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Binnadang

The official publication of the Center for Development Programs in the Cordillera

*Saving
traditional
seeds*

Binnadang is the official publication of the Center for Development Programs in the Cordillera, Inc.

Binnadang is a word used by the Bontoc Kankana-ey in the Cordillera, northern Philippines for labour cooperation. This concerted action by community members is mainly applied in agriculture and community gatherings.

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SHARING SEEDS

Through sharing of seeds, farmers have preserved traditional varieties of rice and other essential food crops such as beans and fruits. This practice endures in some indigenous and local communities where members share, borrow and exchange seeds with one another and even with farmers from other towns and provinces. What is borrowed is repaid after harvest, also in seeds.

Women are traditionally the keepers of the seed. In the Cordillera, the women select the best seeds from a harvest, store them and then sow, transplant and help reap them when they have fully grown into grains. The Adivasi or indigenous communities in India have Seed Mothers who similarly preserve the seeds to be used for the next planting season. It is the Seed Mothers who mainly have the knowledge of the different varieties of rice and other grains such as sorghum and millet. Today it is also their role to protect their seeds from corporate attempts to patent them.

In the past decades however many farmers shifted to high yielding varieties (HYVs) of rice and other food crops for the lure of higher, shorter and easier production. So-called terminator or suicide seeds were also introduced into the market. These not only produce sterile seeds but place seed control in corporate hands.

We are now reaping the toll. The increasing farm chemical use HYVs require has indebted many farmers and turned their soils barren. Many traditional rice varieties, now known to have better nutrient quality, have also disappeared. In India which has one of the richest diversities in rice, hundreds of varieties have become extinct. The indigenous communities in Pinukpuk and Tabuk, Kalinga have lost 15 or an estimated three-fourths of their total old rice varieties.

It is to all our benefit that farmers, farmer communities and allied groups in various countries are now salvaging and reclaiming their traditional seeds. In India, they are collecting, conserving and propagating and distributing the seeds of hundreds of folk rice varieties. In CDPC's People's Integrated Farm, members of partner peoples organizations are seeding the nursery with traditional vegetable and fruit seeds to be shared with farmers in their own and other communities.

The loss of any traditional food seed is our collective loss. It would diminish both our biological diversity and our everyday food security.



Stopping genetically engineered rice

BY BLESSY JANE ESLAO

The International Farmers Exchange Visit-Workshop on Sustainable Agriculture held in Bhubaneswar in Odisha state, India was a boost to the growing movement against genetically engineered (GE) rice and other crops and for conserving traditional seeds.

From October 7-16, 2017 key farmer leaders, rural development workers, scientists and advocates from four Asian countries shared information and views on the so-called golden rice and its impacts on farmers and food security. Genetically engineered, golden rice is fortified with vitamin A.

At the end of nearly two weeks, the 15 participants from Indonesia,

Bangladesh, India and the Philippines united to bring the regional campaign against GE rice and for traditional seed propagation to their partner communities and organisations in their own home countries.

The Farmers Exchange facilitated cross learning by community field visits, cultural and seed exchange, and discussions on traditional rice conservation, indigenous knowledge systems and sustainable agricultural practices. Organised by India-based ORISSA (Organisation for Rural Reconstruction and Integrated Social Services Activities) and Philippines-based MASIPAG (Magsasaka at Siyentipiko para sa Pagunlad ng Agrikultura [Farmer-Scientist Partnership for Development]) through the Stop the Golden Rice Now

Campaign, it also served as a mechanism for advocacy education.

The Farmers Exchange aimed to strengthen solidarity and networking between the international delegates and local organizations, partner individuals and farmer communities/organizations. The Philippine participants were representatives of MASIPAG and Center for Development Programs in the Cordillera (CDPC).

Importance of Rice

The country reports, community field visits to Rayagada, Muniguda and the Adivasi community of Malkangiri, and the overview by MASIPAG brought out the importance of rice cultivation in Asian societies, its role in global food security and the various factors including GE rice that impact production, farmers and consumers.

Rice is of great value in diverse agricultural societies. In Asia where it is a main staple, thousands of rice varieties have been cultivated and developed in varied topographic and climatic regions for millenia, with each variety reflecting unique cultural traditions



Sharing views by women farmers and delegates

and heritages. Rice is also central to global food security, being the major food source of about 2.7 billion people that is projected to rise to 3.9 billion by 2025. Daily capita consumption is highest in China, India and followed by Southeast Asia countries (FAO, 2013 as cited in Regional Campaign Overview).

The rice industry however is buffeted by various economic, political and ecological factors that adversely affect farmers and consumers. One is the global liberal capitalist trade that governs rice production and trade. During the 2008 global financial crisis, rice price increases tripled hitting the poorest sectors in Asia.

Some governments have also liberalized rice importations such as in the Philippines, Nigeria and Indonesia. This has displaced local farmers resulting from land grab and massive conversion of agricultural rice land into corporate-controlled plantations of boom crops such as oil palm. (Regional Campaign Overview)

In his country report, the Indonesia participant Harry Sandy Ame of Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria confirmed that although Indonesia is a leading rice exporter, rice farming has decreased due to land grabbing, mining and palm oil, coffee and cacao expansion. He added that the government's agrarian reform

program, as in the Philippines, is not working.

The global climate crisis further aggravates poverty and food security among rice farmers and consumers. As a result of the severe drought in South Asia and Southeast Asia in 2015, rice production declined in India, Vietnam and Thailand which account for 60% of global rice trade. In India production fell by 1.16 million tonnes in 2014-2015. (Regional Campaign Overview)

Women farmers are affected differentially by these influences. Nasrin Sultana, the delegate from Bangladesh representing the National Women Farmers and Workers Association (NWFA), said the women in her country are not recognized as farmers and do not own land. It is largely the government and corporate companies that use and control the land as well as decision making processes. She added that the women are further burdened by climate change impacts. In lowland communities for instance, water salinity is resulting in lower production. To reverse the situation, NWFA organizes and empowers women through seminars and trainings.

GE rice, HYVs

Scientific rice research and technology, funded mostly by corporations, have raised yields such as the "green revolution" and its use of high



Saving the good seeds for next planting season in the Cordillera

yielding varieties (HYV). But despite this, rice farmers who feed a big part of the world's population are said to be among the poorest people who suffer from chronic hunger and malnourishment (IFAD-FAO 2012 as cited in Regional Campaign Overview).

Bangladesh participant, Abdul Mazid, also highlighted the ill effects of their farmers' increasing engagement in HYV farming. As a result of HYVs' dependence on high agrochemical inputs, pests are increasing and soils have become acidic or infertile.

Further confronting rice farmers today is the introduction of the controversial golden rice being pushed by biotech and agribusiness companies such as Swiss firm Syngenta that deals in agrochemicals and seeds. The growing opposition to genetically engineered rice and other crops raise the issues of their adverse impacts on human health and the environment as well as corporate seed patent rights and control.

Golden rice, which contains beta-carotene, has been developed primarily by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) with the support of transnational corporations, foundations and agencies such as Syngenta, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation and USAID. (Regional Campaign Overview) It aims to address vitamin A deficiency in children and pregnant women worldwide. But oppositors say that malnutrition is not just a vitamin deficiency but a social health problem that needs to be addressed holistically by pursuing sustainable agriculture and social equity.

Golden rice has been deployed in recent years for testing and implementation in developing countries particularly in Bangladesh, Indonesia, India and other parts of Asia through the Golden Rice Humanitarian Board, a public-private partnership set up for the purpose.

But its testing in other countries largely failed due to protests by farmers and civil society groups. In the Philippines in 2013, farmers, advocates and MASIPAG staff marched to the

IRRI demonstration farm in Los Banos, Laguna and uprooted all the golden rice seedlings.

Those who oppose golden rice fear that allowing its entry will open the floodgates to other GE crops. Moreover, they say GE rice benefits the companies rather than consumers and farmers.

