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Gawad Kalinga



Gawad Kalinga

20

YEARS OF BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Milestones
from the
Gawad Kalinga
journey

2003-2023





Building families, communities, and a nation **with courage, faith and solidarity**

'Ending poverty', to us in GK, is not a matter of time, as we have realized over the 20 years of our journey. It is a **continuing process**. It is a commitment to be involved in the welfare of the poor. It is moreover, an internal collective journey, moving from self-focus, to self-giving, to self-sacrifice, in order to achieve a vision of a nation where no one gets left behind.

The **continuing commitment** to the poor's welfare is what drives us to look beyond the past 2 decades and onto the next two. The 20 years hence, where all the groundwork was laid in preparing hearts and minds, is giving us hope over the uncertainties of tomorrow.

So many events are happening around the world that can discourage and dishearten us. Greed, pride and apathy, in many instances have triggered our present crises of war, hunger, the pandemic, and climate change, to name a few. The future seems overwhelming. Fear can truly overtake us and overshadow the gains of 20 years of blood, sweat and tears.

However, **FAITH** is our answer to fear!

In GK, we declare '**Walang Imposible kung Walang Iwanan.**'

In our dictum so strongly founded on relationships, we find hope in knowing that WE can find pathways and discover answers to our hurdles and challenges. Our common desire and combined energy will deliver possibilities!

And so, as we set our hearts to 2050, we **BELIEVE** that:

1. It is **POSSIBLE** to **END POVERTY**.
2. **GAWAD KALINGA** or **GIVING CARE** is an **INSTRUMENT** towards that end.
3. More can be accomplished if we work **TOGETHER**, therefore we call out to all who desire this **DREAM** for the poor.
4. Our role is to **LISTEN** and **RESPOND**, **HELP** and **CARE**, **ENCOURAGE** and **BUILD UP**, **INSPIRE** and **MOTIVATE** the poor to discover their path to end their poverty.
5. This **MISSION** will **DEMAND** from us **DEEP CONVICTION** beyond knowledge and skills, expertise and experience, money and resources, motivation and hard work. Conviction will be seen in the concrete witness of our lives.

GOD ALONE will guide us! We give glory to Him for the fruits of our labor and seek His blessing for the journey ahead.



Milestones of the GK Journey

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BAGONG SILANG

Re-discovering the poor



It could only have been divine planning that the work of Gawad Kalinga began in the most populous, and one of the most troubled and poorest barangays in the Philippines – Bagong Silang. The inspiration was planted in the heart of our founder, Tony Meloto as early as 1995. Together with other members of Couples for Christ, the biggest faith-based group in the country at that time, they began the work that was to be the foundation of the mission.

Spending time with gang members and listening to their stories led to insights as to how to best support their needs. Despite the enormous gap in their life experiences and circumstances, inch by inch, the social disconnection was bridged through trust and courage. Their unharnessed energy was directed towards more productive activities such as youth camps, theater workshops, crafts and other means of livelihood.

The value of dignity restoration among the forgotten of society became the founding framework for shifting the paradigm of poverty eradication. Lifting the poor out of poverty, first and foremost, needed a change of perspective and approach. It required that we treat them with dignity and respect, lending an ear as equals, understanding and listening to the complex circumstances that brought them to their current plight. But most of all, spending persistent time and patience on transforming the cyclical social and economic patterns that kept them poor through generations.

"I was 9 years old at that time, an elementary student who was always absent from class because I didn't have food for school, no money to buy food either, and no energy nor inspiration to go to school. Then GK volunteers came every Saturday. They would go to our area and play with us, it was called the SAGIP program back then. They tutored us, guided us and helped boost our skills and confidence. Then I got an opportunity to be sponsored for school, which gave me a better path. Life was still hard but we managed with the help of the volunteers and the opportunities they shared with us. I had a chance to be part of the Bagong Silang Musical that performed all over the Philippines and the Tao Po Theater group that performed in other countries too. I also became a youth leader and a volunteer teacher for the SIBOL program.

GK gave me the confidence to lead and serve others as part of God's will, not only because I can but also because God is using me as an instrument of His love. I still am not rich but at least I am no longer poor. I have dreams for myself and my siblings to finish college. We're working together as a family to support each other and achieve this."

– Mark Gomez, Bagong Silang beneficiary

"When I became part of the SIGA program, this experience impacted me a lot because this is where I learned how to relate with people, to trust, be prayerful and steadfast. I brought all of these with me as I faced the challenges of my life. With God's grace, I became a professor in the FEU college of Nursing, and am now a nurse and US Navy Reservist here in California, USA. I continue to fight for a good future for my family by being resourceful and prayerful. I really thank the workers and volunteers of GK who became our mentors and models as we grew up."

– Josan Reyes, RN, Bagong Silang beneficiary

"At the beginning I joined GK because I wanted the scholarship. My father passed away and it was my Tita who was helping me with school. I got the scholarship I wanted but I needed to assist in taking care of the other kids in our community. I was doing it at first because it was a pre-requisite but then after some time, I learned to love these kids that were not my family. I also joined house builds and became a youth leader, it gave me fulfillment to serve others. That's how GK taught me to care for others other than myself. More than the scholarship, they taught me how to serve God and others, to be an instrument of change. Now that I am working in Canada, juggling 4 jobs to support my family and to put my children through a good school, I still do my best to live out the values I learned from GK. I hope to be able to sponsor other children's education someday so I can give them a chance to break free from poverty like me."

– Annie Millares, Bagong Silang beneficiary

"I was a gang leader and troublemaker in my community. I didn't even know God but He intervened in my life through GK. They offered me a scholarship, and even if I didn't think I deserved it, I took the chance on myself. After that, they asked me to lead a youth camp in Bacolod and this further strengthened my confidence and my faith that a bright future was possible. Fast forward to now, I serve my nation as a Police Master Sergeant and a member of the Presidential Security Group. I have served 2 Presidents including the current one. Who would have imagined that the previous public nuisance is now a faithful public servant! This just goes to show that if given the chance, people can change. GK taught me how to respect myself, and others, regardless of title and position in life, everybody deserves respect. This and faith in God became the foundation of my values in life."

– PMSG. Jolly Gabumpa, Bagong Silang beneficiary

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CARETAKERS

The missionary army

From the fruits of faith and the unconditional love of a few, the Spirit set fire to volunteers and benefactors that gave the mission its formal shape and form. In 2003, GK was formally established as a stand-alone non-profit organization that would make ending poverty for the poorest of the poor in our country its primary mission.

Because the numbers of the lost and the forgotten were massive, GK needed an army equal in size, and even greater in valor. For each community that was penetrated, there were assigned volunteers that would guide the group through the journey of transformation, following the blueprint of handholding that was discovered in Bagong Silang.

These self-appointed volunteers were aptly called caretakers, their main role being to give and model care to the least among us, to be what all of us are called to be, our brothers' keeper. As community caretakers, they are also ENABLERS, inspiring and encouraging them to act on their challenges, helping them to see their inherent value and dignity; MENTORS, shepherding the communities they serve through sharing values of humility, perseverance and excellence; and CULTURE-BUILDERS, building their every thought, word and deed to always carry a spirit of caring that looks outward towards those with greater need.

Transformation from continued presence and values mentoring are not only limited to the beneficiaries but are experienced by the givers too. This is the reason why most of the caretakers initially assigned to the communities are still walking side by side with them through their path to progress.



"My wife Thess and I had been members of Couples for Christ since 1987. We were very young then. We had the privilege to be guided by God's word and cared for by community. But what always struck my mind was... 'How can these loving and caring expressions, ever touch the lives of poor families?' Little did I know that, we were to be assigned in a place called Bagong Silang, to handle the first two couple members in 1989, till they grew to a chapter, onto the 1st SIGA Youth Camp, where GK begun. The leadings of the Spirit was very clear! GK is Faith in Action! Nothing can ever replace the love, respect and sincerity that the poor offer us in return. How they even cared for my children; when Thess and I would take them along to serve, when they were very small. Until this very day, their genuine relationships remain. They are our closest friends...they have become family to us! Our mission has become my passion and I stand witness to how sustainable transformation can happen when people choose values as a way of life. Bridging opportunities especially for the young, giving them a chance evokes their genius, their excellence and dedication, most of all, their gratitude! To be productive citizens? They can be far more than we can imagine! My message to the young-You are our hope... as our future leaders, seize every moment with greatness and gratitude. You will carry us to the future, propelled by your intelligent hearts and your courage to care! Kung hindi ngayon, kailan pa?... Kung hindi ikaw, sino?"

-Dale Lague, Community Caretaker, Bagong Silang

"The poor have taught me much! Their dependence on God has made them close and allows them to see the good in all things. They are more prayerful and trust strongly. I have experienced many miracles working with the poor. I myself have been transformed- I talk differently now, i used to be proud, not so friendly, but my encounters with the poor have changed me for the better.

One day soon, we will pave the way for a younger generation to take the lead in this mission. As those who have been doing this for a while, we can guide them, allay their fears, strengthen their hearts, and whisper a quiet prayer for God to lead them."

-Jessica Yu, Community Caretaker, Capiz

"I volunteer actively outside of my current job because helping others is helping myself too. There is happiness and fulfilment in serving and blessing others. I want to bring people's generosity and kindness to where it should be. There are so many people who want to extend help but don't know how to. I know I can be a channel so that more can be reached, and more lives can be inspired and be better. I want to be able to share the network and resources that I have and put them to good use.

