interest.

They were also able to grow their consumer store into a licensed grains retailer that caters mostly to 4Ps beneficiaries. From their added assets, the store has pooled almost PhP75,000 of net profit in just one month, which allowed the members to get at least PhP2,000 worth of net shares, excluding the funds they set aside for their revolving enterprise.

## A BETTER LEADER

While the project gave them more additional work to do, such as the regular recording of their transactions, Chavez admitted that it also taught her the values needed to be a better leader.

From the trainings and continuous interaction with PBSP and its projects, Chavez learned how to handle her members better, especially when resolving conflict. Before, she was quick to act on her temper when dealing with erring members. Now, she learned to be more patient and to resolve issues more objectively.

With the learnings and gains, KAWLA is now on its way to achieving bigger dreams. For this year, the association plans to expand their consumer store to accommodate more goods for the community. They also plan to venture into cattle raising and open a warehouse for their grains business.

"PBSP provided the solution to our failing business by teaching us to become better entrepreneurs. We owe our survival to PBSP because they came at the time we really needed them the most," Chavez said.

# HELPING HEAL THE WOUNDS OF WAR

*The Marawi Storybook Series*



**DURING THE 'iRead4Peace: Launch of the Marawi Storybook Series,'** authors Randy Bustamante (rightmost) and Melissa Salva (second from left) along with translator Lawambae Basaula-Lumna (leftmost) and Esmail C. Gabriel read an excerpt from the book, 'Lost and Found: A Song of Marawi.'



**R**ebuilding the city of Marawi, especially the most affected area or ground zero that was reduced to rubble during the May 2017 siege may take years or even decades. Starting over for thousands of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who are still in evacuation centers, transitional shelters and host communities may take even longer as their future remains uncertain.

But the horrible and traumatic experience of the survivors, especially the children, may last forever and affect their process of moving on.

To help children cope, heal from the wounds of war and adjust to their new lives, PBSP, together with The Bookmark, Inc., developed the Marawi Storybook Series which is part of PBSP's Give a Gift of Reading Campaign. For this special initiative dubbed "iRead4Peace," four children's storybooks were produced, highlighting the culture, identity, values and resilience of the Maranaos.

The storybooks were based on actual experiences of survivors of the 2017 Marawi conflict and were translated

into fiction to make them more age-appropriate for children.

Prior to its publication, the storybooks underwent numerous rounds of rigorous reviews by the academe, religious leaders and scholars, psychologists and public groups in Marawi on content, accuracy, psychological sensitivities, and conformity to Islamic beliefs and traditions.

Written in both English and Maranao, the books will be given to every child in Marawi and will also be donated to the Department of Education-Marawi to improve the reading skills of children and serve as tools for peace education and trauma healing.

PBSP's Give a Gift of Reading Campaign aims to improve the reading skills of children and instill in them a love for reading. It is part of PBSP's Education Program and supports the Sa Pagbasa, May Pagasa (SPMP) Consortium where PBSP is also the secretariat.

# LOST AND FOUND

## *A Song of Marawi*

*(Miada ago Miyatoon, Idayda a Marawi)*

Written by Randy M. Bustamante  
Translated into Maranao by Zaman Macapaar-Guinar  
Illustrated by Tristan V. Yuvienco



# FINDING HOPE AND STRENGTH IN THE FAMILY

*A storybook highlights the kindness of strangers during the Marawi siege*

**B**ooks can change the way people see the world and help in developing one's resiliency. For the children in Marawi who lost everything because of the siege, books can save lives. These are not just education materials but also serve as a reminder that they can derive hope and strength from their families.

This is the message that author Randy M. Bustamante wants to convey in his book, "Lost and Found, A Song of Marawi" (Miada ago Miyatoon, Idayda a Marawi). The storybook, translated into Maranao by Zaman Macapaar, and illustrated by Tristan V. Yuvienco, is one of four children's storybooks written for "iRead4Peace," a special initiative of PBSP's Give a Gift of Reading Campaign that aims to improve the reading skills and instill in children a love for reading.