Implementation of golden rice production is set again in 2018 through IRRI and biotech and agricultural seed companies Syngenta, Monsanto and Bayer. In the Philippines it will be done in coordination with the Department of Agriculture and Bureau of Plant Industry. Thus, the Stop Golden Rice Now Campaign.

Confronting rice farmers today is the introduction of the controversial golden rice being pushed by biotech and agribusiness companies such as Swiss firm Syngenta that deals in agrochemicals and seeds.

Reclaiming traditional seeds

Genetically engineered rice and HYVs are a threat to traditional rice genetic diversity. India, which has almost a third of the world's rice genetic resources, has lost many of its traditional varieties. In West Bengal, its leading rice producer, about 90% of 5,500 traditional varieties are now extinct because of HYV cultivation in the past decades. (Regional Campaign Overview)

The agricultural policy expert, Dr. Narasimha Reddy Donthi, in his country report noted that the seeming shortage of rice in India, a major rice exporter, may be a way to lure farmers to plant GE rice which is easier to produce.

To counter GE rice and increasing corporate seed control, farmers, farming communities, development workers, scientists and advocates are working to conserve and propagate traditional or folk rice varieties (FVR). The Nadiabased Agricultural Training Centre, run by the West Bengal Agriculture Ministry, has saved 400 indigenous varieties from disappearing since 2013.

Some 400 farmers from 11 districts started cultivating 150 FRV in 2016 and today have 26 FRV seed distribution centres. (Regional Campaign Overview).

In Muniguda where the Farmers Exchange participants had a field visit, Dr. Debal Deb a Deb is cultivating 920 rice varieties, many on the verge of extinction, on just 2.5 acres in a forested area of the Niyamgiri hills. An ecology scholar turned fulltime agriculturist, not only has he salvaged lost rice varieties in India. He has also improved crop seeds for an age of climate change. He has succeeded in developing rice varieties that can grow and live for months in 12-ft deep water, drought-tolerant seeds, and varieties

of three-grain and double-grain rice. He also discovered a rice variety rich in iron especially good for pregnant women with anemia.

Dr Debal Deb shared that he has been travelling across eastern India, collecting and conserving seeds of important and unique indigenous rice varieties from farmers. He propagates the seeds and distributes them to farmers who take the seeds on condition they share them with other farmers so the cycle continues. He further trains farmers in seed saving techniques.

The participating organizations in the Farmers Exchange have their own programs of seed preservation. MASIPAG trains farmers in the Philippines especially in remote areas on rice breeding and preserving traditional rice and vegetable varieties. The Seed Mothers movement in Orissa engages indigenous peoples to conserve their traditional seeds and enhance community capacities for sustainable agriculture.

The Save our Rice Network has also brought together different broad networks across various regions in



Adivasi biodiversity calendar showing different products harvested throughout the year

India to work for the conservation of traditional rice varieties, upholding farmers' rights on seeds, land and resources, decision making, knowledge systems and respect of indigenous cultural identity. They share good practices among rice-growing states to protect rice and rice culture, including ecology diversity.

The Farmers Exchange is building on these networks to further expand the collective effort in an ever widening circle of support. In addition to Stop the Golden Rice campaign each participating organization will conduct in their own partner communities, they will come together once again in Orissa in February to exchange traditional rice and vegetable seeds from their home countries and communities.



Seed saver: Dr Debal Deb a Deb collects, conserves, and propagates seeds of indigenous rice varieties in India



DRONE MAPPING: USING TECHNOLOGY FOR ADVOCACY

BY MARVIN CANYAS

New technologies are useful tools that can aid one's work and among those that hold promise in furthering our work with indigenous communities is drone technology. A remotely controlled unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), the drone is seeing more widespread and practical uses in agriculture, engineering, business delivery,

weather forecasting, law enforcement and emergency services. Closer to our concerns is this technology's applications in environment monitoring and conservation and in land survey and mapping.

Last September I was one of 11 participants who attended a 5-day

Drone Mapping and Photogrammetry Training by Philippine Association for Intercultural Development (PAFID) and Alyansa Tigil Mina in Manila (ATM) and Imugan, Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya. The training focused on the basic operation of drones and how to process the images taken into 3D/2D maps.

A drone can be used to capture multiple overlapping images of the ground along its specified flight path. The images can then be processed into 2D/3D models or maps using the QGIS (quantum geographical information system) and AGISOFT photo scanner software programs.

PAFID is an NGO that has been assisting indigenous communities these past decades to map out and delineate their ancestral domain claims using GIS. Alyansa Tigil Mina is the national alliance of mining communities, people's organizations, NGOs and environment advocates opposed to large scale mining and its destructive ecological and social impacts. The Center for Development Programs in the Cordillera and its partner Cordillera Peoples Alliance are members of this alliance. And this is one of the areas where CDPC and CPA can put the drone technology to good use.

In a short conversation with PAFID Executive Director Dave de Vera on how our network could apply drone mapping in our campaign and advocacy work, I said it could be utilized as a tool to measure the damage and impact of destructive and extractive industries like large mines and dams. I cited Lepanto Mining Co. and its impact on downstream communities in Ilocos Sur and Abra provinces. He replied that this was possible so long as the approach is landscape mapping but it would take more time and a bigger budget if the coverage were from ridge to reef. He added that operating drones has limitations and need licensing from Philippine aviation authorities.

De Vera during the training noted that advance technologies are now being optimized by rich companies to further their businesses. He stressed that development workers and NGOs

should similarly use them for their own advocacies to benefit the people they work with. He cited PAFID's experience in Pangasinan where they mapped the massive effect of rice pests which enabled the farmers to take action to prevent their spread to other farming areas.

GIS Specialist Kail Zingapan, who headed the training team, discussed the roles and procedures in flying the drone safely and in testing the aircraft. We downloaded the programs and software needed. After ensuring the aircraft and flight controller were in good condition, it was time for us to fly the aircraft. After the first day we moved to Imugan for the practicum and the rest of the training. Imugan is the home of the Ikalahan community which, through PAFID's assistance, has made a comprehensive map of their ancestral domain and developed an Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development Plan.

The International Union for Nature Conservation-Netherlands Committee (IUCN-NC), the organizer of the training, had provided each of the participants with a drone. While we were all excited and enjoying the hands-on drone operation, I noticed each one of us was very careful in handling his UAV.

