

# CHANGED

## CHANGING COMMUNITIES

Stories of partnerships that helped transform communities











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

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

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

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

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

## ABOUT THE COVER

---



This month's issue of the CHANGED Magazine carries the theme, "Changing Communities," and features stories of how our programs and partnerships with companies and organizations helped in transforming different kinds of communities in the country.

**All of the interviews for the articles featured in this issue were conducted before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country.**

## EDITORIAL TEAM

---

### **Editorial Advisors:**

Reynaldo Antonio Laguda  
Anna Cristina Ganzon-Ozaeta

### **Managing Editor:**

Jedidaiah Joy Herrera

### **Writers/Photographers:**

Christopher Articono  
Kimberly Dawn Bontanon  
Jedidaiah Joy Herrera  
Janina Joelle Lu

### **Graphic Designer:**

Jazh Miguel Vilorio

### **Production Coordinator:**

Juvy Domingo

### **Contributors:**

Corporate Citizenship and CS Grants Management  
and Implementation Team



# WHAT'S INSIDE

**CHANGED**  
NINETEENTH EDITION

## 6 SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE

- 8 THE RIPPLE EFFECT
- 10 BUILDING HEALTHIER SCHOOLS
- 12 EMPOWERED BY PASSION
- 14 THE FRUIT OF STEM
- 16 BLESSED TO BLESSED OTHERS
- 18 REACHING THE YOUTH
- 20 THE CYCLE OF LEARNING



- HELPING HER COMMUNITY THROUGH CSR 24
- A CHAMPION OF FAMILY HEALTH 26

## 22 EMPOWERING MOTHERS




## 28 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- 30 AGENT OF CHANGE
- 32 REDEFINING BEAUTY
- 34 BREAKING BARRIERS

## 36 TB CONTROL

- 38 AN INSTRUMENT OF CHANGE





**T**he children of today will grow up to become the hope of tomorrow. However, the lack of basic needs and access to education will hinder their growth and development.

Through programs that assist and provide schools with the needs of the children, PBSP and its member-companies and partners are able to ensure that students are able to learn in an environment conducive to learning.

In the next few pages, take a look at how the Nourishing Minds supplemental feeding program, Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) UP program, and the Bikes for Progress assisted students and motivated them to learn and dream again.



# SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE



# THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Hershey's CSR pioneer feels greater fulfillment with the support of the company and colleagues



**S**heryll Romero's first experience with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was in 2008 when she headed the adhoc committee of an assistance project in Elsie Gaches Village (EGV) in Muntinlupa.

"The Hershey Company (THC) went to Elsie Gaches and we renovated their garden and built a water station. It was the first CSR project of THC in the Philippines," shared Sheryll who works as the Consumer Relations Associate of THC.

This project was eventually followed by other CSR programs. Each year, they would work with different organizations to help the community in Elsie Gaches Village.

## A CSR LEADER

Since Sheryll started working at THC in 2005, she had no idea she would become the leader of the company's CSR team.

"Before, we would just hold parties and outreach activities with select beneficiaries. But when we had the project in Elsie Gaches, the company seemed happy about it so I was tapped to formally lead the CSR programs of THC," shared Sheryll.

## SIX YEARS OF NOURISHING MINDS

Hoping to reach more people with

their CSR projects, Sheryll decided to tap the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) to assist them.

"I read about the work that PBSP was doing and I was really interested to partner with them. Eventually, we started implementing a supplemental feeding program in Baseco," said Sheryll.

In 2015, THC, in partnership with PBSP, launched the "Nourishing Minds" program, a supplemental feeding program for preschoolers of Daycare 5 and 6 in Cluster 3 of the Manila Health Department in Baseco, Tondo, Manila.

"Our CSR projects really focus on education, children, and nutrition. Through the feeding program, we are able to provide the nutritional needs of the children and also help in educating them. We believe that when children are nourished and healthy, their cognitive skills and participation in school will also improve," said Sheryll.

True to this, reports of the project show that since the supplemental feeding program was implemented in Baseco, the students' attendance have gone up. The students also became more active at school.

The feeding program provides



healthy and nutritious food to 180 kindergarten students each year. Aside from providing them with food, THC also donated school equipment and funded the renovations of the classrooms. The renovations added a washing area for the children and a small kitchen where the parents and volunteers can prepare the meals of the students.

"We are very happy with the results of the project that we decided to adopt the school. Initially, it was difficult to hold employee visits because the rooms were dark and small. They had no proper ventilation and the comfort rooms were not functional. So, we improved its facilities. Now, the school is more alive. Almost everything is fixed," shared Sheryll.

### WORKING WITH PBSP

Sheryll sees their partnership with PBSP as a fulfilling experience.

During the implementation of the feeding program, Sheryll worked closely with PBSP from the design up to the implementation and monitoring.

"I have never had problems with the implementation of the projects. When I work with PBSP, I know that the funds are spent appropriately and I know that every cent goes to the project," Sheryll added.

PBSP also helped Sheryll and THC expand their program to include a safe motherhood caravan component for the mothers of the students.

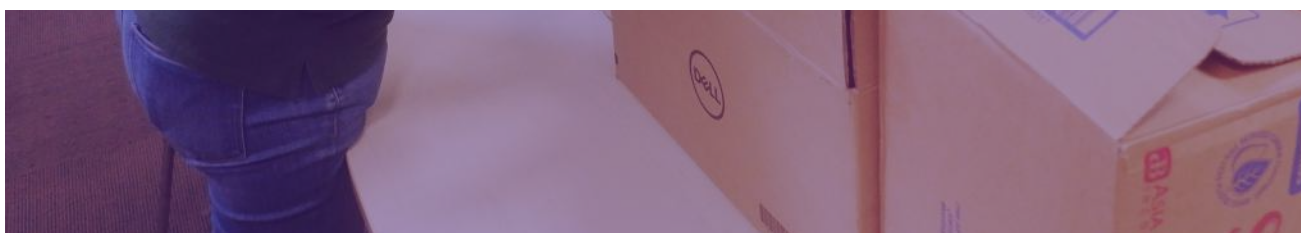
### SENSE OF FULFILLMENT

With the company's support and the commitment of the employees, the Nourishing Minds project was able to assist many beneficiaries in the area.

"I feel very much empowered with the support of Hershey's and our employees who volunteer their time to assist in the project. This initiates a ripple effect where I am empowered to empower the employees who also want to empower the people that we help," said Sheryll.

For Sheryll, there's no greater fulfillment than seeing her colleagues helping out and sharing their blessings with others.

"I am happy with the results of the projects, especially with the improvement of the kids. Now, they look very healthy and very happy and the teachers also look happy because the environment and their situation is better now. So that gives us a sense of fulfillment that we are doing the right thing," Sheryll added.



# BUILDING HEALTHIER SCHOOLS

Hershey's and PBSP provide nourishing food to support underprivileged students in Baseco, Manila



Six years ago, preschoolers in Manila Daycare Center V and VI would drop out from school because of poverty and malnutrition. Absences were frequent among students. Little by little, the number of students coming to class also decreased throughout the school year. The teachers of the daycare center

went to the homes of the students and found out that some of the parents have no money to send their children to school.

This changed when The Hershey Company (THC), in partnership with the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), adopted the school

and implemented the Nourishing Minds supplemental feeding program.

## BRIGHT FUTURES START WITH BASIC NEEDS

The high levels of stunting (too short for their age) and wasting (too thin for their height) among children under the age of five remain a problem in the Philippines.





According to the Philippine Plan of Action For Nutrition 2017-2022 of the National Nutrition Council, 33.4% of Filipino children under the age of five in the country are stunted while 7.1% are wasted. Lack of food and nutrients prevent the growth and development of the children, causing them to become malnourished and affecting their physical and mental development.

Recognizing the importance of proper nutrition for the growth and development of the preschoolers, THC and PBSP provide nutritious and healthy food to the preschoolers every day.

"The feeding program is a very big help to the parents. They don't have to worry anymore about food expenses because their kids are fed here. We follow a standard nutrition and feeding cycle from the Manila Department of Social Welfare (MDSW). We serve nutritious food and the kids are learning to eat veggies. Parent-volunteers who help in the preparation of the food get to watch over their children and assist their

classmates as well," shared Ana Bachoco, a teacher at the daycare center.