We are one big community. Everyone has a role to play and everyone has the capacity to make a difference. You need not be rich to help someone. You can always share time, talent, and other resources. Poverty has been there for the longest time and the time to act to fight it should have been yesterday. Unless we do something, and unless everyone acts to respond, poverty will remain a problem for future generations."

-Chester de la Cruz, GK Volunteer Head, Taguig

3

GK COMMUNITIES

Building a foundation
for hope



As the initial youth development work progressed, it encountered the challenge of sustainability amidst the larger environment from which it grew. Those that made strides were pulled back into their old ways because of the circle of chaos that surrounded them. The next obvious step was to change the physical structures that mirrored the transformation of their aspirations.

The first few GK villages surfaced from the most neglected areas across the country such as coastline and urban slums, and relocation sites for families displaced from infrastructure projects. All of these transient communities had something in common- extremely poor families who on their own would not have even dreamed of cemented walls with metal roofs for homes, let alone paved pathways, pocket gardens and playgrounds. GK saw that the gift of a decent home gave them a taste of dignified living. This proved to be more important than providing the physical structure itself, because it unlocked their capacity to dream better for themselves and their families. GK envisioned giving an address for the homeless so there would be a place where they could anchor their dreams and their future.

To date, GK continues to work with more than three thousand communities across the country, whether directly or through partnerships established on-ground. The work of transformation is a continuing process because they still face various challenges in meeting their practical needs such as education, health and livelihood. But the fruit of the process is hope, and GK continues to nurture it to inspire them to continue the journey despite the many challenges.

"We are fully committed to support GK projects through building communities, providing resources, fostering connection and championing shared values. Together, we will build bridges and spark change to make our world a better place."

-Tan Eng Hwa, President, Berjaya Philippines

"TELUS International Philippines is dedicated to working with grassroots organizations in the country in addressing immediate needs of our communities staying true to our corporate social responsibility philosophy of 'we give where we live'. With our team member volunteers, we continue to build homes for the youth and their families in partnership with Gawad Kalinga, creating a caring community where they can thrive to ensure that no one gets left behind."

-Phoebe Carrera, Corporate Social Responsibility Senior Manager, Telus International Asia-Pacific

JUANITA HUMAHON and MERLYN LAURE, together with their now deceased husbands, Azarias and Nestor, were among the first 25 families that were awarded houses by Gawad Kalinga. The two couples were informal settlers living in small, dingy places in muddy Tambacan.

JUANITA describes life before GK- *"Our house was small then, the streets were muddy. We are thankful to GK for our community. Our lives changed. Our children had space to play. The surroundings were beautiful and peaceful. Everyone was helpful and kind to each other."*

MERLYN, on the other hand says-*"I was depressed with our old home, it was dirty and people did not care for each other. GK brought a lot of change in our lives. I was also able to put up a store to augment our income. We continuously strive to live by the values of GK."*

Juanita and Merlyn continue to be hopeful, believing in unexpected surprises the way they were blessed with a home in GK, 20 years ago!

-GK Rainbow Village, Barangay Tamabacan, Iligan City

"Being given a home is important for us because we didn't have our own land. It helps the poor if we are treated with dignity and respect, especially if it is given to us freely. I realized that all blessings come from God. I am more knowledgeable now and self-confident. My child was also blessed with free education. We live by our values, we acquired friends, our life is much better when we became a part of GK. The Kapitbahayan also became more empowered. We assist each other, talk things out, and work for the good of the community. It's not perfect but we have good relationships. And above all, we have faith in the Lord despite having different religious beliefs."

-Marivic Miranda, KB leader, San Isidro Nueva Ecija

4

The KAPITBAHAYAN Organizing the community structure



GK Villages sprouted all over the country, painting previously dreary landscapes with colorful homes and bright pathways. The end result was paved not without its challenges and roadblocks. As with any community, the question of authority and hierarchy came into the fore.

The caretakers guided the community members in building their own associations that would define leadership structure, set the rules for peace and order and create plans for their shared future. This community association was called the Kapitbahayan, coming together for the common good. Each individual/family was no longer surviving for themselves alone. They were given the task and responsibility to care for each other, as a way to reciprocate and replicate the caring and sharing that their caretakers have started.

In the process, the poor have discovered the empowerment that self-governance brings- that they can and should chart their own path to progress, that they can and should be the architects of their own destiny.

The caretakers and the Kapitbahayan worked hand in hand to put not just infrastructure in place, but other programs that would help the community address the different problems they encountered, from education to livelihood to natural disasters.

Now, we have stories of Kapitbahayans who are paying it forward, giving cash and relief goods, even offering temporary shelter to other communities who have been struck by typhoons and earthquakes. The seeds of generosity that others have sown in their lives are now bearing fruit through their acts of heroism and solidarity.

Eutiquio "Titing" Flores Jr. was among the well-respected leaders of GK Pangarap village in Barangay Lobogon, Del Carmen, Siargao. He worked as an assistant mechanic and served as a tanod for their barangay. He was compassionate, helpful, a loving husband to his wife Elena and their 3 children. When Supertyphoon Odette devastated Siargao island in December 16, 2021, he braved the Category 5 storm to evacuate almost 100 families to safety. Elena recalls... "I told him to stay put but he didn't listen. He told me there were other kids that needed to be rescued!"

At the height of the storm, Titing through his vigilance, saw a mother with 3 children go out of the classroom, trying to seek safer ground because the roof was blown off and the ceiling collapsed. Titing spotted a flying iron roof sheet swiftly heading towards that family and without hesitation, he threw himself up to shield them. He was directly hit on the back of his head, causing his death, in an instant.

"He is naturally helpful to others, a very patient and caring husband, very supportive to our kids. There is no one like him!", Elena proclaims with pride.

-Elena Flores, honoring the memory of her husband Titing Flores, GK Parangap Village, Siargao

"Fear of God is important in leadership. It is what governs good and healthy relationships. The witness of one's life is primary! People follow what they see more than what they hear. In the day-to-day KB interactions, we abide by GK's value of seeking the common good. Everyone helps to maintain good order, peace and the law. We settle disputes through dialogue and resolve cases even before they reach the barangay.

When Taal Volcano erupted in 2020, two hundred families from Taal evacuated to our area to escape the mudflow. Even with our limited space, we hosted them, fed them because this is our way of paying it forward. We gained more friends, and when they returned to their homes, everyone came out of the experience enriched."

-Luouel Moya, Kapitbahayan Leader, GK Keppel Eco Village, Bauan, Batangas

"I became a KB leader in 2018, and since then I have learned the value of patience and never giving up on thinking and doing good for others. Being a leader is taking up the responsibility for the good of others. Being a good listener is important in leadership because this is how you learn the aspirations and expectations of the people you serve. Whenever possible, I act as their voice, bringing their hopes to those who can help."

-Christy Panindi, KB Leader, GK Islam Village, Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat

"I have been serving as a KB leader since 2005. I have learned the value of encouraging others to help and join in Bayanihan efforts for our community. By doing this, we turn good intentions into reality, and people's lives change for the better, both for those we serve and those who serve."

-Jose De la Cruz, KB Leader, GK Dupax del Norte, Nueva Viscaya

5

NATION-BUILDING

Pushing for radical citizenship

At this point, the components for community building were already in place. The volunteers and caretakers were there, homes were being built, partner donors were supporting the work, and the community leaders were stepping up.

Village by village, community after community, the work was growing beyond its original scope. The shared spirit fostered a shared vision for a nation that was prosperous for all, a nation free of poverty. GK became a beacon to nation-builders at heart. Leaders from local and national government responded to the call of radical citizenship that resounded loud and strong from its constituency.

The mission found allies from the President to Cabinet Secretaries, Senators, Governors and Mayors. More and more, government agencies and LGUs were allocating funds to build homes and to support community programs that were resulting in hundreds of stories of transformed lives. Hearts and minds were inspired, crossing political and sectarian lines to work for the common good.

GK provided a collaborative platform for public and private partnership to address the poverty issue. This was a critical milestone in the journey as it unlocked not just resources but a solid platform to raise the agenda of poverty eradication on a national level. The big corporations joined in full support, sponsoring entire communities. CEOs together with their employees were paving blocks and painting walls, using the opportunity to bond as a team while performing their civic duties.

Gawad Kalinga awakened the sense of nationhood from thousand of Filipinos in and out of the country.



"In the expression of people power, GK seeks meaningful change powered by love for God and love for neighbor. Gawad Kalinga is people power and people power is Gawad Kalinga."

-Speech of Former President Corazon Aquino, International Gawad Kalinga Congress, June 2004

"The three important institutions of our society - the church, civil society and government - have united to complete model communities."

-Speech of Former President Gloria Arroyo, GK Unityville, May 2004

"Gawad Kalinga has become a family to us in the provincial government of Davao de Oro as our partners in our hunger and education programs, among many others. In our area, there is active public and private collaboration, volunteerism, and the need to put human dignity and social justice in the center. GK has greatly impacted how governance is done through embodying what public servants ought to be: Una sa Serbisyo, Huli sa Benepisyo. We duly commend and are very thankful for the work and effort that GK has contributed to the collective achievements of the provincial government. Padayon ug walang iwanan sa tanang panahon, GK!"