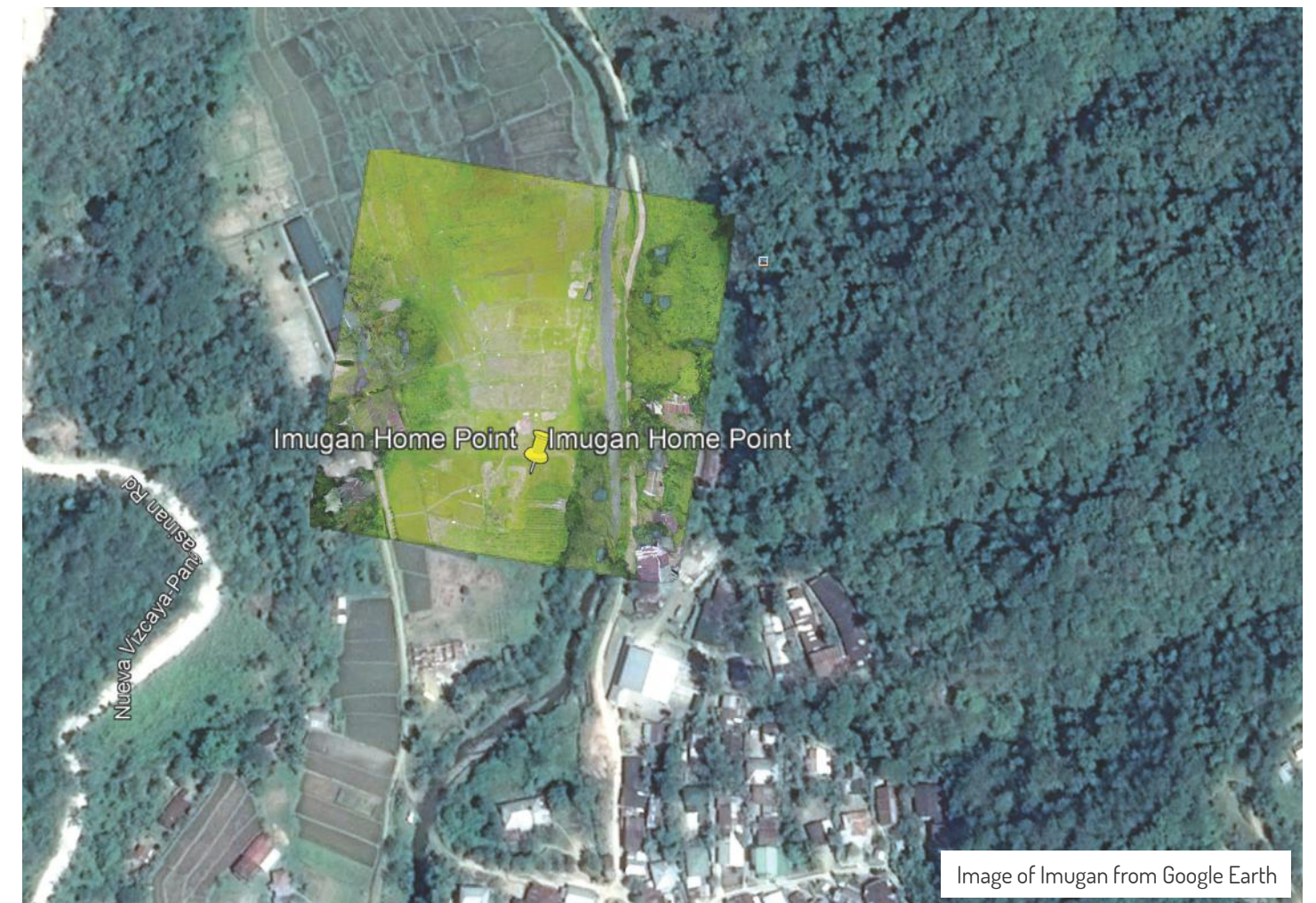
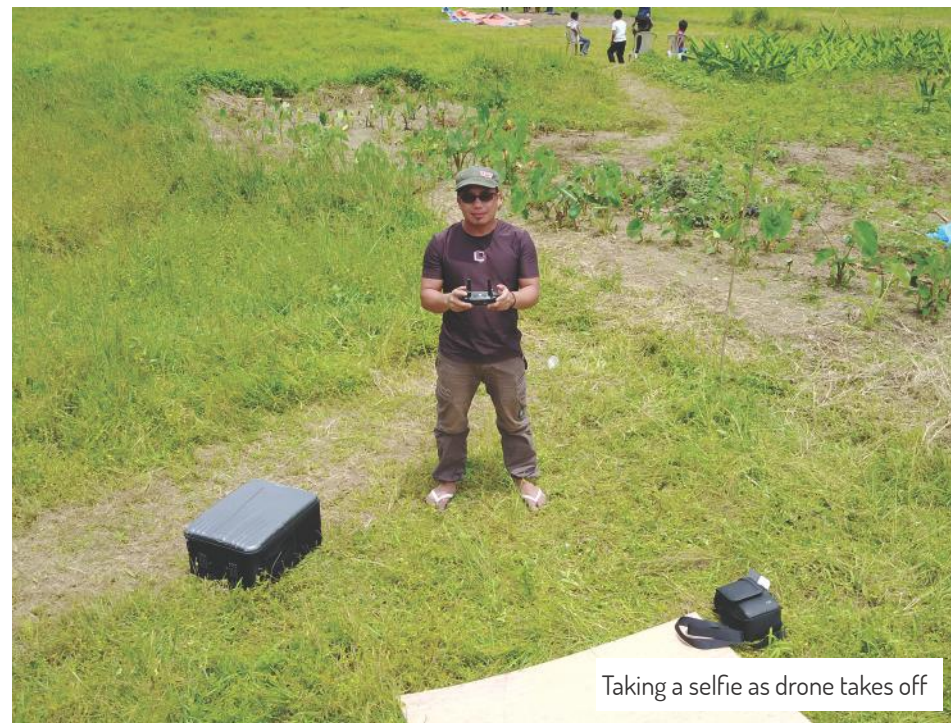
After one and a half days of practicum, we then proceeded to the next step, the Basic Image processing and introduction to Photogrammetry. According to De Vera, this part of the training would take a whole semester in the university. This was the difficult part of the training, but with the guidance of Ms Zingapan and the other participants, I was able to catch up. We developed 3D and 2D mapping with the use of the QGIS and AGISOFT programs.

But in the end, some participants and I were not able to finish the whole process. Our laptops gave out because the computer memory could

not absorb the size of images being processed.

I was very careful during the practicum and tried to remember all the pointers, inputs and troubleshooting tips. I was also thinking that the drone is expensive so I should be careful! Thankfully, the practicum went smoothly. Processing images for 2D and 3D mapping was challenging, and it was really helpful to have the necessary computer skills and knowledge. The training ended with an assessment and PAFID's recommendation for a second round of training for us to further learn and perfect the skills and processes.

I can share what I learned on flying a drone but I am not as confident yet when it comes to image processing and photogrammetry. The training is technical and requires familiarization with the software programs and a good laptop with a high RAM.





Drone shot of Imugan practice area processed with QGIS and AGISOFT programs

The training has shown me the importance of drone mapping in our development work and implementation of projects with our communities in the Cordillera. It is a much needed technology for instance in gathering concrete and documented evidence in monitoring environmental impacts of dams and mines towards the protection of the lands and resources of indigenous communities. Realizing this, it is an area where the CDPC-CPA network must further develop its capacities to better meet the challenges of improving our services to communities we work with.

The training was organised under IUCN-NC's Strategic Resources, Joint Solutions Project (SRJS), of which CPA is the lead in the Cordillera.

NEW LEARNING FOR NEW WORK CHALLENGES



Participants from various parts of the country



Campaign and Advocacy training

The Center for Development Programs in the Cordillera was among SOLIDAGRO's Philippine partners that took part in a series of capacity and knowledge building trainings in 2017 to enhance its campaigns, advocacies and legislative lobbying.

ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGN

BY APRIL BALADAD

I was part of The *Trainers Training on Advocacy Campaign* on July 11-14 for SOLIDAGRO partners from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao with advocacies on health, children, education, environment and farmers' rights to land and economic production.

The training started with a discussion of our own definition and understanding of advocacy in our local dialects. We explained what our advocacies are, how these are implemented and how we are involved in them. From the explanations I noticed that we shared a common definition of advocacy and that is, influencing others with

your belief, especially if it concerns other people and is for the betterment of marginalised groups.

It was also surprising to note that we did not have a direct translation of "advocacy" in our different dialects. The speaker explained that this was because advocacy is not a traditional activity among Filipinos, being more of an adaptation from foreign countries. It was adopted in the Philippines when we needed to influence others.

The training was an eye opener since it provided me an overview of the different phases involved in planning a

campaign and conducting advocacy. My experience so far has been in the implementation phase. The discussion was also very educational and I can say that I now understand why our campaigns in the region are long and continuing since these are geared to the preservation of our ancestral lands and the rights of indigenous people and as farmers.

I am more guided now in coming up with an appropriate campaign plan at the community level and at the same time in responding to community needs. I have also learned that we can further refine our campaign calls and measure gains in a given timeframe while still contributing to bigger and more strategic campaigns. Also a highlight was the discussion on reformism, which reminded me that programs or projects should respond to the needs of the people.

SOCIAL MEDIA TRAINING

BY GLEN NGOLAB

Today billions of people across the world are accessing the internet multiple times a day. Many people have internet on their smart phones. At the touch of a button one can check his social media platform or send an email. I attended SOLIDAGRO’s *Social Media Training* last September 27 with Inday Espina-Varona of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines as our speaker.