The project has assisted over 800 preschoolers in Baseco since its inception. There were also no more recorded dropouts from the daycare center since the supplemental feeding program was implemented.

The Hershey Company and PBSP also funded the improvement of the daycare classrooms and surroundings. The roof, ceiling, and the comfort rooms were renovated. Roads and the hallway were cemented. A kitchen and several shelves were constructed inside the classrooms. A computer, LED TV, ceiling fans and a freezer were also donated to the daycare center.

"Now, our daycare center is one of the best in terms of facilities. More and more parents bring their kids here every day to encourage them to enroll. Hershey's and PBSP are big blessings to us. They don't only feed our kids, they are solving the bigger problem

of the community which is the lack of education of our youth," Ana added.

### **EMPOWERING MOTHERS**

Aside from the supplemental feeding program, THC and PBSP also engaged the mothers of the preschoolers. They were encouraged to participate in the preparation of the meals of the students and were also educated on how to observe proper nutrition for their children.

To complement the supplemental feeding program, THC and PBSP also conducted safe motherhood caravans to educate the mothers on Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health and Nutrition (MNCHN) services.

"Aside from the feeding program, we also received sessions on safe motherhood. We were able to learn how to care not only for our children but for our well-being, as well. We learned that maternal health is also important," said Gina Belbora, one of the mothers assisted by THC and PBSP in Baseco.

# EMPOWERED BY PASSION

Foundation Lead draws motivation to do more from like-minded individuals with the passion to help others

Growing up, Maureen Anne “Maan” Besabe would always find ways to make use of her free time to help others. She was only 15 when she began her volunteer work as an English and Science teacher to kids during summer vacations. Since then, she has been active in advocating for education.

But aside from advocacies in education, Maan also supports programs for recovery and trauma healing of young girls and women who were victims of abuse and human trafficking.

“There are so many things that we can give. We can give time and money. We can give other resources to help people but at the end, it is always about how you can give it. So, from my end, I would like to give my time in a way that I can make it valuable. I also make sure that the people I work with will have a valuable experience from doing volunteer work,” shared Maan.

## PASSION TO HELP

When she was a kid, Maan wanted to become a doctor to help others. However, after finishing her degree in Psychology, she found work as a Human Resource Officer for an organization. For nine years, she was a headhunter and handled employee relations.

In 2014, Maan moved to Telstra Foundation Philippines and eventually became the Foundation Lead where she works on various programs for education. The Foundation aims to provide a lasting and positive difference to the lives of the Filipino youth, especially through education. Through the years, they have implemented projects like school-based feeding, providing incubation projects, and providing learning materials.

One of their ongoing projects is the Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) UP program, implemented in partnership with the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) at Pasay City South High School (PCSHS).

“We discovered that there’s a huge lack of scientists or people within STEM in the Philippines and younger generations pursuing careers in STEM. As a technology company, we feel that we can actually help fill that gap. So we started focusing all our efforts to STEM, not only in Manila but also in Cebu and across the Philippines,” Maan said.

Telstra Foundation Philippines and PBSP started implementing the STEM UP program for Grade 11 students at PCSHS to help introduce the STEM track to the younger





generations and encourage them to take that path when they enroll in Senior High and College.

Telstra and PBSP also implemented an 11-week STEM Boot Camp for Grade 12 students to encourage them to pursue a career in the STEM disciplines and mentored them in developing their investigative projects.

## PARTNERSHIP LIKE NO OTHER

The success of social development initiatives also depend on the support and participation of various partners. Maan believes that the partnership with PBSP has been very significant for Telstra Foundation Philippines.

"I am really amazed and happy that we got into the STEM UP project because it is unique and purposeful for everyone. The partnership with PBSP is a partnership like no other. It is very collaborative. We have been partners for so long that we already know how to communicate ideas and it is nice that we get to step in to different projects or new projects

together and discover what else we can do apart from the things that we know and have been doing for quite some time," Maan shared.

Through the project, Maan also learned the importance of seeing beneficiaries as partners.

"They are partners who help us understand what needs to be done. Their feedbacks help us make sure that the project we provide is really helpful and will not go to waste," said Maan.

## MOTIVATED BY THE PASSION OF OTHERS

Ever since high school, to working as an HR officer, up to being the Team Lead for Telstra Foundation Philippines, Maan continues to do volunteer work. Her aspiration to help more people is driven by the same people with the same passion to help others.

"Working for Telstra made me realize that I share the same passion with a lot of people. I am more motivated

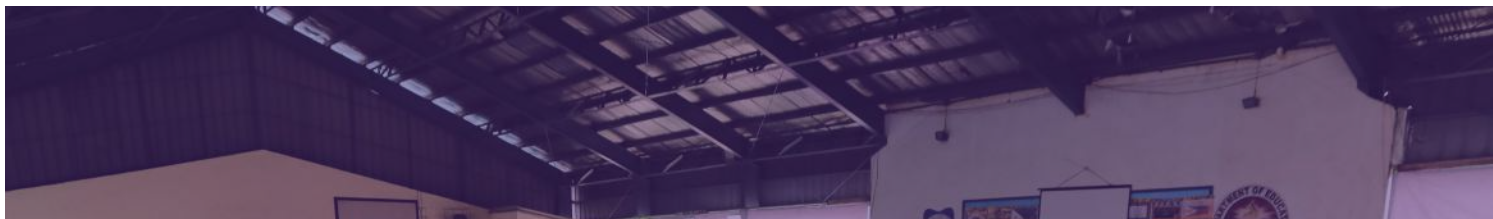
because we work as a team, as a family. I think that changed me as a person knowing that we can do more," shared Maan.

Maan is grateful to the Telstra employees who showed her the passion of volunteering. She realized that the success of the projects would not be as great if not for the volunteers.

"Telstra gave me the opportunity to help, encourage, and influence more people to help others and I think, I am being empowered that way," said Maan.

Aside from her work in Telstra, Maan also volunteers her time to other organizations and projects.

"It is another way for me to understand the world better. I like travelling, so whenever I go to places, I try to help in whatever way I can. Since most of what I can give is my time, even after my work with Telstra, I would squeeze in other volunteer work during weekends," shared Maan.



# THE FRUIT OF STEM

School official shares school transformation brought about by the STEM assistance program

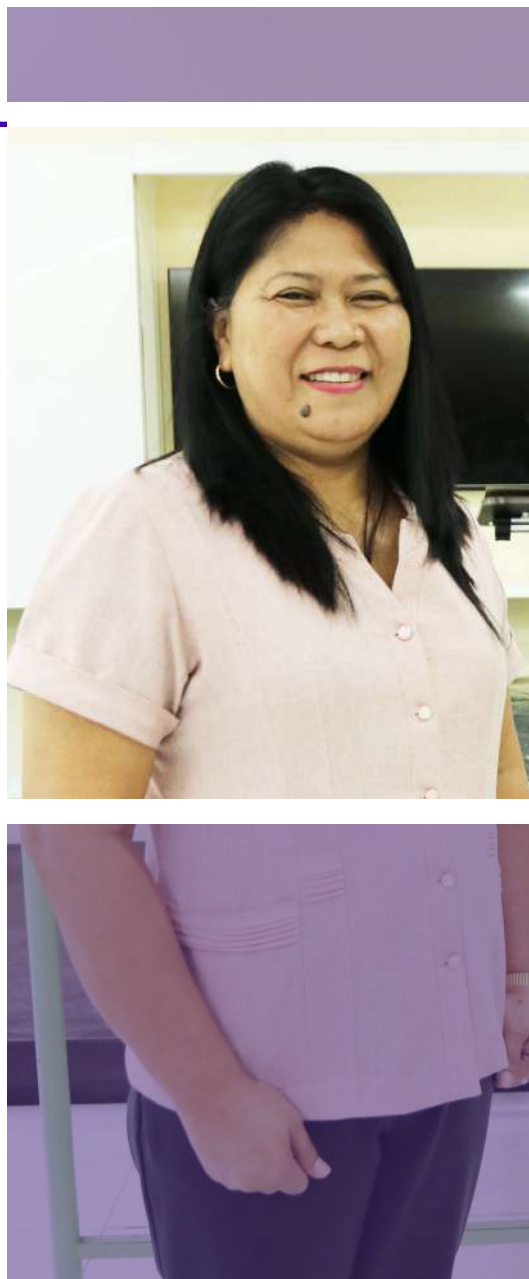
Adapting to the changes brought by the integration of the K-to-12 curriculum is a constant challenge for several public schools in the country. Aside from the lack of teachers trained in the various strands of Senior High School, most schools are not equipped with facilities and materials needed to teach the students.