- Jayvee Tyron L. Uy, MPA, Vice Governor, Davao de Oro

"The Local Government Unit of San Lorenzo has decided to work with Gawad Kalinga because we share common goals of alleviating poverty, improving education, healthcare services and providing livelihood programs for the community. The LGU needs partners in accomplishing these goals. GK is one of these partners that we value much because it promotes the Bayanihan spirit."

-Nelson P. De Los Santos, MD, Mayor, San Lorenzo Ruiz, Camarines Norte

6

GK INTERNATIONAL

Connecting to the global audience

Filipino communities from the US and Australia were already donors of the first few villages, however, the global movement rapidly spread in 2003–2004 just as the country was also set ablaze with the GK way of nation-building. News of villages and hope stories travelled the US through a roadshow, amplified by fundraising concerts and food festivals, celebrating our patriotism with music and food, the Filipino way. GK quickly became a real and tangible connection to the motherland.

The first generation Filipinos who found success in their adoptive countries saw GK as a way to give back to the Philippines. Doctors, lawyers, engineers built villages for their respective hometowns and invited even non-Filipino friends to support the cause. Global summits were held in Boston, Florida, California, cities from East to West, which turned into the biggest reunion of Filipinos outside the Philippines. Hope Balls were staged not only to dance and dress up but to celebrate the resurgence of hope for the country they left behind.

Even the 2nd generation Filipinos found an avenue to re-discover their roots and identity through GK. Children as young as 9 years old were selling cookies and plants, foregoing birthday parties and debuts, to raise funds.

The response of the Filipino diaspora was so strong, GK established official entities in the US, Canada, Australia, Indonesia and Europe to handle the influx of generosity. For overseas Filipinos, GK was their bridge back to the motherland.

But the goods news of GK connected not only to Filipinos but to non-Filipinos alike, those who were looking for a cause to make their own. GK's values were universal and the stories of transformation powerful, that it attracted audiences from different nationalities and sectors of society.



"I am deeply honored and humbled to be given the privilege to be part of this noble mission. As past chairman of GK USA, we will continue and lead support for GKCDFI. I would like to leave the legacy for the next generation of GKUSA to continue to promote our rich culture, history and love for the motherland. We join all in prayers that the gift of giving and the heart of loving will always be with us."

–Dr. Jun Raffinan, GK USA

"The holistic approach of GK in confronting poverty is the most effective way I've seen and it's been proven in many communities that have been transformed and empowered through its programs and culture of caring and sharing. I invite the youth, with the energy, talent and resources, to join the cause for the future of the Philippines."

–Carol Tulud, GK USA

"For me, work that seeks a just and caring world is important. Work that knows how to get there makes it even more so. GK is far from perfect, but it has never lost its way. I have yet to see a group which centers the poor and listens to them as seriously as GK, caring for and working with them, yet recognizing their dignity and allowing autonomy. Despite the challenges, dangers even, they understand that planting a sense of community to heal social ills require roots that come with long-term presence. Beyond its programs, GK amplifies the voice of the poor by pushing for policies in government and practices in business and education that are pro poor. Lastly, GK is led by people who will not compromise integrity, who value personal and public trust, whether dealing with donors, partners, volunteers and communities. That trust is a strong foundation of all this caring."

–Maricel Barreiro-Villanueva, GK USA

"Helping the poor and needy is Faith in Action. It allows us to be instruments of Christ's love for others. GK Australia recognizes the need to support projects in the Philippines to sustain the work that brings hope, love and caring. In being united with GK's 'Walang Iwanan' culture we participate in being catalysts of change."

–Marisa Vedar, GK Australia

"I believe in the approach of GK in fighting poverty. It must be a national movement of convergence where all stakeholders are working together to tackle this issue. Individual connections between rich and poor people are at the center of the solution because it must be based on shared universal values such as solidarity, caring & sharing and social justice. Mentorship and spiritual guidance over the years is critical for the poor to recover their dignity and to become empowered in the long term. Only GK provides such a framework, with a 20-year impressive track record, compared to so many other western charities present in The Philippines."

–Olivier Girault, GK Europe

"The work in the Philippines is not over until we address all issues of poverty. GK is not just about money, we need time and talent, we need volunteers to be successful in the mission of ending poverty."

–Alfredo Pacis, GK Canada

7

GK Builder's Institute

Shaping the science from the spirit

The GK way caught the attention of scholars and experts in the field of social sciences. But it needed a replicable and scalable framework moving forward. Ateneo de Manila University was the first to commit to institutionalizing the processes and best practices of GK through the GK Builder's Institute in partnership with the Ateneo School of Government. They researched, studied and produced the first GK training manuals.

The U.P. National College of Public Administration dedicated space to GK on its textbook. International schools like the Asian Institute of Management and Massachusetts Institute of Technology published studies on GK as a model for community-building. Lectures were done across different universities in the US, Australia and France, leading to a stream of foreign student immersions to the GK villages.

GK's work crossed borders far and wide, becoming a template for anti-poverty programs among other developing countries like Papua New Guinea, Cambodia and Indonesia.

The work was also recognized by local and international award-giving bodies such as Ramon Magsaysay Awards, Nikkei Foundation, Schwab Foundation, Skoll Foundation, among others, adding more credibility to the unconventional spirit-led approach.

GKBI is the knowledge center of all the learnings from the different programs and interventions that has been implemented over time. The greatest source of the GK knowledge base are the poor and the volunteers.



"Ateneo de Manila has always defined its mission as building the nation, preparing leaders and citizens for the country. The vast majority of our nation are poor. Ateneo is challenged to really enter the world of the poor and make a difference for them. Our partnership with Gawad Kalinga has enabled us to build homes for the poor in several communities and to become part of their lives. We have had the privilege of seeing the children grow, get an education and move out of poverty. Our partnership has also helped Ateneo address the very serious problem of hunger and malnutrition with Kusina ng Kalinga. GK that has helped us make a difference in several poor communities, to be true men and women for others and for our nation."

-Father Ben Nebres, SJ, Former President, Ateneo de Manila University, National Scientist of the Philippines

"Along our partnership journey with Gawad Kalinga, GK Ateneo contributed to where it could share its resources and competencies the most. We organized workshops in developing manuals, led in developing training courses to build the capacities of full-time workers and volunteers, and helped set up GK programs. GKA at one point assisted in replicating the model by setting up offices for partnership with GK in other universities. The development and impact of the partnership grew horizontally -- across various programs and vertically -- deepened in communities. The symbiotic relationship between GK and Ateneo has become fuller with GKBI. With GKBI, we develop training programs to build the capabilities of GK workers and volunteers, through them we develop community programs. With GKBI we hasten the work of eradicating poverty through the training courses, formation processes, community project development tools and systems. All these based on actual needs and experiences of the workers and piloted in GK communities. Through GKBI we can amplify the impact of capability building interventions and community development efforts towards building a nation of empowered communities."

-Noi Quesada, Head of GK Ateneo

"I joined GKBI in March 2009 and became part of the team that trained GK community caretaker teams. In 2010, GKBI also became the response of schools in different parts of the country to the call of nation-building by championing patriotic education. They formed a network of schools in nation-building. The schools integrated GK experience into their curriculum and educational materials, conducted research and development work based on GK experience, and in some areas, conducted capacity building programs for GK teams. The schools served as think tanks and centers for learning. GKBI has helped in building the capability of the GK full-time workers, volunteer teams of the provinces, and community caretaker teams, especially in community development organizing and strengthening. As GK moves toward 2050, the roles and activities of full-time workers and volunteers may change but the role of GKBI to capacitate them as enablers, mentors, and culture builders will continue so that they can adapt to the changes in the environment and continue to effectively help poor families to rise from poverty."

-Butch Ozarraga, Head of GK Builder's Institute

8

GK Youth Fuelling growth and innovation

GK started with a few young volunteers who were touched by the spirit and went on to spread the word and recruit more to the team. A group of dedicated students from La Salle, UP, and Ateneo would make presentations to school organizations on weekdays and would participate in builds on the weekends.

From school to school across the nation, the few turned into many. Thousands gathered in communities and events to celebrate their new found passion and mission. Students from rival schools and fraternities would find camaraderie and a common purpose in nation-building. They took to the streets and waved their school flags not in a posture of rebellion, but to make a statement that the future of a prosperous Philippines was theirs to claim.

Their battlecry of "Bawat Pilipino, Bayani" was an expression of the young's collective desire to change the social landscape of our country. And in their numbers, they found inspiration that change is possible together.

The student leaders of GK Youth yesterday are still leading the charge of change in their chosen fields of expertise today. The energy and audacity of the youth is what will ensure that the mission of GK carries on for generations to come.



"I started my journey with GK when I was a student at De La Salle University. When La Salle and CFC partnered to create a summer community immersion program in Dingalan, Aurora for the victims of a typhoon and a landslide. This is where I first understood the mission of GK, to give hope to the hopeless. I saw all my team mates give selflessly, laying down bricks without expecting anything in return. This is where I think GK Isang Milyong Bayani (IMB) started for me. Using the inspiration from that summer experience, I started to help gather more students to volunteer in GK communities, we went to different universities such as College of St. Benilde, Philippine Women University, UP Manila, Adamson University, Philippine Normal University, Arellano University, to name a few. Our volunteer base continued to grow, we would spent at least 4 hours a week in different GK communities. In February of 2006, thousands of us filled Quezon Memorial Circle to solidify our commitment to GKIMB. This is where it all became real. Volunteering for GK opened my eyes and heart to a lot of life experiences I otherwise would never have found myself in. To this day, now being married, my wife and I continue to serve in any way we can through our business. We bring with us the values of servant leadership and service to God and country. And we are always inspired by the belief that ever Filipino can be a hero."