I found most of the topics very relevant to our work, especially in conveying the issues of our partner communities to government and influencing the youth on these issues, being the heaviest users of social networking such as Facebook. I learned that social networking sites offer a chance to communicate in a speedy and efficient manner with the help of mobile phones that many can afford to have. Publishing, posting, updating, uploading, downloading take a small amount of time. Cross-posting to other social networks reaches your target audience and probably more in an instant.

Social networks have the power to open up the world to you, making it a smaller place than it has ever been before and keep us up to date on what is happening. Social media can also serve as a platform for resource generation.

And while social networking undoubtedly plays a vital role in broadening social connections and learning technical skills, its risks cannot be overlooked. For instance, the lack or difficulty in self-regulation and susceptibility to peer pressure makes adolescents vulnerable to cyber bullying.

We can further refine our campaign calls and measure gains in a given timeframe while still contributing to bigger and more strategic campaigns.

Cyber bullying ranges from direct threats and unpleasant emails to unnamed activities such as trolling or aggressive behavior by an individual that causes discomfort to another. Trolling is the act of deliberately inflicting hatred, bias and discrimination.

The consequences of cyber bullying can be life changing; some victims suffer psychological distress and even take their own lives. The individualistic nature of social networking activities makes it difficult to recognize a victim of cyber bullying, but some signs include avoiding or being worried around the computer or cell phone and sudden change in behavior patterns.

Other risks of extensive social networking among youth are loss of privacy, sharing too much information, and disconnect from reality. The digital footprint is a permanent trail that users of social media, indeed of the Internet itself, leave the moment they sign into any service. The digital footprint, by its permanence, can have serious repercussions in future in both professional and personal areas of life. It is important to know that every activity posted online on social media accounts, comments left on various sites, tweets and retweets can contribute to the digital footprint.

While these negative and positive effects of social media are all true, the challenge I would like to raise is how social media is utilised to raise awareness on the situation of marginalised sectors and generate response from local officials. Social media can serve as a platform for campaigns. It can be very beneficial if we use it correctly. I was inspired to write this because social media is a major issue and I want it to share my point of view on this issue.

LEGISLATIVE LOBBY TRAINING

BY HONORIA FAG-AYAN AND DINA MANGGAD

Lobbying or influencing legislation is a key advocacy strategy that a social movement can use to advance its cause. Progressive groups have been using two types of lobbying to push for policy reform or change. Grassroots lobbying is trying to influence legislation by affecting the opinion of the general public, and direct lobbying by communication with any member of a legislative body.

We were part of a 3-day training on *Legislative Lobbying* organised by SOLIDAGRO and facilitated by Bayan Muna (BM) Partylist. BM secretary general Nathaniel Santiago gave an orientation on legislative work in the Philippines’ socio-economic and political context. He touched on the legal basis and purpose of conducting an election, why the progressive movement has been joining elections and the history of its legislative work. Bayan Muna, he said, has submitted many house bills and resolutions but only a few were passed as these were ignored by assigned committees most of the time. A workshop followed on sectoral legislative agenda.

Bayan Muna chair Atty. Neri Colmenares discussed legislative powers and functions, the legislative process, and the basic structure and parts of a bill and resolutions. He noted the very tough processes that a bill has to go through before it becomes a law. He shared his experiences on lobbying and alliance work when he filed House Bill 3934 on the SSS additional pension. The bill was ratified by both Houses only to be vetoed by then President Benigno Aquino.

Colmenares admitted becoming emotional when it was vetoed not only because of his efforts together with the Makabayan Bloc but also because of the overwhelming support by senior citizens. He pointed out that lobbying has three important aspects to the progressive movement: lobbying in Congress, in court and in the streets and that without these three, lobbying would not be successful.

A workshop on drafting a simple bill or house resolution was then facilitated by a BM legislative staff who first discussed the steps before the actual workshop.

BM Partylist Representative Carlos Isagani Zarate then discussed the nuances and challenges in legislating bills and how to lobby. He talked about the objectives of lobbying in Congress (for whom and for what?), do’s and don’ts and useful tips for effective lobbying. The legal basis of lobbying, he said, is embedded in Republic Act 1827 and the power centers in the legislative arena.

It can be concluded from his talk that the Palace has the voice and control on which bills will pass the legislative mill through the Executive Advisory Council and the Presidential Legislative Liaison Office. As a parting shot



Workshop reporting and critiquing

Zarate asked what the difference was between pro and con, drawing a lot of answers from the participants. But the right answer, he said in jest, is “Congress is the opposite of Progress.”

Presenting the challenges in advocating and legislating pro-people, pro-poor bills, BM chief legislative staff Connie Gundayao noted the gains and victories in the parliamentary struggle. She gave first hand experiences of the Makabayan Bloc, summing it thus, “Tanging sa tuloy-tuloy na paglaban ng mamamayan makakamit ang tunay na tagumpay at pangmatagalang pagbabagong inaasam (Success cannot be attained through parliamentary struggle with the present state of society).”

While Bayan Muna Partylist has filed many bills and resolutions in its 18 years in Congress – 74 bills, 49 resolutions alone in the 2nd regular session of the 17th Congress – they stressed that with no guarantee these will be passed, there is still a long way for lobbying efforts in Congress. They recommended that legislative work should be part of organizational planning of the progressive movement.

What struck us most as participants in the training is the reflection that lobbying is not confined to Congress but can be done in the streets. Realising and appreciating the hard work of progressive legislators like Bayan Muna in Congress, we are encouraged to learn more about legislative lobbying and how to put our new knowledge into practice.

Obtaining justice and peace the indigenous way

BY MARVIN CANYAS

K*innabsatan* or *inaakiyan* means the bonding of two individuals as brothers or sisters in Saclit, Sadanga, Mountain Province. On December 9, 2017, two clans of barangay Saclit and Tadian town came together to hold the *kinnabsatan*, formally ending the process to settle peacefully the conflict between them brought about by the near killing of Jomar Tammocho, a member of the Saclit tribe.

The incident

In late September Jomar, a student studying in Tadian, was almost killed by four residents of Tadian belonging to the Perez, Lipas and Pangkawey families. He was drinking after work with a group of men whom he had joined that day on the construction of a house of the Pangkawey family. After a couple of hours, he asked the group to break up the drinking and have dinner so he could go home to his boarding house. Mr. Pangkawey told him to just eat ahead. But while getting his food, one of the men, Marlon Perez, suddenly stood up and hit him in the forehead with a piece of hard wood. He fell and Marlon's colleagues joined in beating him up until he lost consciousness.

Thinking that Jomar was dead, the group took off and burned his clothes. They then put him in a sack and drove him off in a car to dispose of. However, Jomar regained consciousness in the moving car, freed himself from the sack and jumped but fainted upon hitting the ground. A passerby who saw what happened but was afraid to help reported the incident to the police station.

Responding police could not find Jomar who hid in fear. Unable to withstand the cold, however, he followed the road hiding whenever he heard a vehicle until he reached Bauko town. He proceeded to the hospital after getting a piece of cloth from a parked tricycle to cover himself. There the police was informed of his whereabouts.

The settlement

Alarmed at what happened, the Saclit tribe prepared for a tribal attack on the perpetrators and their families. But the father of Jomar, Jorge Tammocho, pacified and advised his clan and townmates



People from Saclit and Tadian attending the Kinnabsatan in Saclit

to be calm. To avert possible violence, the Movement for the Advancement of Inter-Tribal Unity for Development (MAITUD), a member of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA), CPA and Anglican Church members intervened upon learning of the incident. They coordinated with CPA who contacted their staff who belong to the Saclit tribe, Dexter Gallawen of the Cordillera Elders Alliance-CPA and this writer. The mediation team was headed by MAITUD, CPA and Anglican Church members.

At the mediation meeting in Saclit with the Tammocho family including Jomar, Mr Tammagocho said calmly, "As na chamo ay mailak na kasasaad na anak kod ospitar, tet-ewa ay pirmi nan kar-et ko, ngem kasik sensenmek nu kar-et na paturayek, am-amed ay acho to nan in-agar. Kaman natey nan anak ko ansha ngem as Apodyos nan nangtago kan ciya" (The first time I saw my son in the hospital, I was so angry. But it comes to my mind that if I follow my anger, many will cry and be hurt. I considered my son as dead but the Lord gave him another life)."