Such was the case of Pasay City South High School (PCSHS).

"When we transitioned to the K-to-12 curriculum, we could only offer four strands to our Senior High students. These were the Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM), and Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMMS). For the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) strand, we could only offer Home Economics (HE) and Industrial Arts (IA) because we lack the facilities to offer the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) track," shared Editha Alimbuyuguen, Subject Group Head for STEM of PCSHS.

## CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Aside from the challenge of transitioning to the new curriculum, the school also lacked classrooms to accommodate its growing number of students.



"Back in 2014, we had to hold classes in 20 makeshift classrooms because there were problems with the strength of the buildings. There were even times when three classes would hold lessons simultaneously in one classroom because we had no available rooms for the students. It was really awful," Editha added.

In 2016, the classrooms of PCSHS were renovated and cleared for occupancy. Then school principal Agapito Manaog applied for the addition of the STEM strand for PCSHS. After the addition of the STEM Strand, Editha was appointed Subject Group Head (SGH) for STEM.

"Our principal believed that our students deserved to have a STEM track. When we first implemented it, we made use of what we had - TV screens for film showing and borrowed equipment from the Junior High School. But it was a challenge for us because the subjects require experiments and laboratory activities for the students," shared Editha.

## ENABLING THE SCHOOL

In 2018, Telstra Foundation Philippines, in partnership with the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), launched the STEM Boot Camp for the junior and senior high school students of



PCSHS. This was followed by the STEM UP program for the junior high schoolers in 2019.

During the boot camp and STEM UP, well-known Filipino scientists and STEM practitioners were invited to conduct series of workshops and simulation activities in formulating science-based solutions to problems in their communities.

"The workshops were very helpful for the students especially during their research and the Science Investigatory Projects (SIP). During the simulation activities in the workshops, we were amazed at how fast the students were able to present their proposed solutions to the problems presented to them," Editha shared.

Aside from the workshops, Telstra Foundation Philippines also funded the training of STEM teachers and assisted in the renovation of several classrooms and the STEM laboratory for Senior High. The Foundation also donated microscopes, LED TV screens, projectors, and a document camera for audio-visual presentations.

"Our students are really skilled and resourceful. When we had lack of facilities and equipment, they were able to make do with what had to learn. But thanks to the interventions of Telstra and PBSP, their skills will be developed further. Our duty as teachers is to ensure the proper use of these equipment and give the best learning experience to our students," Editha said.

#### HEARTFELT CHANGES

Following the STEM workshops, the students of PCSHS has competed and won various Division, Regional, and National Science competitions. They were also one of the 20 finalists in the Breakthrough Junior Challenge in 2019, an annual global competition for students to inspire creative thinking about science.

In November 2019, PCSHS also won the Outstanding Student Creative Research or Sibol Award for High School for their "Smart Charger" invention. The smart charger invention has a built-in alarm system and a fire-prevention measure which alerts and reminds users when their phone is overcharging. The same invention also qualified for the

International Science and Invention Fair (ISIF), which will be held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia on June 28 to July 4, 2020. The school also has another entry in the engineering category called the "Pulverized Watermelon Pumpkin Seeds" which can serve as an aggregate in commercial concrete production.

"We were able to do it with the help of the STEM workshops. We know that our students will keep on honing their craft. It is inspiring for us to see that our students were able to win these competitions through their motivation," said Editha.

Being the SGH of STEM in PCHS, Editha sees these interventions as a great start for their school which is still adopting to changes of the K-to-12 curriculum.

"We are so grateful to the generosity of Telstra and PBSP, including the employee-volunteers who came during the workshops. Their interventions uplifted my spirit to do more and dream more for our school. More than the STEM workshops and the equipment they donated, we felt the care and their sincerity to help us," shared Editha.



# I BLESSED TO BLESS OTHERS

A bank executive shares life experiences that inspired her to pursue personal advocacies through CSR.



**W**hen she was a kid, Mai Sangalang wanted to be a nun because of her devotion to Jesus Christ and Saint Clare of Assisi. She thought that was her only way to serve God but as she grows up, Mai realized and started to believe that she can serve God by helping more people outside the convent.

"So now, any call for help, I try to do my part. No matter how little it may be, I will help and share my blessings," said Mai, Head of Corporate Affairs, Brand and Marketing of Standard Chartered Bank Philippines.

## PASSION FOR WRITING

Mai has a solid background in writing and journalism. At 10, she was already writing poems and declamation pieces. She served as the editor-in-chief of all publications in college and won numerous awards in creative writing. Mai graduated with a degree in Communication Arts at Miriam College in Katipunan and had short stint writing scripts for radio and TV in top broadcast media networks.

"My biggest passion is writing – I don't like talking too much, it drains my energy. Writing allows me to express my thoughts, it is my creative expression. My mom is a good writer. She used to contribute to Panorama magazine and my dad was a radio commentator. I probably got my mom's creative writing skills and my dad's logic and reasoning," shared Mai.

After graduation, she worked as a communications officer handling internal and external affairs of a financial institution.

"I think my mom got disappointed when I ended up working in a bank because she wanted me to make a name in mainstream media. But while I was working in the bank, I still accepted part-time writing jobs for TV and was actually offered to write full-time for a morning show. But at that time, I already knew that writing for tv was not for me due to incongruent personal and work values. Banking is a better environment for me," Mai recalled.

## HEART FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Throughout her career, social development holds a special spot in her heart. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), she said, is the most fulfilling part of her job.

Mai said that she does not like going to work for the sake of keeping a job.

"I am very passionate in everything I do, but the CSR component is the one closest to my heart. I don't want to wake up in the morning dragging my feet to work. It's nice to go to work when you are happy with what you do no matter how exhausting it is. I am not willing to compromise those things," Mai added.

## A PARTNERSHIP THAT GIVES HOPE TO CHILDREN

Mai has worked with PBSP since 2005 for some of her CSR projects in another foreign bank.

"PBSP encourages collaboration and allows partners to be part of the process, from conceptualizing projects up to the implementation. I don't know any other non-profit organization who can do that for a corporate donor," said Mai.

Mai also shared that working with PBSP allows her to align her local sustainability projects with the global focus areas of Standard Chartered Bank. One of the recent projects that SCB and PBSP worked on is Bikes for Progress.

In 2019, the Bikes for Progress project donated more than 200 bicycles to public high school students living in remote areas and TESDA scholars who would walk kilometers and hours to get to school. The recipients were selected through the recommendation of the faculty and school administrators. The project has assisted students from Enrique Villanueva National High School and Ponong High School in Siquijor, Pandan High School in Castilla, Sorsogon, and Maronquillo National High School in San Rafael, Bulacan.



"I always believed that you don't force fit a program to your beneficiaries. You have to listen to what your stakeholders are saying and then you design your program based on what they need so it will be more meaningful and impactful," she said.

Aside from the bicycles, SCB also provided safety accessories such as helmets and reflectorized vests and conducted bike safety and maintenance training for the students.

About 80% of the Filipino poor who live in the rural areas of the country most often have limited access to social services including education. Most families cannot afford to send their children to school and if able, students usually have inadequate school supplies to use or uniforms to wear, and often go to school hungry. Transportation is a big problem in far-flung areas and if available, it is usually very expensive and not affordable. Hence, the children are forced to wake up early to walk for hours and miles just to attend classes. This daily routine eventually takes a toll on these young learners. Some just lose interest and they eventually drop out.

For other people, the bicycles might just be bicycles. But Mai believes that for the children that they have assisted, it is more than just a ride going to school.