PBSP aims to provide every child in Marawi with a set of storybooks to help in trauma healing and peace education.

## **FAMILIAL TIES AND KINDNESS**

*Lost and Found, A Song of Marawi* is a narrative poem about falling back on family through the kindness of strangers during the siege. The poem has two personae or voices who are telling two parallel stories that meet at the end. One persona is Ana, a six-year-old girl stranded in Marawi with her pregnant mother while the other persona is Amin, a husband and father who is trying to get into Marawi to rescue his elderly father. Their stories complete each other and reveal

the power of kindness to help find what is lost.

"I was under a lot of pressure when I was writing this story since it is not only historical, it's also for kids. It was a bit of a challenge because I had a mental block at the beginning. I watched the video interviews of the survivors of the Marawi siege and I was moved by their stories. But after, the big question was how to translate it into a children's story," shared Bustamante who is a writer, editor, and literary translator.

One of his most recent works is the English translation of Francisco Balagtas' *Florante at Laura*.

In the book, Bustamante chose to delve on the Maranao's high regard for the family.

"This book has two stories and the challenge was combining the stories. But what really struck me the most is that the notion of family is so strong. That these characters are connected somehow, every child is everyone's child and every old man is everyone's father," Bustamante said.

For the illustrations, Yuvienco found it an emotional challenge.

"Seeing what the people of Marawi had to deal with reminded me how bad it was. This is why I am thankful to be part of the project and I hope that this book will help the children who read the story to cope with the experience."