To this Abraham Batawang of MAITUD replied, "Usto ti



Abraham Batawang of MAITUD who led the mediation

kananunutam. Solbaren tayo daytoy nga nakalidliday nga pasamak nga maited iti usto nga hustisya iti biktima ken maikkan iti pannusa dagiti nakabasol. Uston ni Jomar nga biktima ken dagiti uppat nga binmiktima. (Your attitude is right. Let's resolve this painful incident in a peaceful way where justice will be given to the victim and offenders will meet their right punishment. Let Jomar be the

only victim, and the four the only transgressors)."

The other party welcomed the mediation and the families expressed willingness to negotiate with the Tammocho clan. On November 7, the two parties met in the capital town of Bontoc, with the Provincial Indigeous Peoples Mandatory Representative Thomas Tawagen and Mountain

Province Governor Bonnie Lacwasan hosting the meeting. The Saclit party expressed their sentiments and the Tadian group accepted without any objections the wrong that their members had committed.

The talk ended with the Tadian party accepting the Saclit demand: P390,000, with P300,000 as indemnity and P90,000 as reimbursement for the victim's hospitalization. They also agreed that upon paying the indemnity, the settlement decision would be published in the local newspapers and the offenders be set free from jail. "All negative deeds turn to good if we are willing to forgive and rectify our errors," Bishop Brent Alawas concluded.

Kinnabsatan

On November 9, the set date for payment, the Tommocho family decided to use half of the indemnity payment to solemnize their Kinnabsatan with the Perez, Lipas and Pangcawey families of Tadian. Those present applauded this decision and immediately set a date for the event. The Pangcawey, Lipas and Perez families were the first to host the *paranga* on November 27, a ritual process of cleaning and throwing out any anger and ill feelings that are necessary to avoid the curse, *mabotot*.

During the event, attended by around 120 people from Saclit and Bikigan, ideas and advices were shared.

The Inaakiyan or Kinnabsatan was celebrated in Saclit on December 9 attended by most of the residents in Saclit and about 250 people from Tadian. The Tadian party was comprised by members of the local government units, retired teachers and professionals and community members. Also present as witnesses were members of MAITUD, CPA and Anglican priests.

Welcoming everyone, Lakay Tubao of Saclit said, "Inmali tako amin sina para as nan pagsaayatan ken inaakiyan tako ay I-Saclit ya I-Tadian. Pairuten tako na panag-eesha ken makigayyem tako kamo isna esha ken esha. Ikiaman tako na ta maed kasi inar-aramid as lawing ken umanay koma inmatan na as innakeman tayo. (We all came here for our betterment as brothers and sisters. Let us strengthen our unity and let's be friends to everyone. We are performing this in order that what happened will not occur again and this should be enough learning experience for us)."

In response, Tadian, Mayor Wooden acknowledged the participation of all individuals in resolving the case peacefully, specially citing

MAITUD, CPA and Anglican Church members in their mediation. The police representative of Sadanga also expressed appreciation for the indigenous way of resolving conflicts and crimes, noting that the formal judicial process drags on slowly before the victim can claim justice.

MAITUD through Mr. Batawang saluted the Tammocho family for serving as an exemplary model in seeking justice based on peace and encouraged all to do the same. "We don't like tribal war and we need to throw it out. If there is any untoward incident that happens to those covered by a peace pact, we should resolve it in a peaceful way and through principled discussions. We are not enemies. But if intruders come and grab our lands and insult our dignity we should stop them courageously," he said in Ilocano.

CPA vice chair Xavier Akien congratulated both parties for the successful kinnabsatan. "If communities solve all misunderstandings the way we did, it is not far that the main root of our problems will be answered. CPA and partner organizations have long been campaigning for the halting of tribal wars and defending our ancestral land. If there is misunderstanding and division among communities, capitalists can easily plunder our natural resources and ancestral lands. Areas of Tadian and Sadanga are covered by CEXCI company's mining application. If this will be pursued, our wide ricefields and areas will be destroyed. So what we did today to become brothers and sisters is but right. Let us respect each other and unite in defending our lands and our dignity." (translated from Ilocano)

The community people of Saclit and Tadian expressed their appreciation and gratitude. As Mr JorgeTammocho said, "Chaker na yaman ko isnan amin ay timmurong kan chakami, as Apodyos to nan mangsufalit isna amin ay kinakawis yo" (Our deep gratitude to everyone who rendered their helping hand to us unselfishly. God will repay you in return)."

The kinnabsatan was a successful manifestation of the willingness of the family victim to seek justice based on peace and the readiness of the offenders to rectify their unjust deed.



Malibcong: neglected and isolated

BY MILA KIBITEN AO-WAT



Xavier Akien of CPA, which helped in mediating the conflict



The remote Abra municipality of Malibcong was among those that bore the brunt of Typhoon Lawin with storm signal number 5 in 2016. As residents narrated, howling winds and torrents or rain shook their houses and pounded rooftops and walls, soaking every corner of their houses. They cowered inside their houses with plastic sheets tied around their necks to keep them dry. The only thing they could do was to pray to God and call on their ancestors to spare them from the typhoon, the strongest so far to hit their communities. The fury of nature lasted for 48 hours.

When the sky lit up, the villagers were happy to find that no one perished during the storm. But looking at their rice fields, they were devastated to see the promise of a bountiful harvest gone, with heavily laden sheaves of rice all twisted and soaked.

The typhoon isolated Malibcong. Almost two thirds of the road were either washed out, eroded or covered with giant slides. The newly concretized road portions were gone, and the only way to reach the districts of Bangilo and Mataragan was to walk up the snaking muddy pathways. Cargoes were heaped over motorcycles that maneuvered along a very narrow path cleared only for the tires to pass, with a full load of cargo charged P600.

Medical Relief Mission

As part of the rehabilitation of their communities, the community health workers of MaBaGu (Mabaa, Banao and Gubang) peoples' organization requested the Community Health, Education, Services and Training in the Cordillera Region (CHESTCORE) through KASTAN, the Cordillera Peoples Alliance chapter in Abra, to conduct a medical relief mission due to the proliferation of diseases after the typhoon. Because of their isolation caused by the storm, only patients in critical condition, carried by able-bodied men up to where vehicles could fetch them, were brought to the hospital in Bangued.

The mission was done in Barangay Umnap, which is the center of the three districts. The Medical Outreach Missions Foundation, Inc. (MOMFI)

of St Louis University, an enduring partner of CHESTCORE in braving the hinterlands to give much needed medical care, joined the mission. The MOMFI provided medical personnel - 6 medical doctors, 6 post graduate interns, 4 junior interns and 9 medical students, medicines and medical supplies.

A total of 271 patients were served, with 17 boys circumcised, 12 patients given acupuncture treatment and three bed-ridden patients attended to in their homes. The leading causes of morbidity were respiratory infections, including four cases of pneumonia, acid related diseases, hypertension, musculo-skeletal strains, diarrhea and skin infections. Most of the children who came for check up were infested with lice and intestinal worms for which we conducted mass deworming.

The road: evidence of government neglect

But it was not only medical relief that the people needed. The long arduous travel to Malibcong showed the basic services badly wanting in the area.

The medical contingent boarded a bus in Baguio at ten p.m. last December 17, reaching Bangued, Abra by two o'clock in the morning. A jeepney arranged to meet us at the bus station at four a.m. arrived three hours later. The driver explained that his jeepney was "blind" because both headlights were not functioning, and thus waited for daylight to drive. Eleven of us packed ourselves with boxes of medicines, while 20 people rode "topload" on the jeepney rooftop.

The first stretch of the road was relatively unremarkable until we reached Aguibo where the road forks to Lacub, Malibcong and Kalinga. The ride became jumpy and jerky. Five villagers, who were hiking, joined the rooftop load. The vehicle slowly heaved upward. Mountains, mostly barren, came into view with the farthest peaks seemingly touching the skies with feathery white clouds in the blue sky. The surrounding mountain ranges looked lush from afar.