"Our mission is for disadvantaged students to complete basic education. A

lot of them go through daily challenges to stay in school, and these bicycles are their symbol of hope and their ticket to a high school diploma," Mai said.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN

Mai also personally advocates women empowerment and believes that there shouldn't be barriers to economic, political and social participation on grounds of gender alone. But she also thinks that some women can be misguided by their sense of authority fighting for that gender equality.

"A lot of women miss out on this, thinking that they can only draw fulfillment from their career. I think women can feel empowered in many ways. Women should pursue their personal ambitions, build their self-esteem, be given the chance to earn and provide for their family, reward their hard work and have the opportunity to give back to others. Women are capable and deserve to have that balance," Mai explained.

With the rise of women now playing bigger roles in society, Mai also believes that it is very important for women to step up. Whether it's about keeping her family whole, serving the community, the church, or taking a leadership role at work.

"It is important for women to take space in the society and find her voice. My experiences in life taught me to fight for that space for myself, to be competitive,

not to accept that there is a weaker gender, to rise above the challenges and to assert what I think I deserve or owe to myself. For me, that's the kind of empowerment that every woman should have," Mai said.

## GIVING BACK

Mai believes that everyone should be given the opportunity and a fair chance in life.

She was able to finish her studies because of her brother who opted to work overseas at a young age as an international pianist to support the family.

"After high school graduation, I was lost. My family was hard up, I am the youngest of 9, and I thought I will not have the opportunity to go to college anymore even if I was studious and had good grades. If not for my brother who put me through college, I don't think I will be given a chance in life to get to where I am today. I will be forever grateful and indebted to him. And I know, he too was used by God to be a blessing to me, to my family and to other people."

Her life experiences helped her realize that God really uses other people to give hope and inspiration to others. This also serves as Mai's inspiration in giving back and helping others reach their full potential in life.

"Many years ago, I wondered how I'd be able to survive life. I know that I have been blessed with a comfortable life not because of my efforts alone. I believe, I was blessed to be a blessing to other people," said Mai.



# REACHING THE YOUTH

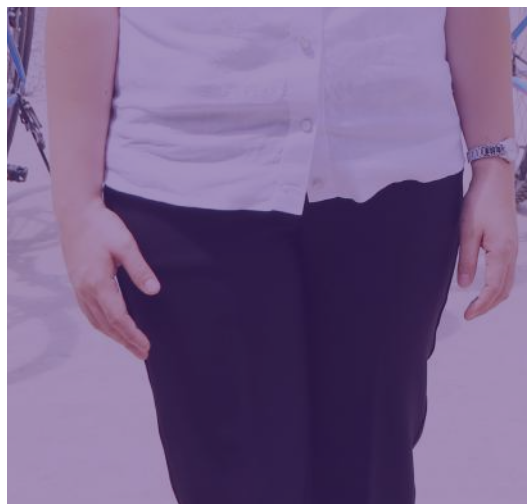
San Rafael, Bulacan's youngest councilor leads community projects that empower the youth

Growing up, Lady Aiza Mapoy was surrounded by strong, empowered women who strived to make a change in their hometown in San Rafael, Bulacan. Her mother Dionisia Santiago Mapoy, president of Kababaihang Lingkod ng Barangay (Kabalingay), was very active in community work. Aiza would often tag along with her mother, gaining the moniker kabalinget or little Kabalingay.

Her experience with Kabalingay helped her realize that women are strong enough to lead and make a difference in their community. It also planted the seed of passion to help others, which eventually grew and became one of her inspirations in her current work as a municipal councilor.

## A YOUNG PUBLIC SERVANT

In 2007, Aiza was elected as the Sanggunian Kabataan (SK) Chairman in their community. During her term, she implemented activities like inter-barangay sports tournament for the youth and coordinated with the municipal hall and the provincial capitol for assistance in implementing Technical Education and Skills



Development Authority (TESDA) and livelihood training for the youth in their community. She also implemented tree planting and weekly clean-up activities.

After her term in the Sangguniang Kabataan, Aiza focused on finishing her degree in Tourism Management. She wanted to pursue her childhood dream of becoming a flight attendant. When she graduated from college, she found work at a nearby hotel and golf club. She had no intentions of running for another government position.

"Running for municipal councilor was never part of the plan. I was supposed to go back to Singapore where I had my on-the-job training. But Congresswoman Lorna Silverio, who was our Mayor during that time, asked me to consider running for councilor. She said that I can always go back to Singapore in case I lose the election. But I won. I am the youngest councilor in San Rafael and I am now on my third term," said Aiza.

## GIVING HOPE TO THE YOUTH

One of the pressing problems that Aiza noticed in San Rafael is the inaccessibility of Maronquillo



High School to its underprivileged students. The school in Maronquillo is situated far from the community and households. They have students who walk to school for two hours because they don't have the money to pay for a ride.

Aiza believed it was heaven-sent when she saw an episode of Business Matters featuring the Bikes for Progress project of Standard Chartered Bank and the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP). Bikes for Progress provided bicycles to underprivileged students who have difficulty going to school due to lack of roads and basic services.

"After watching the episode, I immediately searched for SCB and PBSP online. I found Mai Sangalang's account on Facebook and messaged her for a possible partnership to provide bicycles to the students in Maronquillo," she narrated.

Mai responded to Aiza's message, informing her that SCB and PBSP will look into her request. A few months later, the project came to fruition when SCB and PBSP donated 50 bicycles complete with safety gears to the school.

"The project really had an impact not only to the students but also to their families. It helped save time and

money. Parents who had a harder time sending their children to school because of financial problems no longer need to worry for the fares of their kids. The children who used to walk for two hours just to reach the school can now ride their bicycles," shared Aiza.

Aiza also saw how the bicycles motivated the students to study hard and how it helped shape their dreams. She recounted how some of the students came up to her and said that they want to become a lawyer to defend the poor, or an engineer to build strong houses, or become a teacher to teach others.

"The bicycles gave the students hope to pursue their dreams. That simple project gave them the big possibility that they can also have a future," said Aiza.

Aside from the bicycles, SCB and PBSP also donated cooking utensils and sewing machines for the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) Track Strand of the school.

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Being the youngest and number one councilor in their municipality was difficult. Her position was not a guarantee that her projects and proposals would be approved or funded. Sometimes, she would

even shell out money from her own pocket to fund her projects. It was hard and challenging, especially for someone who is still considered a rookie compared to her fellow public servants.

"During my first term, I knew that there were people who doubted my capabilities because of my lack of experience. I was pressured at first but I took that as a challenge and strived to be better. I attended trainings, seminars, and workshops on governance and legislation. I learned and looked for partners who can help fund my projects," shared Aiza.

Aiza continued implementing TESDA trainings during her term as municipal councilor. She also worked with Wanlu, a ventriloquist, to conduct hand puppetry workshops. Aiza also coordinated with Bagong Henerasyon partylist and Bulacan Governor Daniel Fernando to bring the Computer on Wheels project to San Rafael.

"It's really important to empower the youth because they are the hope of the nation. They will become our leaders in the future. We need to help them realize their potential to grow so they can help their families, their communities, and their country," she said.



# THE CYCLE OF LEARNING

Students of Maronquillo find hope through bicycles donated by SCB and PBSP

For the students of Maronquillo National High School, waking up at four in the morning and walking two hours to school is not an ordinary sight. The school in San Rafael, Bulacan is not accessible, especially to the students who live in far-flung barangays.

But thanks to the Bikes for Progress project of the Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) and the Philippine Business for

Social Progress (PBSP), 50 students who live far from the school no longer walk two hours just to attend their classes.

## EARLY RISERS

One of the students who live farthest from the school is James Salazar, a seventh grader. Every morning, he wakes up at four to help with household chores. The third of five siblings, James has to fetch water and gather food for the cow that they are raising for a neighbor.

"I have to wake up early so I can ride with my father when he goes to work. That way, I won't have to walk to school in the morning," said James who usually leaves their house at five in the morning.

James also shared that if he doesn't ride with his father, he needs to walk two hours just to go to school. He also walks on his way home.