# MARAWI

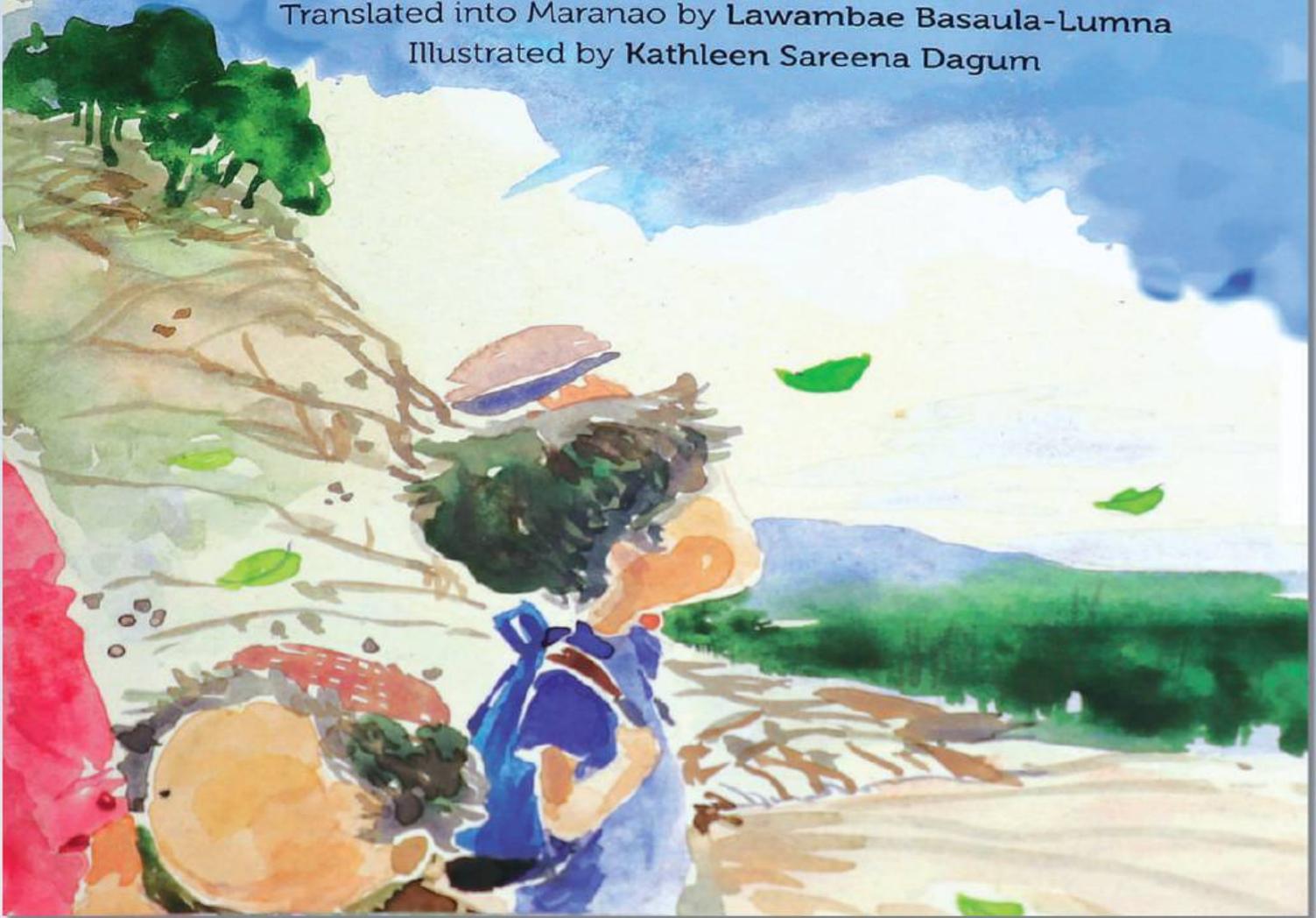
## *Land of the Brave*

*(Marawi, Lopa o Mawaraw)*

Written by Melissa Salva

Translated into Maranao by Lawambae Basaula-Lumna

Illustrated by Kathleen Sareena Dagum



*"In time, Marawi will change, too...You'll see," Farouk said uncertainly, but with hope.  
"He was not seeing the ruins, but a place from his memory."*

# A DREAM FOR MARAWI

*Amid the devastation of the siege, a storybook reminds about the beauty of the place and strength of its community*

In the Marawi children's storybook "Marawi, Land of the Brave," writer and author Melissa Salva chose to focus on peace education and the Maranao values of bravery, resiliency and hope which continue to prevail among survivors in spite of the devastation, trauma and uncertainty caused by the 2017 siege.

This is one of four storybooks produced by the Philippine Business for Social Progress and The Bookmark, Inc. for the "iRead4Peace" initiative, which is under PBSP's Give a Gift of Reading Campaign. PBSP aims to give a storybook to every child in Marawi to help in trauma healing and peace education.

## TEACHING PEACE

"Marawi, Land of the Brave" tells the story of Amir who loves hearing tales from his brother Farouk about his native land, especially the ones about the Maranaos' bravery and skill in battle. These are the stories of Maranao hero Amai Pakpak and Indarapatra.

When the brothers' peaceful lives in Marawi were upended by terrorists, it was Amir's belief in his proud heritage that kept him resilient. Still, he was shocked by the destruction and loss that came with the siege. But because of their relationships to Allah, nature, and the people around them, they have retained their sense of purpose and hope.

The story was inspired by the accounts of fourth to sixth grade evacuees in Saguiaran and Capitol in Marawi City who recalled their simple lives filled with study, play, prayer and family activities. Even though they have and are still facing difficult circumstances, the children look forward to a future where they can be doctors, nurses, engineers, business owners and even Muslim scholars.

"Among the interviews I watched, there were two boys who stood out. One I found memorable because of

the way he sang Bismillah. The other boy, because he said he wanted to be a Muslim scholar when he grew up. I decided that what I wanted to focus on was not the siege itself, but the idea of teaching peace," said Salva.

## A STORY OF CONTRASTS AND SIMILARITIES

In her research, Salva also came across historical facts and legends which added more inspiration to her story.

"In Maranao, history and legend are the same. A historical figure could assume a mythical identity, inversely, legend becomes possibility. I saw the parallels between the siege and Amai Pakpak's battles, and the siege's aftermath and the story of Indarapatra," she added.