The old jeepney moved more jerkily as we reached the second leg

of the road. It convulsed and the passengers lurched in every which way but mercifully nobody was tossed out. We appeared to be ghosts in gossamer white as the powdery dust covered us, with only our eyes blinking. The jeepneys and motorbikes that ply the mountain road bearing pyramids of people, grocery items, gin, soft drinks, junk food and luggage travel dangerously along a steep, spiraling upward road. Enduring nearly 6 hours of ride, we finally reached Kawad, the end of the passable road.

Three motorcycles were there to haul the cargo. Everybody took their backpacks and the trek to Umnap began. According to the orientation given by local officials, the hike would only take less than an hour but this leg of the journey challenged our endurance, as it lasted more than four hours.

Exhausted as we were, we took note of the what was once a road which had narrowed down to a foot wide just enough for the legs to move through and for a motorbike's small tires to traverse. Fallen pine trees dotted the pathway where we had to pass underneath the logs. Weary and sticky from the hike, we arrived at Umnap at a little past five in the afternoon, where some patients were already lined up for medical consultations.

Villagers' lament

By four o'clock in the morning of the 20th, the mission contingent were up, packing and preparing for the journey back home. The women who prepared our breakfast said that the medical mission was a success as it delivered much needed health services. But they apologized for the unbecoming conduct of some of their officials during the cultural program the night before. They admitted that instead of managing the activities as an organization, they took the word of the officials that they would host the affair and take charge of the mission's transportation needs from Bangued to Malibcong that they did not fully meet.

The women shared that the host village's barangay captain, a retired Philippine army member, was not supportive of the people's organization.

It was a general sentiment among PO members that the flame of struggle had dimmed in the past years due to harassments, threats and militarization which caused fear that even militant members succumbed to.

Social problems have also spread in the communities. The small scale gold mining in the municipality lured many villagers to try their luck in the hunt for gold. Some families who gained a fortune changed their lifestyle, while some lost whatever capital they invested, failing to find that elusive vein. The unexpected flow of cash has worsened bad vices, such as drinking, gambling and even womanizing. Children became exposed to these vices.

But the main affliction that plagues the municipality is government neglect as evidenced by the dire absence of socio-economic services, breeding poverty and now virtual isolation. Added to these was election fever, which gripped the people from mid-2015 for the May 2016 national election, that continues to this day in anticipation of the postponed barangay election in 2017.

Virtues are set aside or forgotten as village folks ingratiate themselves with local politicians, becoming errand boys/girls in return for petty economic perks, such as lending money for a sarisari store, recommending their children for government scholarships and giving *pakyaw* or small public infrastructure contractual works. Some who catch the fever just stay as warm bodies at the residence of the mayor, governor or congressmen where they take on odd jobs in exchange for food.

The dreams of young people are to go abroad to work as domestics or utility workers to earn money to better their lives. Landlessness, unemployment, joblessness push the people into poverty. Symptomatic of a people's desperateness in the government system, they look for giveaways thrown their way to meet their immediate needs. With these symptoms also come bad vices that further corrupt their indigenous world view and way of life, hastening the loss of their indigenous socio-political structures that have guided their communities since time immemorial.



Malibcong community members patiently wait in line for medical consultation (Photo: MOMFI)

The new money coming in to Malibcong through the sweat of overseas contract workers has changed the face of the municipality. The entry of local gin has triumphed. Despite prices of consumer goods being five times regular retail prices due to the road condition, alcohol and tobacco consumption is widespread. And local

business people take advantage of disasters to double their profit, with local gin, cigarettes and junk food making the bulk of their sales.

Can Malibcong break out of the snare of gold and neglect? The wind whispers that it can, if the people unite as one as in the olden days.

Palliative Reform: a Deceptive Free Education Law

BY CORDILLERA YOUTH CENTER

Article II Section 17 of the 1987 Constitution states, “The State shall give priority to education, science and technology, art, culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development.” It is in this spirit that generations upon generations of Filipino youth and students wage the fight for nationalist and accessible education in all levels.

Thus, the passing of Republic Act 10931 or Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act in August is a victory rightfully claimed by the youth and student movement. It is no favor or gift from the Duterte administration but a mere acknowledgement of the longstanding clamor of the youth.

Nationalist, Scientific and Mass-oriented Education

To know the real score with the passing of RA 10931, there is a need to recognize the decades of molding of the Philippine education system into what it is today – a lucrative business, a disaster for the Filipino youth and people. At the core of the crisis is neoliberalism, the 20th century economic model that endorses liberalization of trade, deregulation of prices and privatization, and consequent commercialization of basic social services including education.

Through the years, the Filipino youth have shown rigor in resisting this anomalous scheme and has grown in number in registering their call

for a free, nationalist, scientific and mass-oriented education. Indeed, this call has been so strong the Duterte administration could not but heed it.

In the Philippines, the cumulative effects of the decades-long restructuring of the education system to the dictates of neoliberalism have burdened Filipino youth and families. According to the 2013 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS), about 1 in every 10 or about four million Filipino children and youth 6 to 24 years old are out of school due to the high cost of education in the country.

Higher education on the other hand is dominated by private educational institutions. In the Cordillera region, 37 of the 46 colleges and universities or 80% are private while there is only one state university per province. These private institutions impose high tuition fees while state universities and colleges (SUCs) are pushed to increase tuition and other fees and employ different schemes to gain income and wring profit.

In the University of the Philippines, the “socialized tuition scheme” -- in which students pay tuition and other school fees based on their capacity to pay – only resulted in repeated increases in tuition, from P40/unit in 1989 to the current P1,500/unit.

Apart from commercialization, the Filipino youth and students also suffer from the colonial orientation of the education system. Clearly, there

is an urgent need for an overhaul and an alternative, an education that is nationalist, scientific, and mass-oriented, for only through addressing the perennial problems shall our education be truly for the people.

Contentious Provisions

While we recognize the passing of Universal RA 10931 as a step forward in making public education free at all levels, we continue to have strong reservations as contentious provisions of the law and its recently approved Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) exist. In the final analysis, it is nothing but a Trojan Horse.

While the law introduces free tuition and other school fees for undergraduate students in SUCs/LUCs/state-run technical and vocational institutions, it also aims to cement the dominance of commercial interest in the Philippine tertiary education landscape. Ultimately, this does not aim to reverse the systemically ingrained neoliberal policies of privatization and deregulation that have turned education into a money-making endeavor.

The law and its IRR adhere to the principle that education is a mere privilege and free education is nothing but a token or a discounted commodity. Various provisions prove this so:

Preferential guarantee for private educational institutions

The law and the IRR put great emphasis on the role of private schools in the education system of

the country. Through the tertiary education subsidy or TES and the student loan program or SLP, the law ensures direct profit of Private Higher Educational Institutions (PHEIS).

Instead of allocating funds for the expansion of SUCs to accommodate bigger student population, it will instead allocate public funds directly to the hands of education “business owners” just like the senior high school’s voucher system.

Spaces for collection of fees remain

The IRR particularized 13 fees to be made free for the students. However, the IRR provided a tricky provision stating that students who will not pass the SUCs’ admission requirements shall pay a new fee named “composite/normative fee”. This over-particularization and introduction of new fees pose danger as it can be easily circumvented.

The pilot test of Free Tuition Policy (FTP) in school year 2017-2018 has shown us anomalous schemes that the SUCs are opt to have in their admission policies just to ensure reduction of “slots” and ensure their collection. This has been true with the Cagayan State University’s mandatory drug testing and the nationwide experience of rigorous admission process and load of requirements in different SUCs.

Adding to this are the opt-out provisions and mechanisms in making those “who can pay to pay”, similar to University of the Philippines’ socialized tuition that are desperate to milk money from students.

SUCs will be forced to generate income

With free education nothing but a token and not a social service, the IRR only pushes SUCs to generate income through other commercialization schemes. We can expect more private-public partnerships and establishment of more commercial facilities in vast idle lands of different SUCs as the law never envisioned any expansion of SUCs.