"If I am lucky, I get to hitch a ride from the tricycles passing by. But most of the time, I just walk. It is really tiring," said James.

## AN INSPIRATION FOR LEARNING

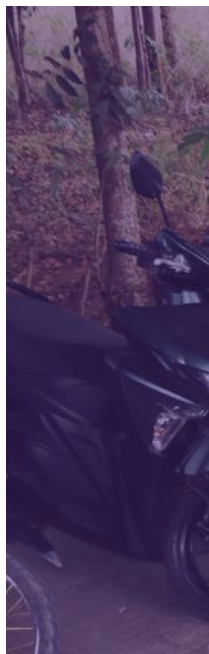
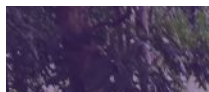
James' father is a construction worker while his mother works at a nearby vegetable farm. Their income is not enough to sustain the family's needs and support his grandmother who is already blind.

"When I get home from school, I would do some household chores then go around our community to gather trash. I would separate the bottles and items that I can sell so I can earn some money," James shared.

These hardships were some of the reasons that made him think of quitting school altogether. "Sometimes, I don't want to go to school because I get home tired but I still need to work. It is easier for me not to go to school anymore and just work. But my mother told me I should go to school so I can learn more," said James.

When the bikes came to Maronquillo, James was overjoyed.

"Before, having a bike was just a dream. Now I have my own bike. I am really thankful for the people who gave me this bike," said James. Now, James is able to focus more on his studies. He still goes to school early to have more time for studying. He even takes the time to clean and maintain his bike.





**CHANGED**



# EMPOWERING MOTHERS





**M**others nurture and care for their families. But they also need care and access to basic services that will protect their health.

Through the Safe Motherhood Caravan, PBSP works with companies and the local government to educate women of reproductive age on Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health and Nutrition (MNCHN) services such as pre- and post-natal consultations, facility-based delivery, exclusive breastfeeding, child health, family planning and saving for health.

In this section, we share with you stories of how our partners provide safe motherhood services in the communities they serve.

# HELPING HER COMMUNITY THROUGH CSR

A community relations officer helps stakeholders through projects aligned to their needs

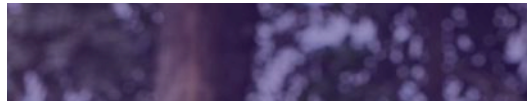
**A**ea Mae De Leon dreamed of becoming a doctor to help others. However, her parents could not afford to send her to medical school. She had to give up her dream so her siblings could also finish their education. Undeterred, Aea Mae took up Bachelor of Science in Biology instead.

Growing up in Polomolok, South Cotabato, Aea Mae admired her father, a carpenter, who instilled in her the value of hard work. For her, he was the epitome of resilience. His hard work enabled all three children to finish their education.

Through her father's experience, Aea Mae learned early on that nothing can stop you from pursuing your goals, as long as you have the determination to succeed. With this resolve, the simple girl from Polomolok decided to move to Cebu, a bigger province, to search for better opportunities.

## EMPOWERING OTHERS

In 2014, Aea Mae started working at Republic Cement. She was assigned to the administration



department, became a Plant Buyer until she was designated as the Community Relations and Development Officer at the company's plant in Danao, Cebu. There, she leads the Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives of the company for the Visayas region.

"The passion to help people has always been in my heart and has motivated me to pursue my current career. When you allow your passion to become your purpose, it will one day become your profession. This job truly gives me the sense of fulfilment. I'm so happy to be assigned in community relations," added Aea Mae.

Aea Mae is an advocate for health, education, and children's welfare. Through the "Oplan Suwat" (Oplan Write) initiative, which she spearheaded, the company adopts schools and daycare centers every year in Barangay Dunggoan, Danao, Cebu. The project encourages the company's employees to donate and volunteer their time in distributing school supplies to needy children.



"I really want to help the less fortunate, because I came from that kind of life," shares Aea Mae.

In 2015, Republic Cement became a member-company of the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP). One of the ongoing projects of Republic Cement and PBSP is the Safe Motherhood Caravan. The Safe Motherhood Caravan aims to educate women of reproductive age on Maternal, Neonatal, and Child Health and Nutrition (MNCHN) services such as pre & post-natal consultations, facility-based delivery/SBA, exclusive breastfeeding, child health, family planning, and saving for health.

During the caravans, women of reproductive age are educated and made aware of the services available to them in order to improve their health-seeking behavior and increase actual utilization of the services related to MNCHN.

"The first project that we did with PBSP was the Safe Motherhood Caravan. What really stood out to me was how PBSP implemented the project. It was very well-planned and well-coordinated, so we decided to expand the project to include the training of

health workers, which is what we're doing now," said Aea Mae.

Through the training of trainers for Safe Motherhood Caravan, the health workers learned about the importance of Safe Motherhood and equipped them with the skills and knowledge to ensure the safety of mothers in their communities.

"Last year, I attended a family planning session led by the health workers we trained. I felt so proud with how they handled the session, from the materials they used, to how the information was rolled out," she added.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS KEY

Aea Mae recognizes the importance of community engagement to the programs that they implement. By getting to know the community, assessing their needs, and engaging them, the programs are able to address the needs of the stakeholders. Aea Mae also noted the importance of health programs to communities located near the plants of Republic Cement.

"Business and community are always intertwined. We strive to work together because the decision of one affects

the other. The community gives us the privilege and social license to operate, so we always need to work in a way that will not be detrimental to them," added Aea Mae.

## ACHIEVING A LIFELONG DREAM

Even though Aea Mae is not a medical doctor by profession, she was still able to pursue a career where she can improve the lives of those around her. Her work at Republic Cement has allowed her to continue her goal of helping others.

"I'm really happy to help my community. This job will always be fulfilling because I know I'm able to touch other people's lives," she said.

From a simple girl living in the province, Aea Mae has come a long way. More inspiring is how she did not let her circumstances and financial difficulties dictate the kind of life she wants to live. She has accomplished much, is happily married, and is enjoying the joys of motherhood. Moreover, she did not give up on her lifelong dream and in 2018, she finally became a doctor by finishing her Doctorate Degree in Philosophy, Major in Technology Management.



# A CHAMPION OF FAMILY HEALTH

A City Health chief nurse leads her community in creating better futures by empowering families through family planning

“I was born to be a leader,” quipped Mercedes Jane Sia, when asked why and how it shaped the person she has become.

Calling herself a proud “city girl”, Jane was born and raised in Cebu City. Her mother was a public health nurse, and her father, an overseas Filipino worker. Even though her father was away most of the time, they remained close. She recalls having a simple but happy childhood. Her parents also taught her the value of strength, hard work and perseverance.

“I was treated with much attention and love, so I grew up with confidence. I knew at a young age that I wanted to become a nurse, or a fashion model,” said Jane about her childhood dream.

However, she was influenced by her mother who was a public health nurse to pursue the same profession.

“I saw how happy she was in dealing with the community, and I was inspired by that,” said Jane.

## ADVOCATING FAMILY PLANNING IN THE COMMUNITY

Jane is the youngest chief nurse in the history of Cebu City health. She is also the department’s youth and family

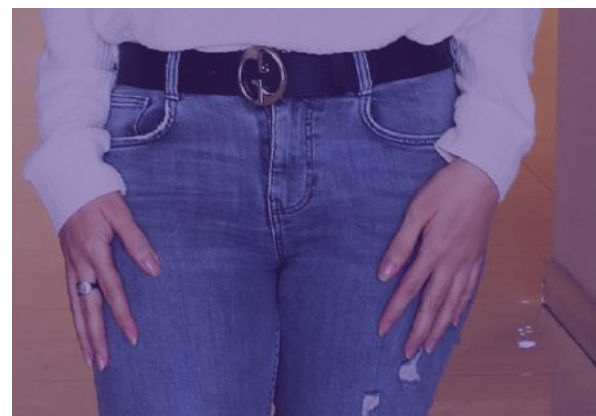
planning coordinator. She considers educating the youth and Filipino families on family planning and safe practices to be her personal advocacy.