–Franz Joseph Hipol, Former GKIMB leader and volunteer

"I was a GK volunteer during college and GK was where I met some of the most influential people in my life. My GK exposure also gave me the opportunity to know the poor as family and friends. I could trace a lot of what I do now to those days when I was a volunteer. Up to today, my biggest WHY is still deeply connected to love for country and nation-building."

–Reese Fernandez–Ruiz, Founder, Rags2Riches Inc.

"The community development projects that we do in GK Youth are personally meaningful to me. They bring out in me a volunteer spirit and a servant heart. These experiences allow me to share with others the best gifts that God has given me: a happy family, supportive friends and an inspiring community. GK Youth enables me to give me back and pay forward to those most in need. I believe everyone is given an opportunity to share their potential to make genuine impact to their community and society."

–Jessica Mae Briones, GK Youth, Buhi, Camarines Sur

"As a youth leader coming from a poor family, I want to give hope to others like me. We will not be poor forever. Our future is our choice. We can dream, and work hard to make that dream happen. But we cannot forget about others in need too. If we look beyond ourselves, we will find many with bigger problems."

–John Marco Pajutrao, LGU Panabo GK Village, Bgy. Datu Abdul, Dadia, Panabo City, Davao del Norte

9

HIGHWAY OF PEACE

Finding hope
amidst conflict

When GK reached the hallways of the academe and boardrooms of big corporations, it became the go-to path for community programs in Luzon and Visayas. However, the shaky peace talks of the government with Muslim secessionists in Mindanao initially kept GK work out of the region. Various camps in Mindanao were completely destroyed from the government's all-out war against MILF in 2000, and this was perceived as a direct attack of the Christian capital against Muslim Mindanao. Bridges were burned and the distrust ran deep. Amidst the ruins, the call for re-construction in that region could no longer be ignored. It was GK's next frontier in nation-building.

Through divine appointment, GK's first Muslim village was built in Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat on land donated by a Christian family, the Griños. The generosity and sincerity of the Griño family paved the way for handshakes even in the most contentious areas like Barira, Maguindanao. A community arose from the ashes of what was previously Camp Abubakar, the site of the final stronghold and harshest battle of that time. Christian volunteers, together with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, started to travel in what was called The Caravan of Hope, across conflict-ridden roads to participate in builds in Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur and Cotabato. Convoys of cars and lines of human bridges became an annual sight that reached other cities in Mindanao with the aim of restoring lost confidence and repairing broken relationships.

GK has earned the trust of our Muslim brethren, allowing projects to take place in as far as Sulu where volunteers work side by side, carrying the banner of peace and hope where conflict once was.



"The presence of GK has made many Christians aware that just like them, Muslims also want peace. It is not the cultural divide that was the problem but the lack of opportunity for many Muslims. It is poverty that drew them into the rebel factions. GK reached out to those Muslims who were isolated because of conflicts in their area. When GK expanded to include feeding in its work, I can't forget the time we served food to the displaced Muslim families after the SAF 44 incident. Classes were disrupted. Children stayed in cramped tents and classrooms. They were timid the first time GK workers tried to engage them but when GK started bringing food and had them participate in a game we called Paraisong Pambata, the daily feeding became for them an experience of a big children's party. They were so happy, they looked forward to it everyday. I can't forget the image of kids running to meet the GK van that brought the food, and running after the van to send off GK workers who have become their friends. Their laughter covering the sound of mortar shelling in some rebel-identified spots.

GK has taught me to brave fear when treading on unfamiliar places, to go out of my comfort zone. I have become more embracing of people's differences. To give hope for a peaceful future – a future that the next generation may come to enjoy, we must learn to understand and work through our differences. It is an opportunity for growth. Oftentimes, it takes only one person to reach out to make a big impact in the lives of others. We must never stop reaching out to those in need. Always take the first step to seek peace."

–Noel Griño, GK Pioneer in Sultan Kudarat

"GK is instrumental in building trust between Muslims & Christians here in our area. During my stint as the Provincial Manager of NFA North Cotabato years back, one night when I went home to Tacurong City, we were stranded along the national highway due to the big acacia tree that fell down because of heavy rains and strong winds. Vehicles lined up for almost one kilometer because the road was inaccessible. I called up Mayor Totoy Paglas and he immediately responded by bringing a pay loader together with the GK Datu Paglas homeowners. They brought their chainsaws and bolos and swiftly cleared the road. This kind of solidarity was not present before the HOPE caravan. It has alleviated the fears and the anxiety of the entire community. Now, we can freely travel along Muslim areas even at night."

–Fernando Nunez, GK Hope Caravan Volunteer

10 BAYANI CHALLENGE

Nationwide volunteerism

Bayani Challenge started as a response to a landslide in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte in 2006. Taking its cue from the Hope Caravan, a call to re-build was made out of the ruins of disaster. People from all over the country came, spent their time and own money, concretizing the word 'padugo' (to give of oneself). The energy during the build was palpable and GK wanted to use this platform to grow it exponentially.

The idea of Bayani Challenge then morphed into an annual event that would encourage modern-day heroism. Symbolically celebrated on April (Day of Valor) to June 12 (Independence Day), it is a regular reminder that while we celebrate heroes of our past, heroism today is still very much alive.

Simultaneous community building activities happen across various sites in the country engaging thousands of volunteers in building homes, feeding hungry children, reading books, planting food, and cleaning up the environment. But it's not all hard work, the volunteers celebrate their camaraderie through sharing stories of personal journeys (Kalinga Nights) and Unity dances to liven the festivities.

Seventeen years to date, and hundreds of thousands of heroes after, Bayani Challenge continues to be the country's biggest volunteerism event annually. It attracts volunteers of all ages and profiles. Barkadas (groups of friends), colleagues and families use this as an opportunity to strengthen bonds and deepen shared convictions for the nation's future.



Nathanael Navarro, a student who participated in Bayani Challenge with his father, as a graduation gift shares-

"I have always had a love for community work, and Bayani Challenge gave me a chance to really connect with the community. It was an insightful and developmental experience for me. Insightful because it taught me lifelong lessons. Developmental because it made me realize the needs of the community and what can be done to help them. As I reflect upon the whole experience, I realized that Gawad Kalinga sends us not only hope but also a challenge to break the hold of a desensitized world toward a more caring and inclusive future."

Violeta Imperial, a social responsibility specialist working with the DENR, sees in volunteerism a 'lifestyle'. She says-

"Blessings received should be extended to the needy."

Impressed by what she saw in the Bayani Challenge in Tayabas, she invited friends and travelled to Matanao in Davao del Sur and Patikul in Sulu, offering her presence and availability to help the poor and bring them hope.

Municipal Officer of Tapaz, Capiz, **Aldrin Falco** was thankful for his Bayani Challenge experience because it allowed him to personally serve the IP barangays of Lahug, Tabon and Rizal Sur.

"Even if it was a long trek upland through slippery walkways just to reach our indigenous Capiznons, I am grateful because i got to see their dire situation and discern the help they need. It was an eye-opener, I will definitely do this again. GK is right that by helping the needy, we can change lives. I realized too that everyone can help in their small ways, you don't need a lot of money or skills, but just a heart that desires to do good!"

Nor-ain Dalgan, a Muslim and GK's Community Development Coordinator in Sultan Kudarat joined Arakan's tree planting and shares-

"Yung tinanim kong narra dito sa kalbong bundok, anak ko na ang mag-aani. Ginagawa ko ito para may masilungang puno ang henerasyon nila!" (I planted a narra tree in this bald mountain, knowing it is my child's generation who will take shade in it!)



11

OPERATION WALANG IWANAN

Rehabilitation beyond disaster response

When Typhoon Sendong/Washi hit Mindanao in December of 2011 where thousands of homes were destroyed and lives were lost, GK was one of the first few responders on the ground that distributed relief packs and assisted in evacuation efforts. There were two central commands set up in Metro Manila to accept donations where hundreds of volunteers showed up to lend a hand in repacking and coordinating distribution. The instinctive response of workers and volunteers to natural disasters grew organically from their Bayani Challenge and Hope Caravan experience. They used their network on ground to assess the needs, call out for resources, and plan logistics of distribution.

Operation Walang Iwanan was applied as the model for disaster response efforts for all the major natural disasters that followed thereafter. The biggest disaster mobilization effort to date was in 2013 where twin disasters hit the Visayas region- a major earthquake in Bohol/Cebu followed by Supertyphoon Yolanda that ravaged Leyte and Samar. Thousands of relief packs were distributed, and this is where the first mobile kitchen was set up to serve hot meals to the victims. GK earned the trust of LGUs, corporations, private individuals and even international humanitarian organizations such that GK became an extension of their relief efforts.

However, beyond immediate relief interventions, GK wanted to ensure that recovery and rebuilding plans continue after the dust of public attention has settled. For Sendong, thousands of families were relocated to homes built on flood-safe grounds in partnership with the LGUs and major private donors. To date, GK has repaired thousands of homes that were destroyed and has provided livelihood assistance to farmers and fisherfolk who have lost their harvest and equipment to the storms.

Operation Walang Iwanan (OWI) goes beyond providing immediate relief. It makes a continued appeal to help displaced families re-establish their lives.



