



Philippine Resources

Mining, Petroleum & Energy Journal

Issue 1, 2019

**How do you solve
a problem like
Malampaya?**

**Solar Lolos
on the way to
financial literacy**

**Second round
of mine audits
about to start**



Headlines in this issue

8



20



Economic Commentary

- 6 How do you solve a problem like Malampaya?
- 19 Solar Lolas on the way to financial literacy

Mining News

- 22 Philippines to start second round of mine audits in March
- 22 ECCP, eVAP support PNIA via Nickel Initiative 2019
- 24 The mining industry and renewable energy
- 32 Mining industry's best at 65th ANMSEC
- 38 The mining industry in the Year of the Pig
- 40 Bezant Resources pursuing creation of Mankayan Copper Gold Mine
- 42 Triggers and causes of the landslide in Itogon, Benguet



40

Technical News

- 50 'Super grass' Bamboo presents promising future

Energy News

- 58 Time to step on the gas – Philippines LNG
- 60 DOE now ISO 9001:2015 Certified following rigorous assessment

Industry News

- 68 PHILCONSTRUCT marks its 29th year

Solar Lolos on the way to financial literacy

By Patricia A. O. Bunye

I have written frequently about the journey of our “Solar Lolos”, seven Aeta women who trained at the Barefoot College in Tilonia, India under the “Tanging Tanglaw: Turning IP Grandmothers into Solar Engineers” project of Diwata-Women in Resource Development, Inc. and its project partners, the Land Rover Club of the Philippines and the Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association.

Five years after we first launched this project in 2014, we remain as excited and committed as we see the Solar Lolos making great strides.

At the Barefoot College, where their training was made possible by the support of the Government of India through its Indian Technical and Eco-

conomic Program, they learned how to assemble, repair and maintain solar panels for installation in their respective communities in Bamban, Tarlac and Gala, Zambales.

The first batch trained from September 2014 to March 2015, while the second batch trained from April to September 2018.

The first installation of solar panels in Bamban took place in 2016, with the installation in Gala following soon after. Rural Electrification Workshops (REW) where the Solar Lolos do their work, and which serve as community activity centers, have also been constructed. During typhoons, these REW have served as emergency shelters as well.

In each community, “Lupong Solar”, or committees composed of 7 members

(3 IP chieftains, 2 Solar Lolos, a lupong secretary and a collector) have been organized.

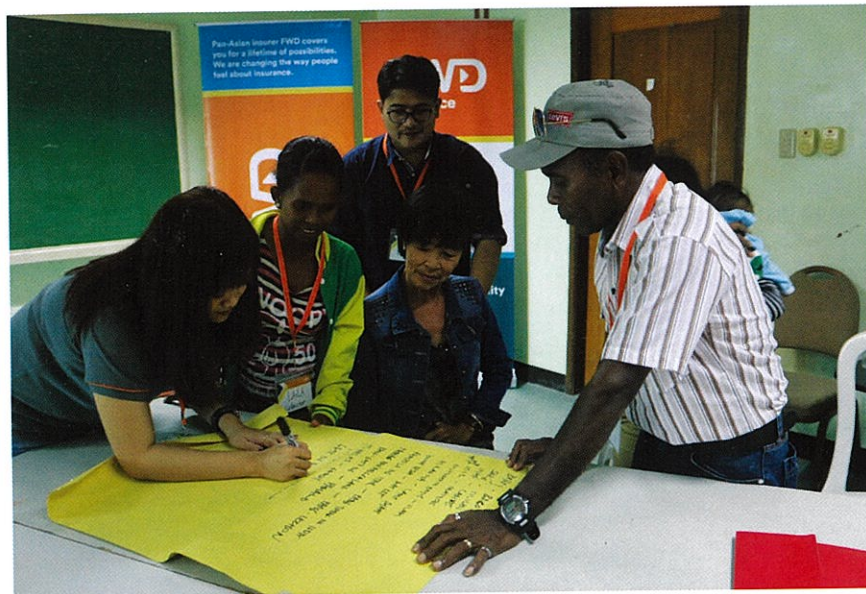
The Lupong Solar is tasked with managing the funds collected from the users of the solar panels for future use when the panels would need to be repaired or replaced. The Solar Lolos who undertake the installation, maintenance and repair of these panels are also paid a modest stipend from these funds.

One major milestone is that the Lupong Solar of Bamban has opened, with the assistance of Diwata, its own bank account with Chinabank’s Bamban Branch, in which they are now depositing their monthly collections. The whole process of opening their accounts took more than half a day,

Continued on following page >



The Solar Lolos and a group of hardworking supporters. Photographs courtesy of John Siop/FWD Insurance.



< Continued from page 18

but it was an accomplishment that the Solar Lolos can be proud of.

The Tanging Tanglaw Project also receives tremendous support from FWD Insurance which has designed a Financial Sustainability Training Program for Solar Lolos.

The first formal training session, which was facilitated by trainers from Bayan Academy, was held on 04 December 2018 at Diwata's training room at the Clark Skills and Training Center (formerly known as the "Clark Polytechnic College").

[Pursuant to a Memorandum of Agreement with the Bases Conversion Development Authority and the Clark Development Corporation, the Tanging Tanglaw Project is allowed the use of a training room formally known as the "BCDA Group Women's Center" and a storage facility for its solar equipment.]

One activity during the training session was to construct a model community by using pictures, drawings and cut outs.

Although the participants were divided into different groups, their en-

visioned model communities contained the same features: water, schools and concrete homes.

In this regard, Diwata has been looking into how it may assist the Bamban community in improving its water supply. Volunteers from the UP National Institute of Geological Sciences have conducted the necessary studies, but the actual funding and implementation of the water project will have to be deferred.

Although the training session was conducted informally, a number of more sensitive or serious concerns were elicited from the discussions, including the participants' thoughts on family, government and even discrimination.

They also expressed the desire to implement culturally appropriate conservation and development programs.

The discussions were a good starting point for further engagement with them, particularly on short, medium and long term developmental interventions.

To make the program more meaningful and impactful, there is a need to calibrate their expectations versus the actual programs that can be

delivered.

Moving forward, we will have to focus on the need for livelihood projects for the communities. Currently, majority of the community members are farmers. They produce root crops, vegetables and raise poultry. Other sources of income come from charcoal production and wild animal hunting. Other tribe members also work in the lowlands as construction workers.

While Diwata has been engaged with these communities for five years now, there is still so much to learn about them, particularly their dynamics and cultural norms.

It is a continuing lesson in being open and patient, and most importantly, not imposing our ways on them.

It never ceases to amaze me how far our Solar Lolos have come and how they have been transformed by the Tanging Tanglaw Project. It will certainly be exciting to accompany them further on this journey to financial self sufficiency. ■



Patricia A. O. Bunye is a senior partner at Cruz Marcelo & Tenebrancia and head of its mining and energy practice. She is also President of Diwata-Women in Resource Development, Inc. Questions and comments are welcome at po.bunye@cruzmarcelo.com.