She remembers her excitement when she was approached by the Philippine Business for Social Progress and Intellicare (Asalus Corporation) in 2015 to help coordinate the Safe Motherhood Caravan project in Cebu. To her, it was one of the best avenues to reach more people in her community and educate them on life-saving information for mothers before, during and after pregnancy.

The Safe Motherhood Caravan enabled Jane to carry out a more holistic approach in educating families about their health and family planning. What was normally targeted for mothers or pregnant women now expanded to include all women of reproductive age, the youth and even men in the families.

Jane is working hard to empower women, especially those of reproductive age, on saying no – to teenage pregnancy and other risky behaviors.

“Serving the people, and mentoring the nurses and midwives on Safe





Motherhood gave me a sense of fulfillment,” she added.

A breast cancer survivor, Jane is also passionate about advocating breast cancer awareness, most especially the importance of information and early diagnosis when it comes to fighting the disease.

## COLLECTIVE EFFORT TO UPLIFT THE COMMUNITY

Every year, Jane, along with the nurses and midwives in her department, would look forward to the Safe Motherhood Caravan. The work is not without its challenges, but what keeps her moving forward is the desire to uplift the community.

“You have to keep engaging the community, even after the caravans. It’s also important to encourage the participants so they can help spread the information to their relatives, friends, and neighbors,” said Jane.

Jane also recognizes the importance of maintaining a good working relationship with partners and other organizations to serve the communities better.

## A ROLE MODEL

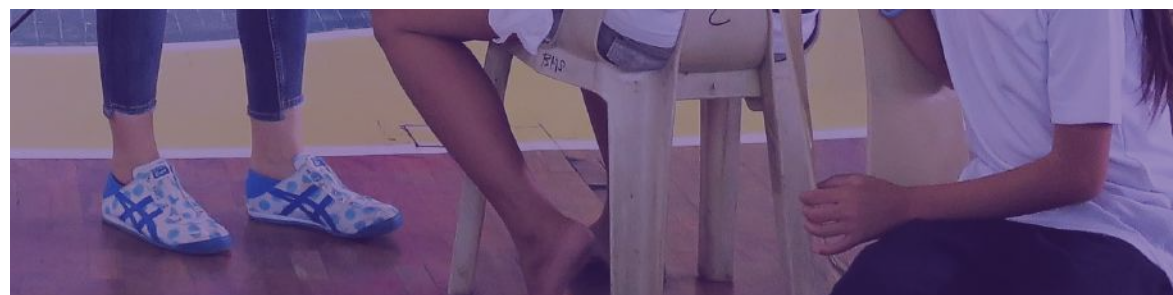
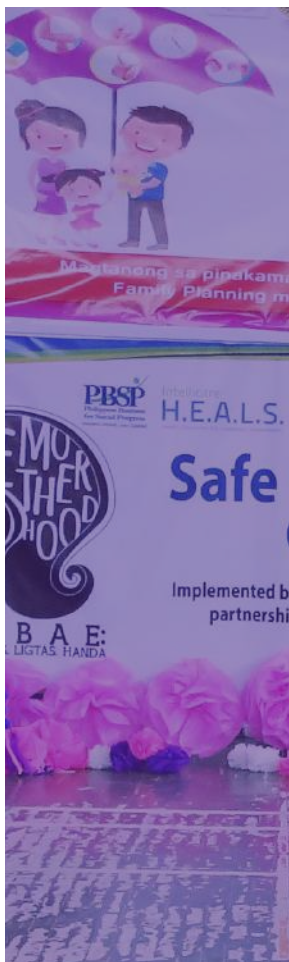
Jane, 42, is a mother to a 17-year-old son and 8-year-old daughter. Having practiced family planning herself, she can really walk the talk about the issues she believes in. She is not only a good

role model and leader to her colleagues, but also serves as an inspiration to many.

Just recently, she launched a program called “Family Planning in the Workplace” wherein she brings the services of the City Health department to mall workers who usually find it hard to leave the job and avail the same services from their barangay.

“As long as there’s a purpose, and as long as I have something to contribute, I will never stop doing the work that I do,” she added.

Jane hopes to continue the work and empower more health workers, women and families in the years to come.







**P**BSP works with its member-companies and partners to implement livelihood programs that provide the underprivileged with training and opportunities to start their own small businesses.

In the following pages, we will share with you stories of how the Creating Spaces and Beauty for a Better Life program helped improve the lives of the people in the communities we serve.





# SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

# AGENT OF CHANGE

A Muslim woman is defying tradition and old beliefs to empower women in war-torn Maguindanao

It was in the conflict-torn Datu Saudi Ampatuan where Guiamelan Sayutin began her work as an agent of change among women.

Guiamelan empowered marginalized women against violence and inequality in a culture-sensitive area of Maguindanao. In 2017, she was became part of the Creating Spaces to Take Action on Violence Against Women and Girls (Creating Spaces) project that seeks to reduce Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), and Child, Early and Force Marriage (CEFM) in six Asian countries including the Philippines. The Creating Spaces project is funded by OXFAM, with support from Global Affairs Canada and implemented by the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) in the six municipalities of Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur.

“After attending the training on early marriage and VAWG, I was able to educate my fellow Muslim women on their rights, on how to take care of their children, and prevent child, early and forced marriage in their respective families. They have changed their lives after learning that they still have a voice in this society,” Guiamelan shared.

## LOVE AND TRADITION

As the youngest of seven siblings, she also experienced inequality during her childhood. Guiamelan and her eldest sister were not able to finish their studies because her family believes that women don’t need to go to higher education. But with Guiamelan’s perseverance, she was able to convince her parents to send her to school. Her older brother also pushed her to study hard for her own future.

However, Guiamelan had to go through a difficult life when she began to have a family of her own. She was 19 when her father forced her to marry an Ulama, a Muslim scholar trained in Islamic law.

“Life was very difficult at that time because my parents could not afford to sustain our daily needs. My father did not have a stable income as a carpenter, while my mother just sold handwoven mats for a living. After they forced me to marry at an early age, my life started to get miserable,” she said.

Her family’s worst nightmare came when they were displaced due to a widespread conflict in their area. Every two days, they would transfer from

one evacuation center to another. This has been their situation for years.

“As a mother who continues to live in an evacuation center, it is really hard to provide the daily needs of our three children. They had to stop schooling because we didn’t have a stable income and we couldn’t afford to buy food every day. But with the help of various Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), we were able to overcome all the challenges and were given the opportunity to work with PBSP and United Youth of the Philippines- Women (UnYPhil-Women) through the Creating Spaces project,” Guiamelan said.

## BREAKING THE CYCLE

With her experiences in life, she shared her newfound knowledge on VAWG and CEFM to her husband and children. Later on, she was able to influence women from eight barangays in Datu Odin Sinsuat through Islam sessions every Friday, one-on-one discussions, and mother’s classes.

“At first, my husband was against the idea because he is an Ulama. It was hard to advocate for change especially when your family is not well-informed about VAWG and CEFM.





In my place, the practice for women who already have their menstruation is to get married. I fought hard with my husband against arranging the marriage of our daughter. I did not want her to experience what my father did to me," she revealed.

At that time, Guiamelan's husband agreed to accept the changes in their family. She also helped younger generations to become aware of their rights as women. She likewise encouraged the mothers to protect their children against early marriage and working at an early age.

Initially, the parents did not welcome her teachings and doubted her intentions. Some even suspected that her group received financial assistance from the project and did not share the funds with them. They would even ask for money or any kind of assistance in every session that they conducted.

Through determination, persistence and words of encouragement, the mothers eventually realized the importance of VAWG and CEFM. They were even thankful that they learned their rights as a woman, and a mother to their children.

"Later, they have become grateful for the knowledge that we shared with them. Without it, they knew that they will have to force their children to become an OFW to improve their lives," she said.

## CHANGING PERCEPTION

Through the Creating Spaces project, Guiamelan was able to help improve the lives of women in Maguindano, and in the process, she also became a better mother and an empowered woman. She was able to voice out her sentiments on important issues and learned to have some good principles to live by.

"Before, women did not have the right to speak up. But with the help of the Creating Spaces project, I can now talk in front of other people as a woman. I can now advocate against violence and inequality in our community," she revealed.