"We were able to reach out to Juan Communities in the most remote areas of the nation thanks to Gawad Kalinga. We can always count on the GK network to help us efficiently mobilize assistance for communities in need and that are bouncing back from crises. We are grateful to have found a partner in GK who share our commitment to uplift the Filipino, champion education, and build the nation Juan Community at a time."

-Graciela E. Mendoza, Scholarships & Community Head, Gokongwei Brothers Foundation

When Sendong struck in December of 2011. The typhoon caused the overflow of the river, the collapse of the bridge and the rise of storm water to mountain level surrounding Manongdo in Iligan. Rho suddenly found himself fleeing Sendong's wrath as thousands of families ran for their lives.

"It was devastating!" he recalls. "Sendong's gushing floodwaters carted away our meager savings, life memories, 'Lahat ng mga pinaghirapan sa buhay - naubos!' All wet and soaked in mud, we found ourselves racing nowhere and begging to just be able to drink water to survive, as food was scarce for all.

A year after the tragedy they were awarded a home in GK Sta. Elena, a 16 hectare relocation area where 1,600 families, victims of Sendong were settled. Rho was trying to capture the right Tagalog word to define the deep impact of the house that GK gifted his young family with. *"Binigyan kami ng GK ng dignidad, sa pabahay na ito. Nagkaroon kami ng address, para bang may 'title' na kami, kabilang, kasama!"*

Rho cites the beginnings that the GK house meant to the Sendong survivors. The residents of Sta. Elena seemed to have all taken direction at improving their lives. People looked for jobs, something worth returning for the value they were accorded. Despite challenges, people rose to pursue the higher cause. There was effort made to live the GK values of bayanihan, a caring and sharing community.

"GK planted kindness deep in our hearts, especially to the most needy!" Rho quips.

-Rho Sic, House Beneficiary, Typhoon Sendong Build, GK Sta. Elena, Iligan City

Charlene well remembers that October morning in 2013. She recalled hearing strange sounds, then their kitchen crumbled, as people fell and rolled on the ground. An earthquake had struck. Still grappling with the sudden aftershocks, the torrential rains of Yolanda came beating down the province. Charlene's family kept moving from place to place just be able to find shelter through frightful nights of the quake's aftershocks. Rey Balatayo, a GK volunteer, found them in a small nipa hut where the family lay to sleep on bare earth. Through him, GK brought the good news of hope where disaster had struck. This act of kindness extended to helpless victims of both earthquake and storm carved deeply into Charlene's heart. She looked forward to an opportunity to pay the deed forward! That chance unknowingly came through SEED when she applied and got a scholarship. From a scholar, she has now become a SEED mentor, teaching other students what she has learned.

"My GK journey has been one full of experience and realization. I firmly believe in GK's mission to end poverty because I can see it work in my life. There is no stopping the building of dreams and casting of hope for the poor. They need to know our commitment NOT TO LEAVE ANY POOR BEHIND!"

-Charlene Mier Monton, House Beneficiary from Bohol Earthquake, Barangay Maribojoc, Bohol

12

BARANGAY WALANG IWANAN Strengthening local partnerships

When Typhoon Sendong/Washi hit Mindanao in December of 2011 where thousands of homes were destroyed and lives were lost, GK was one of the first few responders on the ground that distributed relief packs and assisted in evacuation efforts. There were two central commands set up in Metro Manila to accept donations where hundreds of volunteers showed up to lend a hand in repacking and coordinating distribution. The instinctive response of workers and volunteers to natural disasters grew organically from their Bayani Challenge and Hope Caravan experience. They used their network on ground to assess the needs, call out for resources, and plan logistics of distribution.

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Operation Walang Iwanan (OWI) goes beyond providing immediate relief. It makes a continued appeal to help displaced families re-establish their lives.



9.6K+ BARANGAYS
ENGAGED
757 MUNICIPALITIES

GK, through its Barangay Walang Iwanan initiatives, has engaged the community for a youth hub which provides internet access to aid in their studies while giving the community a gathering venue. Values formation meetings have also been held in the site. Recently, a youth camp was conducted for youth leaders of the entire province. The farmers are likewise being presently organized to plant a common 'Gulayan' area.

Commenting on their experience and the benefits accrued from this partnership, Barangay Captain Tacmo and BWI KB President Arligue reply "Dahil nagtutulungan kami, mas marami ang aming nagagawa sa mas maikling panahon. Sa ganoon, marami rin kaming napagsisilbihan nang mabilis. Hindi na sila kailangan maghintay nang matagal." (Together, we are able to do more, faster; that way, more people are reached and served. People do not have to wait long!)

Asked about their sense of the community's topmost dreams, our leaders share, 'Lahat, unang-una nais umasenso sa buhay. Pangalawa ang matulungang makahanap ng pandagdag-kita. At pangatlo, tulad ng narami, ang mapagtapos ang mga anak sa pag-aaral.' (Primary among their dreams is improving quality of life; second is sourcing opportunities for additional income; and third is being able to graduate their children from school.)

-Brgy. Capt. Anecito Tacmo and BWI KB Pres. Dorena Arligue, GK Bilay, Butuan

After the ravage of Typhoon Odette, Brgy. Lajanuza was recipient of roofing materials donated by a partner of GK. Mentors from SEED trained the community in establishing a food farm while a banca was donated to assist fishermen whose boats were damaged by the typhoon.

While GK was able to help them re-start after the typhoon, Brgy. Lajanuza responded as a cohesive unit built on the assistance given to them. They were able to extend the produce of the community food farms to regularly feed the children. The barangay captain has also organized all the households and encouraged regular community clean-ups.

Asked about the leader learnings gained from a close service partnership of village and barangay, Kagawad Lim and BWI Kapitbahayan President Tusay commented, 'Hinihikayat naming lahat na magtulungan at magbigayan. Sa lugar namin, pinakamalaki na pong isipin ang kabuhayan. Kung kaya, mahalaga po ang bayanihan. Pinapairal po namin dito sa Brgy. Lajanuza ang kultura ng pagdadamay. Kung sino yung mayroon, tulungan yung wala!' (We jointly encourage Brgy. Lajanuza's community residents to help and share. Livelihood is a major concern in our area. That is why 'Bayanihan' needs to be practised. We encourage the culture where those who have, share resources with those who lack!)

-Kagawad Gil Lim rep. Brgy. Capt. Rune Perocho and BWI KB Pres. Hilda Tusay, Brgy. Lajanuza, General Luna, Siargao

13

KUSINA NG KALINGA

A path to Zero Hunger

Kusina ng Kalinga started in Kanangga Central School in Leyte Province in February 2014 as part of the disaster recovery program of super typhoon Yolanda. GK had no experience in large scale feeding programs and had to turn to the Ateneo Center for Education Development (ACED) which has been working with the City of Valenzuela for its daily feeding program for 16,000 day care and elementary students. It was the first time that this urban model would be tested in a rural and post-disaster setting. The successful experiment in Kanangga paved the way for the first Kusina ng Kalinga Central Kitchen in Alangalang, Leyte and eventually the first batch of model kitchens in Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat and GK Sitio Pajo, Brgy. Baesa, Quezon City.

The network grew steadily to a nationwide network 160 kitchens from 2015 to 2019—a growth path which was altered by the pandemic. However, the challenge of the COVID quarantines inspired a community-led response where local volunteers initiated feeding activities for the hungry children within their own bubbles. The mothers proved to be the best frontliners in addressing hunger and nutrition for their children and families.

Towards the end of lockdowns in 2022, the network had ballooned to 840 community kitchens across the country. Moreover, these grassroots efforts to address hunger brought to the forefront the power of community gardens and community health education in creating enabling environments for zero hunger.

The leadership and lived experiences of community volunteers paved the way for GK's 5M approach to zero hunger: magtulungan (bayanihan), magpakain (feeding), magpakalulsog (health education), magtanim (community food farming), and mag-connect (online bayanihan).

GK has gathered those committed to achieve SDG 2 and co-founded the Zero Hunger Alliance (ZHA) to organize the largest network of implementers and local partners working towards building zero hunger communities in their localities.



9.6M MEALS SERVED
383K KIDS FED

*2020-2023

"The importance of KnK lies in its role as a stepping stone to combat hunger and poverty. Its sustainable community-driven model can be applied across different areas, making a collective impact. Beyond the framework, the program's genuine intention and heart make it truly meaningful. Volunteers' involvement in food preparation, gardening, and educating the beneficiaries on healthy food sets the stage for a brighter future ahead."

Working for a company that also wants to fight hunger, I believe that supporting this particular program has an impact to fight poverty. The help we do together with KnK can create a positive impact that results in a significant difference in the community. Access to good meals can empower individuals- especially for children to be healthy which will enable them to pursue their dreams. Who knows? They can become game-changers in their barangays or even the country!"

-Charisse Vilchez, Marketing and Global Responsibility Manager, Starbucks Philippines

"Ako po si Janella, walong taong gulang. Bago ang Kusina ng Kalinga+, napansin ko na di marunong kumain ng gulay at mapayat ang mga batang tulad ko. Nung dumating na ang KnK+, nagiging mas malusog at di na napapabayaang. Mahilig akong kumanta at sumayaw. Sana po di mapabayaang at maging malusog ang mga bata para hindi mapapayat."

(I am Janella, 8 years old. Before Kusina ng Kalinga+, children like me were too thin and we didn't know how to eat our vegetables. When KnK+ arrived, we became more healthy. I like to sing and dance. I wish that kids will always be cared for and that they will be healthy.)

