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In The Spotlight

Alumnus Wins Zayed Future Energy Prize



Illac Diaz receiving the award. (Photo courtesy of Liter of Light FB)

On January 20, Liter of Light, founded by Hubert Humphreys alumnus Illac Diaz, won the Zayed Future Energy Prize in the Non-Profit Organization (NPO/ NGO) category. Illac received the award from His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Egyptian President, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in a ceremony during the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week and the World Future Energy Summit. Liter of Light (or Isang Litrong Liwanag) won the prize for bringing eco-friendly lights to communities without electricity.

The Zayed Future Energy Prize represents the vision of the late founding father and President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan, who championed environmental stewardship. This annual award celebrates achievements that reflect impact, innovation, long-term vision and leadership in renewable energy and sustainability.

Fulbright Alumnus Wins Awards for Documentary

Fulbright Alumnus Joseph Israel Laban won the Grand Prize for his documentary “Ulilang Lubos” (Orphans) at the 2014 UNICEF Asia Pacific Child Rights Awards in Macau China last November. The same documentary also brought him the Silver Screen Award for Documentary/ Social Issues Category at the 2014 U.S. International Film and Video Festival Awards held the same month. The documentary was directed and produced by Joseph for the 10th Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival.

Joseph also produced and directed the film “Nuwebe,” which won Best Director for a Narrative Feature award from the Queens World Film Festival in New York and the Indie Bravo! award from the Inquirer Philippines. “Nuwebe” has also been shown at various International Film Festivals including Festival Cinematográfico Internacional del Uruguay, Rome Independent Film Festival, Aurangabad International Film Festival, and CinemAsia Film Festival in the Netherlands.



Joseph Israel Laban with his Grand Prize Winner trophy from the 2014 UNICEF Asia Pacific Child Rights Awards in Macau, China.

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the sixth edition of USAalumnews! This has been another exciting quarter for our amazing alumni and YSEALI members. From prestigious awards to impactful community projects, you have all been doing outstanding work around the country.

I want to highlight four of our alumni who have received awards for their innovation, hard work, and dedication - Illac Diaz, Joseph Israel Laban, Maria Irene Aserios, and Zobair Sidic. Congratulations!

Alumni have also been hard at work in their communities all the way from Ilocos Norte to Jolo. Read more about their activities and get inspired to undertake your own community projects!

Don't miss out on any opportunities - follow us on Facebook and Twitter - and sign up for YSEALI to be eligible for grants, workshops, and exchanges at: <https://youngsoutheastasianleaders.state.gov/>

Hope to visit many of you this year and see firsthand all the great work you are doing!



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YES-C Alumni Improve Communities in Baguio City

After completing the YES-C program, the 52 participants from the U.S. Embassy-Manila funded program entitled "Youth Empowerment for Stronger Communities" (YES-C) implemented community projects focused on providing livelihood skills training to disadvantaged persons in Baguio City.



In Barangay Irisan, YES-C participants led a baking workshop for women and children. In Barangay Happy Hallow, YES-C participants joined the Barangay council to start a coffee plantation and plan to use the proceeds from that to construct a community basketball court. Other YES-C participants held youth empowerment workshops to provide underserved youth with training on leadership development, proposal writing skills, financial management skills, and children's rights. One group constructed a library at San Carlos Elementary School that benefits 740 students. At Irisan Elementary School, YES-C participants joined students and school administrators to implement an "Environmentally Friendly School" project where they grew medicinal plants and placed garbage disposal bins and compost pits around the school.



YES-C was implemented in partnership with Child and Family Services Philippines, Inc. and provided training to Baguio youth on entrepreneurship, life skills, environment, social media, and civic responsibility.

Alumni Support MYPEACE in Mindanao



Alumni from Iligan and Zamboanga City joined the U.S. Embassy- Manila funded project "Madrasah Youth Promoting English Advancement for Community Empowerment (MY PEACE)" as volunteer teachers for youth from Marawi and Zamboanga City. MY PEACE aims to teach basic English language and grammar to selected Madrasah youth from the two cities. Alumni and teachers from the area implement the program every weekend. "It is such a great opportunity and a privilege to be working with the teachers and alumni to empower young people by teaching them basic English. The experience has been challenging and fulfilling," shared KL-YES alumna Hannah Sharip. Participants are also expected to implement an outreach project in March. The project is being carried out in partnership with Naawan-HELPS Inc. and Voice of Mindanao and will end in June 2015.