Hence, Salva chose to play on the idea of contrasts: Amir's fanciful idea of battle vs the Marawi siege; the idyllic setting of Lake Lanao during sunset and Amir's feeling of waking up from a beautiful dream versus the waking up the following day to a nightmare; and the finding of terrorists swarming all over the city, and their objective to divide by eliminating those who are not like them versus the community banding together to protect anyone in need of help, regardless of faith or background.

The author also juxtaposed certain historical events with legends due to their similarities: Amai Pakpak and his warriors defending Marawi from foreign invasion is similar to soldiers and the community working together to expel terrorists; the princes who came from distant places to slay Umacaan juxtaposed with soldiers coming from far away to fight the terrorists; Amir's self-concept, fueled by legends of bravery, and juxtaposed with the community's quiet bravery and show of solidarity; and the damage left by Umacaan softening and becoming beautiful over time which also sends the message that Marawi can rise from the devastation it suffered from the siege.

"Readers could also explore the idea of sanctuary. The family were unable to worship on that first day of the siege. Because the mosque was taken, the people were robbed of a place to seek spiritual and physical refuge. The mosque was supposed to have been held sacred no matter what. The community came together to support each other and keep each other safe. One of the basic ideas of peace education is to be able to live in harmony with oneself, with others (the community) and the natural environment. This is what I hoped to convey in the story," Salva explained.

More than giving a message of peace and hope, Salva seeks to remind the children of Marawi of the beauty of their land and the strength of their community.

"The story hopes young readers will treasure the beauty of Marawi. It aims to gently guide them to the idea that a sense of belonging in a community, welcoming diversity, having a sense of purpose and hope, and a connection to nature makes them more inclined to peace," Salva said.

## EMPHASIZING THE MOVEMENTS

Teacher-artist Kathleen Sareena Dagum made every page of the storybook more vivid with her watercolor illustrations while Lawambae Basaula-Lumna provided the Maranao translations.

What makes the illustrations unique in this storybook though are the unrefined facial features of the characters.

"I made it that way because I wanted to focus more on the body movements. I believe the dramatic effect comes with the background or the scenery. I wanted to show how the bodies relate to the background. I also wanted to emphasize the scenery, that despite all these tragedies, the beauty of Marawi will remain. I hope the survivors would see it and give them hope. I hope this book will really enlighten and touch lives," Dagum said.