-Janella, 8 years old, KnK+ Sagrada Familia, Bato, Camarines Sur

"Para sa akin po malaking tulong ang KnK+ dahil kahit na ako'y mahirap nakakapagpakain tayo sa mahihirap. Sa komunidad po e malaking tulong ang KnK+ dahil nakakain sila ng masarap at masustansyang pagkain. Nasusuloyunang kanilang 'gutom' kapag mayroong feeding. Hindi man nila sinasabi pero nakikita ko sa kanilang mukha na masaya sila kapag nakakain. Napakahalaga po ang ginagawa ng isang tulad ko sa kitchen para matuldukan ang gutom. Pangunguna sa mga service team para maging tama ang gagawin, magdisiplina para walang papaburan sa pagbibigay ng pagkain. Magkontrol sa sitwasyon kapag namimigay na ng pagkain."

(For me, KnK+ is a big help because even if I am poor myself, I am able to feed other poor people like me. It's a big help for the community because they get to eat delicious and nutritious food. We are solving hunger every time we feed. Even if they don't say it, I can see in their faces that they are happy whenever we feed them. My role as a kitchen manager is important because we as the service team need to be good examples, to have discipline in our work, show no favoritism among the people we feed, and make sure that the whole situation is under control.)

-Bro. Edelberto F. Tolentino, Kitchen Manager, GK Balite, Oriental Mindoro

14

SIPAG

Leadership through sports



12.8K+ CHILDREN TRAINED
60 SPORTS SCHOLARS
*2018-2023

The SIPAG program began under the leadership of Danny Moran and Ed Formoso in 2005. The initial participants were the youth of GK Tatalon, a handful of children kicking the ball around on the streets, in lieu of a proper venue. GK officially adopted SIPAG as its standard youth sports program in 2008, founded on the support of the Moran Foundation.

SIPAG as a concept program is intended to utilize all forms of sports to develop character and leadership among the youth. It was football however that gained more momentum due to its accessibility and relative simplicity. Beginning with 10 GK communities in NCR, SIPAG launched Liga GK, a futsal and street football league among GK communities, which eventually spread to more schools and communities across the country. As the years progressed, the program received support from various organizations which paved the path for its beneficiaries to gain access to international competitions, educational scholarships, leadership trainings, and opportunities for coaching careers.

The program has produced many achievements, the most notable ones being-

- Trainees have been granted football scholarships from major schools such as FEU, ISM and UP.
- Talented players got a foot in the door to the world of professional football by being accepted into prestigious clubs like Kaya Football Club, Azkals Development Team while a few even made it to the Philippine National Team
- The SIPAG team was able to compete in competitions across Europe.
- A few of the first batch of beneficiaries have progressed to earn professional coaching licences.
- GK SIPAG became a FIFA Foundation-supported organization.
- The “SPORTS LEADS” project in partnership with the US Embassy in the Philippines was awarded the “Heroes Off the Pitch” Best Community Project 2023 by La Liga.

The program still has a long way to go in terms of reaching more children in need of the opportunity to learn and develop their potential through sports. But it is on a steady track to producing more young leaders who are giving back to their community.

"For many years GK has been a champion of strengthening families and communities that all lead up towards building a nation. Since the start, GK has always prioritized values formation, and this is why many years ago I (through Red Ribbon and eventually the Moran Foundation) sought to develop GK's sports program starting with football. The power of sports in community development can't be understated. For us, sports is not just a game. Sports can be a tool to help improve physical and mental well-being, and helps teach children at a formative age social skills, friendship, solidarity and teamwork. Sports also brings people, especially the parents, together where virtues and values can be taught. I have seen how GK has done a good job in using football and futsal to help build better citizens and future leaders from their communities."

-Danny Moran, Chairman, Henry V. Moran Foundation

"The biggest achievement of SIPAG is that we have developed leaders among our kids who are now running our programs, driven by a culture and spirit that is unique to GK. The mentorship and leadership program in SIPAG is second to none because we use sports and football to simulate life - how to deal with conflict, how to handle loss/setbacks, how to work and communicate well within a team, how to set goals and persevere to reach them. These are virtues kids take with them when leave the program - through sports they pickup all these soft leadership skills necessary to succeed in life. Another big achievement is that the spirit of volunteerism and bayanihan that is high among our kids and graduates - these are the ones who regularly volunteer their time and talent to teach other kids in their communities. I helped start the program, but it is the kids we first worked with who are now running it and mentoring the next group of kids. We can see how football can be such a powerful tool for forming the right values we need in our youth today."

-Coach Kevin Goco, Former Program Head of SIPAG

"SIPAG has been a big part of my teenage life as it helped me engage into sports early on which shaped my future dreams. Before entering the SIPAG program, it felt like I was stuck in a loop, going nowhere but GK broadened my experiences and gave me ambition. I couldn't forget when we had a chance to go to Europe for competitions, as a young Filipino kid, it was a once in a lifetime experience for me to play against top level teams in Europe. Now, I am working hard to reach my goal of being part of the Philippine Men's National Football team so i can represent my country and make my family proud."

-Cian Gabriel Galsim, SIPAG beneficiary turned Philippine National Training team member

"GK's impact in my life was very big. If not for GK, I won't be where I am. We used to live in a shanty but GK gave us a decent home. GK also taught me to go outside of my comfort zone and to fight for my future. Before my biggest dream was to ride an airplane, and after I got the opportunity, I dreamed bigger for myself. I pursued a coaching career and am now able to fly to different places. I am actively involved in SIPAG program because i want to help other kids to pursue their own dreams too, like how this program opened up doors for me. I wish for more children to be given this chance that I had where my dreams actually came true."

-Chester De Torres, SIPAG beneficiary turned Coach

"Thanks to GK, I became acquainted with the SIPAG program, which offered me the chance to uplift myself and support my family. SIPAG has transformed my aspirations into reality, granting me the opportunity to visit destinations that I only previously saw in pictures, such as Africa, France, and breathtaking locations within the Philippines. Along my journey, I encountered numerous individuals, each with their own inspiring stories that fuelled my motivation to persist in my work within Gawad Kalinga. In the future, my dream for SIPAG is to extend our reach and positively impact even more lives, turning others' dreams into tangible realities like mine. It is my firm belief that those who diligently work towards their dreams and maintain unwavering faith will witness the magic of transformation unfold in their lives."

-Coach Zara Francisco, SIPAG beneficiary turned Coach

MALETA LIBRARY

Reading as the
foundation of learning

Apart from hunger, another roadblock to children's development is the lack of basic reading and comprehension skills. Before the pandemic, reading skills among learners were already below standard. In the 2018 Program for International Students Assessment (PISA), the Philippines scored lowest in reading out of 79 countries that participated. Results of the PISA further showed that only 1 out of 5 Filipino learners aged 15 achieved at least minimum proficiency level in Overall Reading Literacy.

The problem was further aggravated by the school disruptions at the height of COVID. World Bank estimated that as of June 2022, learning poverty in the Philippines is at 90.9%. Learning poverty is defined as the percentage of 10-year-old children who cannot read or understand a simple story.

A group of core volunteers from Cebu responded to the challenge of learning poverty. They designed a program called The Maleta Library which in essence is a travelling suitcase full of books which travels from community to community. The books were classified and matched to the children according to their age group and reading level. Children of the community were free to borrow the books and share it with their families for a period of a month. Reading sessions were held on weekends with volunteers to encourage interest and love of reading. After a month, the suitcase travels to another community in need. Just within Cebu, they were able to assemble enough suitcases full of books which rotated around 18 communities for two years.

The program was then adopted by communities in Luzon and Mindanao. To date, there are 37 active sites across the country. Some of the Maleta Library reading sessions were paired with KnK feeding activities to encourage attendance and further strengthen the impact of learning among the children.

Maleta Library is a precursor to a rescue reading program that GK is currently piloting to mitigate the decline in reading abilities among children in poor communities.



37 ACTIVE
READING
SITES

*2019-2023

"The Municipality of Goa is blessed to have Gawad Kalinga because they brought the Maleta Library to the far-flung barangays of the Municipality. Initiated by the Youth Volunteers, the children from the upland barangays were given free access to a mobile library which helped them a lot during the pandemic period. It was indeed a very successful endeavor which brought volunteerism and learning in the different aspects of humanity."

-Lea Nonah Abrera Millesca, Former Admin Officer of GOA, Camarines Sur

"Basically the travelling Maleta Library is aimed at teaching basic love for books thru story telling and book reading, as well as keeping the kids from the sites competitive vs. the private schools. The project aims to bring books to the sites to give a chance to kids who may not have the resources of the books. This program will need the involvement of the entire community to follow up on the progress of the children to ensure that we lessen if not eradicate poverty in education."

-Cora Ortiz, GK Nanay Volunteers of Cebu, Pioneer group of Maleta Library

"My children seem to have imbibed an extraordinary excitement for books. They enjoy the 'learning together' experience provided by the sessions, where volunteer older children, youth or mothers guide their reading and explain the meaning of what they had just read. I get excited myself when at the end of each session, we present them books and ask them to choose a book that they wish to look at and read. This exercise feeds their curiosity. There are 23 barangays in the municipality of Allen. I have embarked on an ambitious goal to bring to zero, the percentage of non-readership among elementary pupils in our municipality."