# REDEFINING BEAUTY

L'Oreal Philippines redefines the meaning of beauty through its Beauty for a Better Life program

As one of the leading cosmetics companies in the country, L'Oreal Philippines, Inc. is innovating trends that would appeal to and accentuate the beauty of Filipinas. Aside from their cosmetic line and beauty services, L'Oreal is also innovating ways to bring focus to underprivileged barangays.

Through its Head of Corporate Communications Carmel Valencia, L'Oreal is implementing Beauty for a Better Life (BFBL) program in partnership with the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP). Now on its fourth year, BFBL is a community-based livelihood training program created in 2017 to help the poor and unemployed gain skills on haircare and makeup techniques that would enable them to become self-sufficient.

"When we were designing the program four years ago, we decided to go back to the heart of the communities in the Philippines, which is the barangay. We are one of the few L'Oreal countries implementing BFBL in a community-based program which caters to men and women alike," said Carmel.

## EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

At present, the BFBL program is implemented in select barangays in Pateros, Taguig, and Antipolo, Rizal. The adopted barangays have high unemployment rates where the project

can really have an impact on the beneficiaries.

Carmel shared that one of the most important things in choosing the beneficiaries of the program is making sure that their respective families support the trainees' decision to join the program.

"During the interviews, we ask them if their spouse and family know about this because one of the common concerns is who will take care of their kids or do the household chores while they are training," said Carmel.

When the BFBL program was first implemented, L'Oreal and PBSP noticed that the training had a lot of drop outs because the trainees were being pulled out by their families.

"Their families would tell the trainees to stay at home instead. But since we started asking them this question, we've had low dropout rates throughout the program's implementation," Carmel shared.

Carmel also added that L'Oreal Philippines decided to make the program more inclusive by catering to trainees regardless of their gender and sexuality.





"We decided to also include men in the training. Because based on our discussion with the salon departments, if you really take a look at the hairdressing industry in the country, there are many male hairdressers. We realized that aside from the women, we also need to give opportunities to men. We are also very LGBT-inclusive," said Carmel.

The trainees attend classes every afternoon from Monday to Friday. The classes cover topics such as customer service, shampooing, haircutting for male and female, hair color, and perming. Once all the topics have been covered, the trainees undergo a two-week internship at partner-salons.

"One of the biggest problems of salons is actually recruitment. Meanwhile, L'Oreal has all these BFBL graduates that we want to be employed at a salon or set up their own home service business. The internship opportunity is a win-win solution because a lot of the interns are being absorbed by the salons to work for them," Carmel shared.

## A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

Carmel believes that one of the reasons why BFBL has been successful in the country is because the program recognizes the importance of partnerships.

"This is actually a three-way partnership. There's PBSP who is the expert on determining the barangays that will benefit the program and the expert on collective impact. We are the expert on beauty education. Then there's the barangay. It cannot be successful without the barangay's motivation, their willingness and their level of commitment and responsibility to the program," said Carmel.

The program stays in one barangay for the entire year. During that time, L'Oreal and PBSP are able to conduct three batches of training at the barangay hall.

Carmel shared that part of the program is transforming one floor of the barangay hall into a mini academy where the trainings can take place. An area is allotted for the classroom and another one is allotted for the salon area. They even install a backwash to make it look and feel like an actual salon.

"We are very particular when it comes to the venue. We don't want to conduct the training in just any room. We want the students to really feel that they are in a real



education environment because when they graduate they receive a real L'Oreal hairdressing diploma, we even pay for their TESDA certification with the help of PBSP. We want them to be in a conducive learning environment," said Carmel.

Carmel is also thankful to the trainers who are very passionate and dedicated in training the beneficiaries.

"The trainers are really part of the success of the program. Our trainees have zero knowledge on hair dressing. The trainers have to be very patient during the training they really have to motivate and encourage the trainees to learn and finish the program," said Carmel.

## A BETTER LIFE

Upon graduation, BFBL provides the graduates with a starter kit to help them set up their own home service salon. Carmel also shared that they are monitoring the beneficiaries even after they have graduated.

"PBSP helps us in monitoring the status of our graduates. We check on them every six months to see if they are still employed. We want to ensure that they are working," said Carmel.

Carmel notes that majority of the BFBL graduates have already found employment in salons or have set up their own home service business. They are earning more than they used to and are more financially stable. Some of the graduates even earn up to Php10,000 a week during peak season.

"The true test of success of the project is in the name itself, a better life. And better life means breaking out of poverty, breaking out of the cycle of families who cannot work or study," said Carmel.

Carmel also emphasized the importance of beauty education for L'Oreal and the beneficiaries of BFBL.

"We believe that education is the light at the end of the tunnel and with beauty education, L'Oreal is able to expand the definition of beauty. That it is not just a product or a brand that you use for your hair and makeup. We are redefining beauty as a force of good, a way to give back to the community. And for our beneficiaries, it gives them the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty," Carmel said.

# BREAKING BARRIERS

A victim of a drug syndicate reinvents her life through L'Oreal and PBSP's Beauty for Better Life

Life had always been bittersweet for Bolemar Lomoya. Growing up in Mindanao, she had many friends and enjoyed playing in her hometown. However, she also felt abandoned when her parents left her in the care of different relatives.

When she was eight, Bolemar ran away from home and found a new family in her teacher's home. Her teacher had a cousin who lived in Manila and would often tell her stories about how good life is in the big city. In her young mind, she imagined that she would become a professional and live a better life.

Little did she know that moving to Manila would turn her life upside down. It was far from what she had imagined.

## A ROUGH CHILDHOOD

With promises of good educational opportunities and a better life, Bolemar was inspired to move to Manila. She arrived in the city full of hope, believing that her imagination would finally come to life.

However, none of these promises came true. Instead of sending her to school, she became a runner for a drug syndicate.

"I was only 13 years old when I started doing errands for them. That time, I had no idea that I was carrying drugs for them. All they ever told me was to bring the packages to certain locations. Sometimes I would get curious and ask them about the packages but they always told me not to bother about those things," said Bolemar.

When she had no errands, Bolemar was locked inside the house of the drug syndicate. She was not allowed to go out or talk to their neighbors.

"As I grew older, I realized what was going on. I would see them make and pack the drugs. After running errands, I would come back with loads of money. I was really scared but I could not do anything. I even ran away from them but they brought me back," shared Bolemar.

## BREAKING FREE

In July 2014, Bolemar was caught during a buy bust operation. She was carrying a bag filled with drugs when the police caught her. During the investigation, Bolemar shared to the police how she became involved with the syndicate. Later on, she was turned over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) while her case was being investigated.

She stayed with the DSWD for three years. There, she spent her time studying and making up for the time that she lost. When her case was resolved, she was adopted by a Non-Government Organization in Quezon City. She underwent training on safe awareness, personality development, and therapies to deal with the trauma. Eventually, she became a trainee of the Beauty for a Better Life (BFBL) program of L'Oreal Philippines and the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP).

Training under the BFBL program was not an easy feat. Learning haircare techniques was very challenging. The practical exercises and exams were also difficult for Bolemar. But she pushed herself to learn until she was able to graduate.

"The BFBL training was an unexpected blessing for me. I never thought that I would be given this kind of opportunity. The program gave me a certificate that proves that I am also educated and trained," said Bolemar.

Aside from the training, L'Oreal and PBSP also helped Bolemar secure a National Certificate from TESDA.

## FINDING HER WAY

After graduating from the BFBL



program, Bolemar decided to leave the NGO that adopted her to try to make it on her own. She was eventually employed at a L'Oreal partner-salon where she worked as a junior hair stylist.

"It was my first time to be independent. It was hard at first because I was used to being dependent on other people. It was my first time commuting to work on my own. Since I did not have enough money, I lived with one of my BFBL classmates until I could afford to rent an apartment," shared Bolemar.

Her newfound independence was a learning experience and adventure for Bolemar. She learned the ins and outs of commuting in Metro Manila and adjusted to her workplace.

"My work is hard and challenging at times. At first, I struggled getting along with my co-workers. They knew about my story and there were people who looked down on me because of my background. But I learned to stand up for myself and prove to them that I'm also capable," said Bolemar.