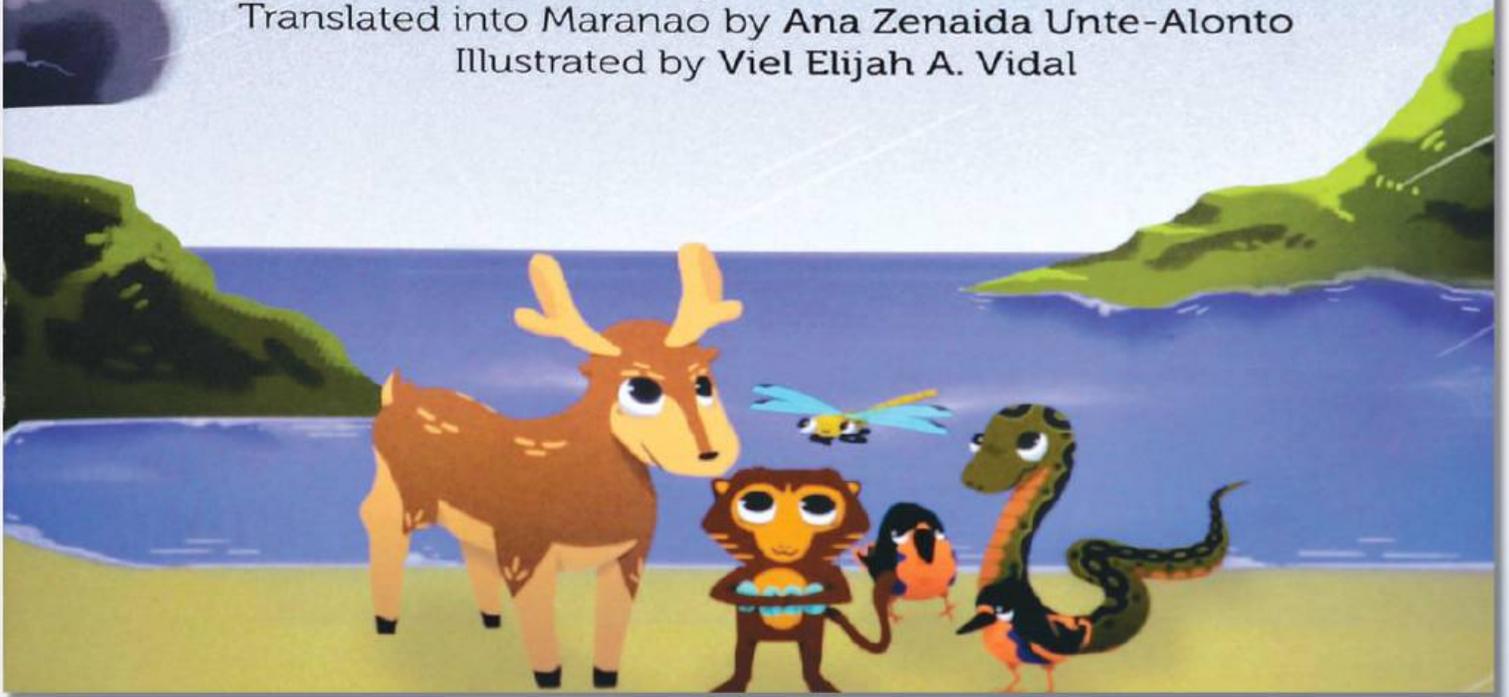
# THE DAY THE Typhoon Came

*(So Gawii A Kiyapakaoma o Barat)*

Written by Carla M. Pacis

Translated into Maranao by Ana Zenaida Unte-Alonto

Illustrated by Viel Elijah A. Vidal



# LESSONS FROM THE SIEGE

*A Marawi storybook underscores values of caring and helping that enabled Christians and Muslims to survive*

**A**mid the death, destruction and the struggle of survivors, there were inspiring stories of Muslims and Christians helping and saving each other during the 2017 Marawi siege.

Some of these stories include Muslims covering up their Christian friends and neighbors in Muslim garb to protect them during encounters with terrorists, and Christians standing up for their Muslim friends in military checkpoints. There were also kind people who took in those who needed a place to stay at the height of the firefight between the government troops and the Maute terrorists.

These values of caring and helping one another is the theme of the first-of-its-kind Marawi storybook titled "The Day the Typhoon Came" written by renowned children's book author Carla Pacis. It is one of four storybooks produced by the Philippine Business for Social Progress and The Bookmark, Inc. for PBSP's "iRead4Peace" initiative which aims to help young survivors heal the wounds of war and cope with their new lives.

## **INCULCATING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

"The Day the Typhoon Came," is a story of care and concern for others even how different they are. The setting is in Lake Lanao which is rich in diversity with different animal characters. During a strong typhoon, the animals: Dragonfly, Tumba (a cyprinid fish endemic to Mindanao),

Python, Kingfisher, Monkey, Deer and a boy help each other to find shelter and safety.

The typhoon represents the terrorist attack on Marawi and the animals symbolize the people of Marawi who are of different religions, ethnicity and social status. Illustrated by Viel Elijah Vidal and translated into Maranao by Ana Zenaida Unte-Alonto, this storybook underscores the values of caring and helping each other, especially in times of need.

"The process of writing the book involved watching videos and listening to tapes of interviews with the young survivors. This was because we couldn't go to Marawi to interview the kids, and we don't speak the language. As I was listening, it seemed like they were saying that it's important to go back to the community and their sense of caring for each other. You help each other in times of need. That's what I picked up," explained Pacis.

She thought the best way to demonstrate these values would be in a big calamity such as a typhoon.

"What I wrote is a cumulative tale where characters start from small to big, from dragonfly to deer. The fish can easily eat the dragonfly, but then they decide to help each other and bring each other to safety," said Pacis. "Through this book, we hope to convey the message of caring for each other no matter how different we are and our beliefs are. For the children of Marawi, they need to care for each other so their communities will

survive. They need to be able to help each other and think of themselves as one community, not different from each other."