-Darlene Patilano, GK Community Development Coordinator, Northern Samar

"It makes us happy to see our children learn to read, love books and gain self-confidence in doing so. As the reading sessions are conducted in groups, the children enjoy the learning time. The sessions have resulted in their learning new words and in improved spelling. We encourage them by giving incentives for good performance!"

-Adonis & Niceta Gono, parents of John Francis Adonis, 8 years old and Maria Nicole, 10 years old, GK Talisay, Laoan 2, Cebu City

16 SEED Philippines

Raising Agri-leaders

SEED Philippines is GK's flagship education platform that is intentionally targeted to support the agricultural sector where majority of the poor depend on for their livelihood and sustenance. SEED is dedicated to the mission of raising youth leaders for the agricultural sector who will end poverty for themselves, their families, and their communities. Students go through a curriculum that builds the needed character and competence to become food producers and community entrepreneurs. The character formation modules draw from the wealth of GK's 20 year-experience in community organizing and values transformation programs. The competence build-up relies on the national certification programs of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). The chosen scholars go through a hybrid learning experience of on-campus modules mixed with hands-on application where they establish community food farms. These food farms become a source of food and revenue for their communities, and are also used as a platform to fight hunger and food insecurity.

What started as a campus in Bulacan has since grown to become a nationwide agricultural school system with four other campuses in Bukidnon, Davao, Leyte, and Camarines Sur. Since the program started in 2014, SEED has produced 537 graduates across all campuses.

In the next decade, SEED will establish 13 more campuses to ensure its presence in every region of the country—to be at the forefront of ending poverty and improving the quality of life for farmers, fishers, and foresters.



5 SEED CAMPUSES
537 SEED GRADUATES
12K+ SQMS OF COMMUNITY FARMS DEVELOPED

*2014-2023

"Through the years, SEED has become the proof of concept that investing in the future of children through agricultural education and entrepreneurship works. As such, through its work in various parts of the country, SEED has quietly-but powerfully- been in the forefront in the advocacy for intergenerational equity and sustainable development confronting the challenge of poverty to ensure a brighter future for the next generation."

-Dean Alex Brillantes, Professor Emeritus, UP NCPAG and Chair, SEED

"Synchrony is proud to support the SEED program. Agriculture remains an essential industry, one that provides food, nutrition and health to our countries. We hope the students who participate in the SEED program learn to establish and build organic agri-businesses that can help combat food insecurity in their communities and the Philippines."

-Michael Matthews, Chief Diversity and Corporate Responsibility Officer, Synchrony

"As a home beneficiary, GK treated us like family and allowed us to redefine our path from poverty to endless possibilities. I was invited to join SEED as well. Through unwavering determination, I completed the SEED program in 2018, and it was a truly transformative experience. Through SEED and GK, I had the opportunity to change the trajectory of my family's life and my own. GK & SEED don't just help me cross that line, they helped me build my own line. Graduating from the program, I felt a deep sense of responsibility to help and inspire others who faced similar struggles as I did. It's like God had a plan all along, allowing me to experience poverty so that I could share my story and make a difference. Now, I'm proud to be part of the SEED Leadership Team, leading our operations in Mindanao. This journey has made me realize that as a Filipino, I have the right to dream big and pursue the endless possibilities life has to offer. I firmly believe that if given the chance, individuals from underprivileged backgrounds can not only shine, but shine brightly. We don't need to lower standards for the poor because that only promotes mediocrity, but really help us aspire for greater heights. My story is not just about overcoming poverty; it's about embracing my roots and sharing how God's transformation empowered me and now empowers others. From once being deprived of education, I now find myself as a Campus Director, running my own school—an inspiring testament to the life-changing impact of SEED/GK."

-John M. Paul Jose, SEED 2-year program, Batch 3, Bulacan Campus

"SEED PHILIPPINES is different from the other schools, because here our hearts and minds were opened to the reality of life. We are taught to be instruments of progress for our country. Students are taught to dream and fight for their dreams despite challenges in resources. I believe this is important specially for the young poor who need to be empowered to do more and be more. This is a good investment for the youth and our country's future. I didn't have a chance to dream before SEED because I was just too busy surviving, now I am a full time GK volunteer and a community farm organizer because I see the importance of serving a greater cause other than my own."

-Monrea Agustin, SEED 3-month program, Batch 1, Bulacan Campus

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GK Enchanted Farm

Showcasing the culture of productivity

GK Enchanted Farm (GKEF) sits on a 14-hectare property in Barangay Encanto, Angat, Bulacan, built around a community of 100 poor families. Since its inception in 2013, GKEF was designed to showcase a culture of productivity that is integral to a poor community's development pathway.

Over the years, it has been the mecca for social entrepreneurs wanting to learn, ideate and incubate social business projects that would provide livelihood and revenue to benefit the community at large. Learnings from all these projects have been distilled into a framework called productivity hubs, which by design should have:

- a strategic location that closes the distance between food source and market
- production facilities that will process low value crops into higher value retail products
- a learning institution that will train potential agri-leaders from the community to run the agri-based social enterprises within the hub

Inside GKEF is the first SEED campus, a processing facility for peanut spread and potato chips, and a mushroom farm, all run by Community Enterprise Organizers. These new generation CEOs have been trained from ground up to push the agenda of productivity and social business for their own communities.

While GKEF remains to be the primary showcase of a productivity hub, GK intends to build regional hubs across the country to serve poor farming communities around it. Staying true to the original vision, the hub will serve as a convergence platform for various stakeholders who want to participate in the advancement of agri-enterprises unique to the produce and needs of their region. Productivity hubs are a mechanism in the ecosystem of preferential value creation that BayanAnihan aims to promote.



"GK serves as my stepping stone to achieve multiple milestones in my life. First, they provided me education (SEED) that served as my biggest foundation where it sharpened my business skills, where I learned a lot of values that changed my character. Second, they gave me opportunities to learn more as a production head and kitchen manager of First Harvest. Lastly, the unwavering support that GK is giving me as a family, that we work for one goal and that is eradicating poverty. It taught me that poverty is not the reason why we have to limit ourselves in honing our capabilities to make our dream come true. Family spirit is always there."

Community-based enterprises are important to a GK community because it provides families with a source of income that will directly benefit them and they don't have to go outside the community that will cost them transportation, food, or rent. The high portion of their income would be allocated to their essential needs and they could save because it is less expensive if they work in a community-based enterprise."

–Gabriel Rabino, Community Enterprise Organizer, First Harvest Peanut Butter and Spreads

"Working at First Harvest has helped me a lot especially when my father got sick and we had a lot of medical expenses. What I earn also helps us a lot with our daily needs. It is a big relief that I found a job near my home so my expenses are much less too and I am not far away from my children."

–Jean De Guzman, Quality Assurance Officer, First Harvest Peanut Spreads and GK Angat Community Resident

"I lost my job because of COVID-19 so when the opportunity to work for potato chips came, it was a huge help for me and my family. I am thankful to GK that they never tire in looking for ways to help our community."

–Jedryck Jumadiao, Staff, First Harvest Potato Chips and GK Angat Community Resident

"I'm very thankful that I became part of this mission because GK taught me not only to dream for myself and my family but also for the poor. Growing up I experienced extreme hunger and hardships and I never thought I would be where I am now. GK is a big part of my life because it allowed me to feel rich, not with money, but with opportunities and passion for what I do. It gave me a purpose in life that is bigger and my heart is full because of it. Our work here at GKEF supports local farmers and this is important because we can prove to farmers and the industry that there is hope in the future of our agriculture. I believe now that lives of the poor can change like mine. GK also taught me that I have a responsibility to be a good example for the youth, and to maintain good relationships with all the people I work with here at the farm."

–Cristina Calvadores, SEED Graduate, GK Enchanted Farm Manager

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BayanAnihan Preferential value creation for farmers

GK is intentionally focusing on farmers and fisherfolks because they are the backbone of our food system, yet they remain to be the hungriest and poorest sector of our society. Most of them live from one harvest cycle to another, mired in debt, vulnerable to forces of nature and the volatility of market movements. Despite the importance of their trade, they still have limited access to technology, logistics, finance and marketing support that will allow them to break free from poverty.

BayanAnihan is a collaborative and transformative approach to ending rural poverty. It is a new way of looking at the agri-value chain, from sourcing to financing to retailing, making sure that equivalent worth is given back to the people who put in the most hard work. It means reviewing and changing existing practices that limit the ability of farmers to extract remuneration proportional to their labor. It is ensuring that they receive preferential value wherein the status quo keeps them at a disadvantage.

There are three pillars of change- 1) preferential value creation where we design mechanisms that will increase returns and remove risks from farmers/fisherfolks 2) a culture of sustainable productivity where we celebrate the dignity of production and self-reliance and lastly 3) compassion in commerce where we move from financing to investments, treating them not as laborers but as partners in the venture.

BayanAnihan in literal terms means "harvest for all". By giving preferential value to farmers/fisherfolks, there is an opportunity to lift the lives of their families, and encourage even the children to continue their trade. This ensures advancement and sustainability of the industry which benefits everyone in the end.

GK will continue to work with farmers/fisherfolks all over the country and connect them to regional productivity hubs such as GKEF where they can avail of training, processing and marketing support to maximize the return on their harvest.