### MOVING FORWARD

In 2019, Bolemar was able to find and reconnect with her family with the help of her friends. It was her first time talking to her family after so many years.

"I haven't had the chance to go back to Mindanao. Maybe when I am more financially stable, I will visit my family and spend time with them," said Bolemar.

At present, Bolemar is focused on her work being the youngest staff in their salon. However, she does not see this as a hindrance but as a challenge to prove herself and become better.

"I'm also planning to go back to school and finish college. I am working hard to become a senior stylist so I can also work abroad," said Bolemar.



# TB CONTROL



## STEP 5 SPUTUM COLLECTION

GABAY PARA MAKAKUHA  
MAAYOS NA SAMPOL NG

1

Magmumog ng tubig.

Huminga nang  
malalim nang 3 beses.

Tuberculosis is one of the fatal diseases that Filipinos face in the country. Millions of people with TB do not get the proper care that they need and deserve.

PBSP, through the Advancing Client-centered Care and Expanding Sustainable Services for TB (ACCESSTB) Project, works with various organizations and individuals that advocate and support the TB control program.

In this section, we will share with you the story of an exemplary doctor who dedicates her lifelong work in serving the community and indigenous people.

# AN INSTRUMENT OF CHANGE

An exemplary doctor dedicates her lifelong work in serving the community and indigenous people



"The health awareness of the community was improved. TB stigma has significantly reduced and there is a sudden increase in the number of cases being notified through active TB case finding. Most of the people in the community would voluntarily visit the hospitals for diagnosis and treatment," she shared.

Through her dedication, Dr. Centino was able to implement a strategic approach for TB management and control. She was able to engage not just the healthcare providers, but also the teachers, students, market vendors, transportation groups, and other government agencies for health awareness advocacies. Dr. Centino also partnered with the Department of Education (DepEd) to integrate TB education in the school curriculum and form the Kiddie TB Patroller that helps in referring people with symptoms of TB to health facilities. She also led the City Health Office (CHO) in conducting a daily radio show to discuss TB, malaria, dengue, and other infectious diseases to its constituents.

## REACHING HER DREAM

But Dr. Centino's life was not easy when she was growing up. As an only child, she would help her mother sell all the fishes caught by her father every morning.

Because of the hardships, she motivated herself to excel in class. Every morning at exactly 4 a.m., Dr. Centino would study using only

light from a small lamp. Her efforts paid off as she was a consistent class valedictorian from elementary to high school, and was later awarded with a full-scholarship from a university in Cagayan de Oro City. But she did not grab the opportunity because she really wanted to pursue her dream to become a doctor.

Dr. Centino started to live independently but with the support of her mother who sends monthly supply of food and even ironed clothes from their province to Cebu City through cargo. After taking two National Medical Admission Tests (NMAT), Dr. Centino was allowed by her mother to pursue her degree as Doctor of Medicine which was on a full scholarship.

"Due to financial constraints, my mother was very hesitant to send me to medical school. Since I was really determined, I took the NMAT exam and found out that I can avail a full scholarship program at Matias H. Aznar Memorial College of Medicine because I ranked third among all the applicants. I immediately enrolled and informed my mother that I will pursue my studies. She only needed to give me a Php1,000 for my transportation and food allowance. With that mere amount, I only bought a pair of shoes and school uniform for the entire year. Every day, I would spend my time in the library to read and take down notes since my parents could not afford to buy me books. There was

Born and raised by a market vendor and fisherman, Dr. Agnes Centino grew up living a difficult life. But even in the midst of poverty, she never gave up on her dream to become a doctor even if she didn't have the financial means to fulfill it.

It was a good thing she didn't because several years later, the 58-year-old doctor was awarded as one of the Bayani ng Kalusugan in 2016 and Presidential Lingkod Bayan in 2019. Dr. Centino's exemplary efforts lead to the improvement of tuberculosis control and other infectious diseases program in her city.



also a time during summer that I ate only champorado and dried fish from breakfast until dinner so I could save money to pay my tuition for the entire semester,” she revealed.

## A HEART TO SERVE

Despite all the adversities in life, Dr. Centino passed the Physician Licensure Exam (PLE) and began her career as a company physician and a medical doctor in a primary hospital at Medina. After 11 years, she decided to become a public servant in Gingoog City, working as a medical officer and in-charge of the infectious disease division.

“I was trained in tuberculosis control, malaria, dengue, and all other infectious diseases. After the training, I fell in love with the program. I realized that I am serving the marginalized people in the community who need more attention,” Dr. Centino shared.

From then on, she became committed in implementing different strategies to encourage her patients to seek treatment and in reaching out to indigenous people (IPs) in the community. Dr. Centino would also conduct training sessions for nurses,

midwives, and even barangay health workers on TB and other infectious diseases.

She also initiated health immersions in the IP communities to understand their language and culture, and educate them about the health programs. One time, she even went beyond her duty as a doctor and helped the IPs fight oppression and got involved in negotiations with the New People’s Army to release displaced families.

Seeing her efforts, the local government of Gingoog City supported her health advocacies. They approved the distribution of the food supplement program and financial assistance to the people with TB. On top of that, Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), through its Advancing Client-Centered Care and Expanding Sustainable Services for TB (ACCESS TB) project, provided technical and medical assistance to the people who were diagnosed and treated for TB.

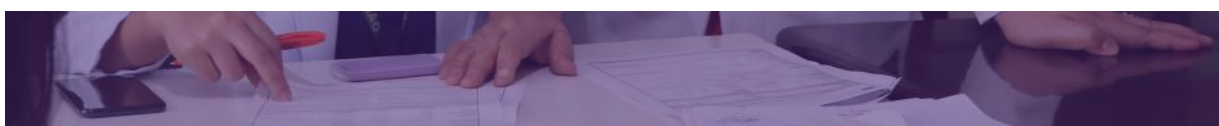
“We are very thankful for the PBSP ACCESS TB project’s technical

assistance and logistics support. Because of these, we were able to extend our services to the nearby municipalities. Without their help, our healthcare providers will not be equipped with proper knowledge and our patients will not be taken care of,” she said.

## COMMITMENT AND COMPASSION

Throughout her 27 years of medical work, Dr. Centino developed compassion and commitment to her patients and community. She was also able to influence the younger generation of public health workers to continue serving people in need.

“Being a company physician for 11 years was really a different experience since you should abide by the rules and regulation of the company. But in public health, I was able to serve the people from womb to tomb. They have been part of my life as I developed compassion and commitment to address their health problems, helping them with their emotions, and even giving them financial assistance. As long as I am still in public service, I am willing to help the patients and my community,” she said.



a partner organization of



and a vetted organization



# LET'S SOLVE PROBLEMS TOGETHER

## FIND OUT HOW:



[facebook.com/pbsp.org](https://facebook.com/pbsp.org)



[twitter.com/PBSPorg](https://twitter.com/PBSPorg)



[instagram.com/pbsp](https://instagram.com/pbsp)



[www.pbsp.org.ph](https://www.pbsp.org.ph)

### **HEAD OFFICE & LUZON REGIONAL CENTER (LRC)**

PBSP Building, Magallanes  
corner Real Streets, Intramuros, Manila  
Tel. Nos.: (632) 8527.7741 to 48  
Email: [lrc@pbsp.org.ph](mailto:lrc@pbsp.org.ph)  
[pbsp@pbsp.org.ph](mailto:pbsp@pbsp.org.ph)

### **VISAYAS REGIONAL CENTER (VRC)**

The Persimmon Plus, Unit 213,  
Bldg. 4 MJ Cuenco Avenue,  
Mabolo, Cebu City  
Tel. Nos.: (032) 232-5270  
Fax. No.: (032) 232-5283  
Email: [vrc\\_rm@pbsp.org.ph](mailto:vrc_rm@pbsp.org.ph)

### **MINDANAO REGIONAL CENTER (MRC)**

Second Floor, Suites B203 and  
B204 Plaza de Luisa, 140 Ramon  
Magsaysay Avenue, Davao City  
Tel. Nos.: (082) 221.2251 to 53  
Email: [mrc\\_rm@pbsp.org.ph](mailto:mrc_rm@pbsp.org.ph)