## **THE POWER OF WORDS AND ILLUSTRATIONS**

Pacis did not only just write a storybook for the project but also helped in selecting the other authors and illustrators who will do the three other storybooks.

"I immediately said yes to this project when it was offered to me. I cannot give money, I cannot go there physically and help. So, this is my way of helping. Through the power of stories, maybe we won't see the effect right away, but hopefully it will help change minds. It will become an agent of change," said Pacis.

With bibliotherapy, she added that kids who most often have difficulty expressing themselves, would most likely be able to do so when they read a book they can relate to.

"When they have acknowledged that something bad happened to them, and they realized that they're not the only ones who experienced it and then they learn that there is a solution or an end to it, I think that's how books can help children," Pacis said.

As an illustrator, Vidal hopes his characters would also inspire the children of Marawi to go into art.

"I believe art can be therapeutic. It helps people express what they can't normally express in words or in action," he said.

# Water Lilies for Marawi

*(Tarëmbabak para sa Marawi)*

Written by Heidi Emily Eusebio-Abad

Translated into Maranao by Jalillah Gampong-Alonto

Illustrated by Shellette Gipa



# HOPE IN FRIENDSHIP

*This storybook speaks about true camaraderie and understanding despite religious differences*

Children are resilient, they also have their ways on how to cope with the crisis. They laugh, they play, they start to dream and hope again.

Such is the story of *Water Lilies for Marawi* which is one of four children's storybooks written for "iRead4Peace," a special initiative of PBSP's Give a Gift of Reading Campaign that aims to improve the reading skills and instill in children a love for reading. These books were developed to serve as tools for peace education and trauma healing of the Marawi survivors.

Written by Heidi Emily Eusebio-Abad, translated into Maranao by Jalilah Gampong-Alonto, and illustrated by Shellette Gipa, the storybook depicts how war affects children. This story shows how, sometimes, children have the better judgement on how to cope with war. Having lived through the war, they can prove to adults that differences in faith, culture, or even social status can be bridged by true friendship and understanding.

## **A BOOK FOR KIDS AND ADULTS**

*Water Lilies for Marawi* depicts a story of friendship and understanding among Muslim and Christian children in Marawi. Set during the time of the siege, Shameera, Leslie, and Orak portray how children live through the war and maintain their friendship despite religious differences.

"More work went to preparing to write the story, especially doing the research and choosing the names of the children. I had to read several articles about the children in the evacuation centers to understand their situation," Eusebio-Abad shared. "What makes this different from my other books is that I had to be very careful writing it. I have never been to Marawi and I had to be very careful in writing about the culture and children there."

Eusebio-Abad is an Associate Professor at the Department of English and Comparative Literature in the University of the Philippines Diliman. She handles Creative Writing Courses on writing for both children and young adults. She has written 11 storybooks for children, two of which were in poetry format.

"I am not thinking of big ways by which my story will have an impact on the child, I'm thinking more on the little things. The moments when a child sits down on the floor with my book, for me that's a big help already," Eusebio-Abad said.

Aside from the kids, the author also hopes the book would appeal to the adults and enable them to reflect more on their actions.

"I'd like to address this book more to the grown-up readers, they need to do more of the learning. In the first place, what was the cause of the Marawi siege? It's the adults, not the children," Eusebio-Abad said. "And in my story you will see the combination of Muslims and Christians and they remained friends. It is possible to form a genuine friendship. If the children can do it, why can't the grown-ups form a more peaceful community?"

Meanwhile, illustrating the storybook proved a bit of a challenge for Gipa.

"This is not a typical children's storybook. It's about what happened in Marawi and for a children's storybook, that's a heavy topic," Gipa said. "The challenge was how to make the illustrations light and appropriate for children. I drew inspiration from the colors of the sun because it symbolizes hope. And I want the kids to feel hopeful just from seeing the colors and illustration of the book."

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