Thus, instead of pushing for the increased budget allocation for capital outlay, the law will only reinforce SUCs to enter partnerships that maximizing public lands for commercial spaces

rather than classrooms and other educational facilities.

No clear direction to expand access to free education

The economic managers of President Duterte were keen in insisting that there shall be no expansion of free education access and no additional SUCs upon the signing of the free education law.

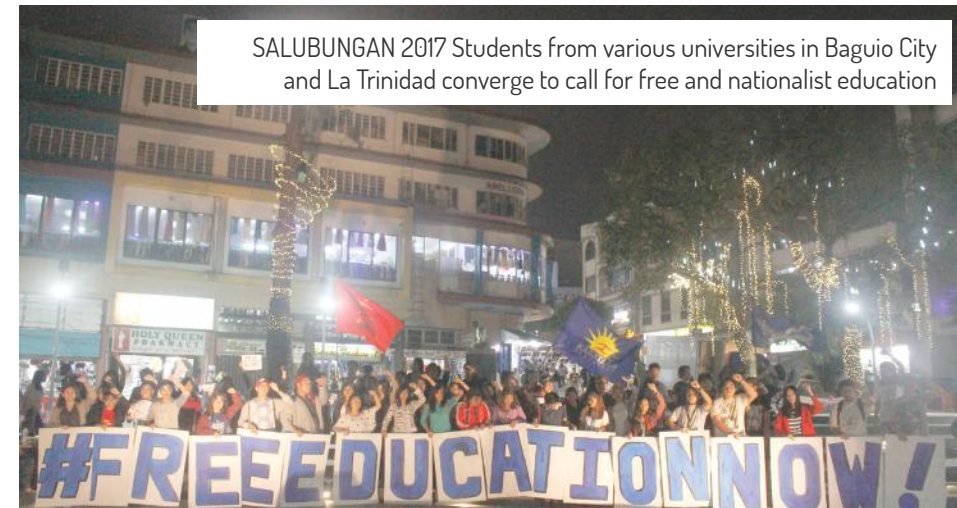
If the law is true to its intention, the vision should be towards democratizing education at all levels, aiming to encourage the largest number of youth to pursue their studies. Instead of allocating funds for the profit of private schools, use these to build additional facilities and employ additional teachers for public schools. Needless to say, the country’s S/LUCs are limited to cater to all the Filipino youth, but

instead of solving this incapacity, the law and its IRR push the majority to pursue private education.

However, given the experience of the voucher system in senior high, the amount that will be given to those students, be it in loan or in subsidy, cannot cover the full expense of private education. In the end, this will just lead a number of students to drop out – not making their education free, but worse, leaving them with debts.

The youth will not sit idly by. We recognize that there are far bigger and more fundamental issues besetting the educational system. With this, it is our greater task to continue the fight for genuinely free and nationalist education and no tuition and other fee collection for the coming school year.

SALUBUNGAN 2017 Students from various universities in Baguio City and La Trinidad converge to call for free and nationalist education



Epitome of a Political Activist

BY MILA KIBITEN AO-WAT

The villagers remember her yawning heavily while trekking the rocky mountain slopes of Mt. Kabunyan in Bakun, Benguet in the early 1990s. The hike had to be at the break of dawn to avoid the scorching sun at midday.

As a community organizer in Benguet's remote areas, Annie Dalapus Licauen made long mountain treks along narrow and slippery pathways where one could easily slip, fall or be pinned by broken trees and rocks. One time she did fall and hung upside down, dislocating her knee bones permanently.



Annie joined the Community Health, Education, Services and Training in the Cordillera Region (CHESTCORE) in 2014 as it reopened its Traditional Chinese Medicine clinic to respond to the need of development workers, organizers and people's organisations for an alternative wellness program. With a heavy heart, she bade goodbye to the villagers whom she loved and served so dearly. By that time her physical condition had so deteriorated colleagues jokingly called her "factory defect."

For over three years that Annie joined CHESTCORE, she displayed conscientiousness and patience in performing her tasks. She was so scared at first of doing organizing work among health professionals particularly doctors. But as a change innovator, she was challenged and she succeeded.

Annie led the team of volunteers manning the services desk, which included management of the People's Clinic. They assisted patients from far-flung communities, urban poor and families of fellow activists by referring them to our network of doctors who signed up as Friends of CHESTCORE. Our referred patients are usually not charged professional fees and other services. She was the clinic's main acupuncturist, her skills in traditional Chinese medicine honed through years of practice among the masses and her co-activists.

She marched with us in the streets to denounce government neglect particularly basic social services for the people. In spite of her physical limitations, Annie joined CHESTCORE's medical missions. During the mission we conducted in San Juan, Abra on July 22-23, 2015, she turned 53 on the 23rd and we were feted to a feast by Mayor Arthur Bautista. The last one was in Malibcong, Abra in December 2016 where we hiked 6 hours to reach Umnay, the mission site.

Annie was sometimes tactless in words, but in hiding her pains she was very tactful. She never showed pain and tiredness when doing her work. Almost half of the time she was with us was spent in seeking medical services to alleviate her neuropathic pains.

In the second quarter of this year, Annie was diagnosed with Chiari malformation. We were presented with two remedial measures; one was to undergo a corrective surgery, and the other was to do nothing but double or triple her pain medications. It was very difficult to decide which to undertake because both remedies could be fatal. Annie as a fighter chose the surgical procedure knowing well the possible complications, and worse it could cause her death. Up to the last days of her life she valiantly fought.

She opted to work as a community development activist worker among the vegetable farmers of Northern Benguet and the subsistence farmers of Mountain Province and Kalinga.

It is an irony that Annie's death was partly attributed to the bereft government health care facilities. We extoll the health care providers in the premier public hospital who did their best to serve the patients in spite of being understaffed and badly equipped. When her condition worsened due to complications of meningitis and pneumonia, she needed to be placed in an intensive care unit but since it was under renovation she had to be moved to a very crowded ward that served as ICU room.

The dedication of the hospital personnel was apparent but their act could not cover up blatant government neglect and indifference to basic health needs of the people. For these we thank all the hospital personnel, particularly Dr. Domingo, the neurosurgeon who stood with us to the end.

Annie fought for a public health care system for the ordinary Filipino. Falling victim of the system she advocated to be changed, Annie left a lingering political statement.

Who is Annie?

Annie was born on July 23, 1962 in the picturesque village of Besao, Mt. Province. Born to an indigenous peasant family, she was no stranger to the hard and spartan village life. She went with her mother and older sisters to work in their farm lots on weekends. After

finishing high school in their hometown, she enrolled at the Baguio Central University where she earned a teaching degree.

As a student, Annie joined the Progressive Igorots for Social Action (PIGSA), a militant advocate for the recognition of the long-denied rights of the Igorots to their land, life and resources. PIGSA launched the successful campaign to stop the bastardization and commercialization of the Igorot culture through an annual

mock celebration of the Grand Canao by the City Government.

Annie could also sing and dance, thus she joined the Cordillera Youth Cultural Action Program, precursor of the current Dap-ayan ti Kultura ti Kordilyera. In spite of being a fulltime social activist, she finished her course as an educator and passed the licensure exam. Just like any other new graduate from a poor family, Annie was pressured by her parents to teach in the public schools so she could help finance the education of her younger siblings.

But she opted to work as a community development activist worker among the vegetable farmers of Northern Benguet and the subsistence farmers of Mt. Province and Kalinga. She also worked among the mining communities of Mankayan and Itogon who fought for their lives and resources against destructive mining companies.

While working with farmers, she trained to be a health worker particularly as an acupuncturist, delivering much needed basic health services to the neglected communities. Her skills were sharpened through a continuing practice and learning among the farmers and co activists she worked with.

She married a fellow activist, Antonio Licauen, in the early 90s. Unfortunately Antonio was killed by

state armed forces while working with farmers in Benguet in 2005. Annie as a widow struggled to raise their son Lean with the help of her family and comrades. Lean just graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology last semester.