733 FARMERS
ORGANIZED
831K KILOS OF HARVEST
TRADED & PROCESSED

*2021-2023

"It has been my honor to be associated with BayanAnihan, whose mission is adding value to agriculture products harvested by Gawad Kalinga communities. Only through building up scale and investing in quality can we sustain the return of value of produce arduously planted by the communities. In my short involvement with BayanAnihan, I am truly impressed by how the management team implemented the rigorous task of building the organization, the processing facilities and the systems to fulfill this mission."

-Phillip Ong, Santeh Feeds Corporation Chairman, and BayanAnihan Chairman

"Our meaningful partnership with Gawad Kalinga is the perfect blend of flavor and purpose. At Potato Corner, we firmly believe in enhancing lives not only through our flavorful products but also by extending unwavering support to farmers and communities in need. We're committed to making a positive impact and spreading joyful moments through every bite."

-Joey Alvero, Potato Corner, COO

"The brand Oh Crop really started with our Filipino farmers in mind. It's been a dream to be able to help them live better lives. And what an honor to partner with Gawad Kalinga because through this partnership we're able to grow adlai production at a faster rate and thus help hundreds of Filipino farmers, and hopefully, thousands soon."

-Chari Trinidad-Mendoza, Oh Crop, CEO

"GK changed my perspective in life, to be more conscious of others' needs, and not just my own. As a child of a farmer, I want to help my family and other farmers do better in life. I am assigned to work and trade directly with farmers from different provinces through our BayanAnihan program. These farmers that we work with say that we help them not only by buying their produce but more importantly, we give importance to the work of their hands which increases their pride in their work. It also helps that we provide assistance in whatever way we can, our support gives them more confidence, and they appreciate that we really have their best interest at heart."

-Kenn Pedral, BayanAnihan worker

"Masigasig po ang GK sa pakikipag-usap at pagpapalakas ng aming loob, pagbibigay-pag-asa na nasa pagsisikap at pagtutulungan namin ang ikatutupad ng aming mga pangarap para sa maayos na bukas ng aming mga anak."

(GK is persistent in encouraging us and giving us hope that by working hard and helping each other, we will be able to make our dream of a good future for our children come true.)

-Allan Sesilan, Farmer, San Lorenzo, Camarines Norte

19 Yamang Kalusugan

Bringing back the basics of health

During the COVID pandemic, health became the topmost concern of many if not all. GK then revived its previous community health program to make it adapt to the times. The modules were simplified to increase appreciation of the students and to enable even non-technical volunteers to teach it. The method was also designed for both face to face and online classes for faster dissemination. The content was tailored towards lifestyle changes that are doable, affordable, and relevant to the health concerns of the community.

The new program was called "Yamang Kalusugan/Health is Wealth" to emphasize the importance of health in eradicating poverty because their health affects their overall state of mind and ability to produce and perform their tasks. Having a fully functioning mind and body is one of their greatest resources.

YK focuses on strengthening not just the physical self but also the mental and emotional aspect of their well-being. The lessons covered nutrition, sleep, meditation, exercise, relationships and stress management, all with video lessons, handbooks, activities and assessment forms to help guide their understanding and progress. Another important component of the program's design is having accountability group sessions to reinforce the application of their knowledge and to provide encouragement for their health journey.

Community health training has reached over 30 municipalities nationwide. There have been positive results such as improvement in blood pressure, sugar or cholesterol levels among individuals with health challenges. Most encouraging feedback have been that of mothers who said that their health habits such as choice of food have changed for the better.



1.5K+ CHAMPIONS
TRAINED

*2015-2023

"Operation Better World is Ford's global umbrella program that allows the company and its employees to be involved and immersed in various community development programs. Ford Philippines holds a long-standing and mutually-beneficial partnership with Gawad Kalinga (GK) as part of its efforts to help transform the lives of communities, families, and individuals. Since 2013, projects under Operation Better World have successfully supported the healthcare needs of GK communities: from providing access to clean water, conducting medical and dental missions and training of health volunteers. At Ford, we remain committed to help make a difference in the communities we serve and uplift the lives of those in need."

**-Josephine B. Gonzalez,
Government & Corporate Affairs Director,
Ford Group Philippines**

"Ang nabago sa kagawian namin ang pagtanim ng mga halamang gulay na mga masustansya, napatibay nito ang kalusugan ng aming pamilya. Halimbawa, kapag mayroong magkakasakit sa aming pamilya mayroon kaming pagkukunan ng mga halamang gulay katulad ng okra, malunggay, luya at alughati. Ito ay pwedeng pang ulam o panggamot sa may sakit kaya ito ang palagi nating sinasabi kapag my tinanim may aanihin, kaya malaking tulong ito sa aming kalusugan."

(We started planting vegetables in our backyard and this helped the health of our family. When someone gets sick, we have nutritious vegetables like okra, moringa, ginger and alughati. We can use this for our meals and to heal us when we're sick. It's true that if you sow something good, you will reap something good too. We are healthier because of this.)

**-Alma Rubio Baldesimo, YK-Champion,
GK Handumanan Village, Panay Capiz**

"Our partnership with Gawad Kalinga is integral to the health ecosystem that we want to build. The 'Mental-Behavioral-Nutritional' or MBN Framework that we want to espouse will help the community re-frame their perspective on health. It will teach them how to make better health choices by having a higher level of consciousness on the factors that affect their overall state of wellness. It has been very heartwarming to read about all the positive testimonials from the communities on how their health has improved even through the simple changes they have made on their diet and lifestyle."

**-Mitch Genato, CEO Romlas Holdings,
LifeScience Institute**

"We should be aware not just of what we eat but also the other things we consume like social media. We became more aware of the ingredients for cooking and the effect of processed food in our bodies. Apart from nutrition, we have to think about all the aspects of our being-physical, mental, emotional, even financial. We need to listen to the signs of our body. We learned all of this from YK and we are thankful for all the information. This has helped our family and our community in GK Capiz."

**-Myra D. Balderas, YK-Champion,
GK Dinginan Village**

"We learned a lot of important lessons from YK, one of which is taking care of one's mental health. Now, I have a more positive view of life, I'm more calm in resolving conflict and facing challenges. It's not easy to accept changes but always keep an open heart and mind. I have better relationships now with family, friends, officemates and other people I encounter. Physically, my health and my family's is better too. I hope this helps more people like me."

-Sim Vito, GK YK Volunteer Trainer, Capiz

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3ZERO

Forming alliances
towards zero



3 REGIONAL
FORUMS
5K+ PARTICIPANTS
*2020-2023

GK, together with French NGO ACTED International Foundation, co-founded the 3Zero Global Alliance which aims to mobilize public, private and civil society partners to ensure a just social, ecological, and political future for all, most especially the poorest people globally. The 3Zeros – Zero Exclusion, Zero Carbon and Zero Poverty – aim to consolidate urgent issues of our generation into 3 goals that are easily understandable and identifiable for all stakeholders.

There are three roles of the Alliance –

- to connect partners across sectors and countries, with the aim of breaking silos
- to unleash human potential through sharing of experiences, learnings, and resources
- to innovate through experimentation, piloting, and scaling up solutions to local and global challenges

To power the 3ZERO movement in the Philippines, three forums have been organized to bring different actors together to address some of the most pressing issues. Five micro grants have been awarded to support the development of solutions and it is in Manila that the first 3ZERO House was launched as a collaborative hub that embodies the 3ZERO objective within a physical space. It aims to accelerate and facilitate partnerships, innovations, and solutions between different stakeholders. Trainings and workshops are being conducted in the 3ZERO house with local partners, and several shared services are being developed and offered. This pilot 3ZERO house is being replicated in several countries across the globe.

"We became part of the 3Zero Alliance to create a strong support system for delivering positive impact to our communities. Collaboration with ecosystem partners is essential to drive systems change. As we unite efforts, we realize the power of collective action, making our end goal achievable and our impact profound. Thanks to the 3Zero Alliance, we've had incredible platforms to showcase our impact work and connect with potential partners who champion our mission. Not only did it give us the opportunity to share our best practices, but also to learn and replicate our impact formula, amplifying the reach of our positive influence."

–Ryan Gersava, Founder and Chairman, Virtualahan

"We joined the 3Zero Alliance because we resonate with its cause for a zero poverty, exclusion, and carbon world. That is, in a nutshell, what sustainability is all about. More so, our mission aligns well with 3Zero's nature, being that of a network of organizations and people who are all working together towards changing the world for the better. By helping, being helped by, and collaborating with the rest of the organizations in the 3Zero Alliance, we believe we stand a better chance at creating a more sustainable Philippines and world."

Every individual and organization carries its own expertise, lived experience, and strength. By leveraging each other's strength and capabilities, it becomes easier for us to achieve our individual missions and our collective vision for a sustainable and 3Zero Philippines and world. This ability to connect, learn from, and collaborate from a multitude of like-minded and like-hearted organizations and individuals through the 3Zero Alliance is the core benefit I see in being a part of such a rich network."

–Shawntel Nieto, President, Sustainable PH

"Gawad Kalinga's work on the ground and vision have gone far beyond the borders of the Philippines with an active participation in global events and global forums like the 3ZERO World Forum organised by Convergences. This is where Acted and Gawad Kalinga crossed path for the first time in Paris and the alignment of values made it easier to work together. Gawad Kalinga has been a strategic partner for Acted in the Philippines since then, from joint project implementation to the organisation of 3ZERO Forums in the country and even the launch of a global alliance together towards Zero exclusion, Zero Carbon and Zero Poverty."

–Fabien Courteille, Country Director, ACTED Philippines