As a mother, Annie adored her only child, shielding him from her pains and other domestic problems. She found ways and means to make their house leak-free and safe from the elements by borrowing money from her comrades and getting loans from different cooperatives she joined. But even these domestic concerns did not deter her being a fulltime activist. Oftentimes she had to leave the young Lean in the care of comrades or relatives when her services were requested.

For the past years Annie suffered from severe neuropathic pains in her back and extremities. Her movements were affected and her original family name Dalapus fitted her clumsiness. When she moved “dalapusen na amin,” thus when seated beside her you had to secure your laptop or she would bump it with her movements.

She was advised to seek medical attention, but hard headed as she was, she sought temporary relief through massages and physical therapy, reasoning that she did not want to take pills anymore. But when the

pains became unbearable, she finally consented to undergo the much needed check-up.



Chiari Malformation Disease is a condition in which brain tissue extends to the spinal canal. The doctor recommended for Annie to undergo a C1 Laminectomy, possible cerebellar tonsil excision and duraplasty as a remedial measure to ease the severe neuropathic pains and numbness. According to the doctor, if Annie did not undergo the prescribed operation she would have to double or triple the dosage of her pain relievers, and her condition could lead to paralysis.

We decided to conform to the doctor's recommendation. Dr. Domingo, a member of our Friends of CHESTCORE network, performed the surgical procedure for free, but we had to raise funds for the mesh to be implanted and other incidental expenses. We held a very successful dinner for a cause.



Since April this year we unloaded Annie of her tasks as a health activist so she could rest and take on her domestic chores. What she never told us was that during those months old patients in the network still approached her for acupuncture. These gave her time to reunite with old comrades and update them about her health condition and her then impending surgery. She forced herself to be “busy” to forget her pains and according to her to render her tired so she could lie dead asleep at night. But the pain was always there.

When she slipped into a coma on her last day in the hospital, I closed my eyes and suddenly images of all the comrade patients we have cared for came to memory. Most of them suffered from rare diseases. I told those who were there in the waiting room with us about this realization.

“Wen ah ta rare species tayo nga aktibista (Yes since we activists are a rare species),” one said. Another added that rare as we are, we are also an endangered species that if we keep silent are apt to go into extinction.

In memory of Annie, the best we can give is to intensify our organizing, networking and campaigns for the conscientization of the masses to attain true freedom and a just society where oppression and exploitation are gone.

Annie, we will miss you and will always remember you.



To Annie, our sister and comrade

Though parting words were never said between us
Our hearts shed tears unseen as we watched you go
Annie, the sun has sadly set, darkness has come to claim you
Time for you to rest, It is time to go.

Our Cordillera martyrs who have gone before
Now are laying the carpet for you to walk.
With a salute, they shall chant and sway in unison
Welcome, comrade Annie, to your eternal home.

Go forth Annie, no regrets, no sadness!
We lost you in person but your deeds shall remain.
With all our comrades and the toiling masses
We salute you with fervor
For a life well lived.

Your life we will always celebrate
At this moment we make a pact,
we renew our commitment
Serve the people to the fullest
Farewell, Annie

Farewell, your good deeds shall forever live
Your weaknesses shall remind us of humility,
of the courage to rise again and again
Fare thee well Annie, Till we meet again!



Protest rally against mining companies at Sofitel Hotel

Around 3,000 indigenous peoples, Moro people and advocates from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao flocked to Manila for the 2017 *Lakbayan ng Pambansang Minorya para sa Sariling Pagpapasya at Makatarungang Kapayapaan* (National Minorities' Journey for Self-Determination and Just Peace) from August 31 to September 21.

Lakbayan is a form of struggle of the national minorities in the country for recognition and respect for their right to their ancestral domain. It is an organised expression of their collective opposition to the continuing destruction of the ancestral lands of Igorots,

Lumads, Moro and other national minorities due to militarisation and extractive industries, and this year to the Duterte government's implementation of martial law in Mindanao and all-out war against ISIS-affiliated groups in Marawi.

Lakbayan shows the unity of the national minorities in defending their land, life and resources against big companies, both foreign and local that destroy their lands. It also aims to get wider support from different sectors for their struggle to self-determination.

Lakbayan 2017 consisted of a series of activities. In the *Salubungan*

(gathering) in Manila, participants from the South met with minorities from the North at the Bonifacio Shrine and from there marched in a caravan to Mendiola to hold a program near the Presidential Palace. They were joined by different sectors from religious groups, artists, politicians and students from different universities in Manila. Speakers among the delegates exposed and opposed what they believe is the partnership of the US and the Duterte administration and its militarist and neoliberal policies.

At a rally at the Sofitel Hotel where the Philippine Chamber of Mines was meeting with mining

companies, the participants called on mining companies to get out of their lands, called out government officials who favor and support them, and demanded a stop to destructive mining in the country.

I hope that those companies opened their ears and eyes and listened well to know and understand our sentiments as indigenous peoples. I learned a lot as I listened to those who spoke at the rally especially on how they protect and fight for their lands. For me, land is life and we will not get tired of defending and protecting it from destroyers like mining companies.

Lakbayan 2017

LYDIA BOCLIG



Wood carving prowess, Kaggon from Ifugao, in the museo

The Lakbayanis also put up a Museo ng Pambansang Minorya inside the *kampuhan* (camp-out) on the UP Diliman campus. The museum featured the histories of struggle and cultures of the Lumads, Igorots, Moros and other national minorities which delegates discussed with visitors, mostly students. As one of the delegates assigned at the museo together with CDPC colleague Blessy, I got to know about the history of the Cordillera and the Lumads that I did not learn in school. Sharing the culture, history and struggles of indigenous peoples gave me confidence in speaking and discussing these with different students.

We also displayed and sold indigenous products in the museo like *innabel* (weaves) earrings, necklaces, woodcarvings, peanut butter, *walis tambo* (soft broom), t-shirts, CDs of songs composed and performed by Dap-ayan iti Kultura iti Kordilyera (DKK), books such as *Cordillera Heroes, More than a Red Warrior*, on medicinal plants, among others. Part of the proceeds went to medical assistance for our colleague Cora Loste of Cordillera Peoples Alliance who has been diagnosed with breast cancer. Here, our skills in sales talk was put to the test and we are proud to say that we were able to sell a lot for Cora's medication.

Also catching the attention of students and local artists in the museo was the indigenous tattooing by Jasmin Adaol, a member of the Butbut tribe in Kalinga. Many of the students were very eager to be tattooed using the indigenous way as it is done by the popular Wang-od in Kalinga. Even if their names were not on the waiting list, students were still willing to wait for a chance to be tattooed. Some students and artists even tried to inveigle us to be first on the list but we of course stuck to the order.

The delegates gave many educational situationers in the *kampuhan* on dams, mining and other issues that face national minorities and how they confront these challenges in their own lands.



Indigenous tattooing by Jasmin Adaol of the Butbut tribe



Student immersion at *kampuhan*

CDPC NETWORK

Community Health Education, Services and Training
in the Cordillera Region ([CHESTCORE](#))

Cordillera Alternative Law Center ([DINTEG](#))

Cordillera Disaster Response and Development Services, Inc
([CorDis-RDS](#))

Cordillera Labor Center ([CLC](#))

Cordillera People's Alliance ([CPA](#))

Cordillera Women's Education Action Research Center, Inc.
([CWEARCI](#))

Cordillera Youth Center ([CYC](#))

Dap-ayan ti Kultura iti Kordilyera ([DKK](#))

Development Agency of Tribes in the Cordillera ([DATC](#))

Montañosa Research & Development Center, Inc ([MRDC](#))

Northern Media and Information Network, Inc. ([NMIN](#))

Regional Development Center – Katinnulong Dagiti Umili iti
Amianan ([RDC-KADUAMI](#))

Regional Ecumenical Council in the Cordillera ([RECCORD](#))



CDPC
Center for Development
Programs in the Cordillera



Provincie
Oost-Vlaanderen
Voor ieder van ons



SOLIDAGRO
Oogst samen met boeren in het Zuiden