SUSI Alumnus Tops Foresters Licensure Examination

Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI) alumnus Zobair B. Sidic, garnered 6th place (87.10%) in the July 2014 Foresters Licensure Examination (FLE) given in Manila and Davao City. Mr. Sidic graduated with a BS in Forestry from Mindanao State University-Marawi and took oath as a licensed Forester in September 2014.

Zobair was inspired by Southeast Asia's vast resources which he sees as potentials and opportunities for the region's rising economy. He added, "Only in United States and the Philippines are foresters accredited as professionals. And that professionalization is a challenge for the Filipino foresters in reversing the deforestation trend in the country as the second lowest forest cover in Southeast Asia."



In the Spotlight

Mindanaoan.com Wins ICT Awards



Mindanaoan.com, owned by International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) alumna Maria Irene Aserios, was awarded as top Cagayan de Oro (CDO) blog during the ICT Awards held at Centrio Mall Activity Center in December 2014. The ICT Awards are organized by the CDO ICT Business Council, in partnership with the DTI, DOST, National Telecommunications and Communications and the CDO City Government.

The award was given to Mindanaoan.com for the "creation and maintenance of an exceptional blog that is appealing, engaging and dedicated to promoting and showcasing CDO."



Alumni Lead MOOC Professional Development Training for Teachers

Three U.S. Government alumni of the E-Teacher Scholarship program are helping their fellow teachers by facilitating camps for English language teachers enrolled in the "Shaping the Way We Teach English, 1: The Landscape of English Language Teaching MOOC (massive open online course)". The MOOC camps are led by alumni Mitchellene Vigilia-Rivo, Rebecca Sagot, and Melda Uychoco. More than 100 teachers are participating in weekly meet-up sessions in Dagupan, Davao, and La Union. The five-week course offers teachers the opportunity to study TESOL methods through the University of Oregon. The alumni-led MOOC camps help teachers share ideas for lesson planning and build on materials presented to them in the online course while building a community of learning among the participants in the camps.

Marawi Alumni Lead Guinness World Record Attempt

International exchange and local alumni in Marawi attempted to break the Guinness world record for the biggest paperboat race. The Lake Lanao event was hosted in Barangay Raya Madaya and headed by Ms. Asmenah Barambangan. The primary objective of the event was to draw attention to the need for preservation of Lake Lanao.

Before the event, alumni held several environmental activities in Lanao del Sur high schools, such as essay writing contests and poster making competitions. One thousand and six hundred participants, including members of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI), took part in the historical event. The group is still awaiting the final results.



Volunteers from Brgy. Raya Madaya lining up the paperboats in attempt to make the Guinness Book of World Records for the largest paperboat race.



USG Alumni and YSEALI members took part in making 1,600 paperboats for the historical event called "Ranow: World Record for Lanao."

Photo from TV Patrol Mindanao

TedXOrtigas: Sharing Ideas Worth Spreading

Kennedy Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (KL-YES) Alumnus Abner Bayangan co-organized the first TEDxOrtigas Conference on January 8, 2015. Abner is the primary licensee for TEDxOrtigas, which aims to foster a local community that empowers individuals to become influencers and a trail blazers. In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TEDx is a program of local, self-organized events that brings people together to share a TED-like experience.

The TEDxOrtigas conference brought together speakers from diverse fields and specializations such as sports, politics, business, academe and the arts. One of the speakers, Emmanuel "Manny" Paquiao, an international sports icon and Filipino lawmaker, shared his thoughts on discipline to become a world champion. Another speaker shared his experience moving from Google USA to Google Philippines in his talk entitled, "On Being Proudly Filipino." The TEDx speakers not only focused on their revolutionary ideas and expertise, they also shared their personal journeys to success and how they were able to make a global impact as ordinary individuals.



KL-YES Alumnus Abner Bayangan speaking at TEDxOrtigas.



Boston College alumnus and Google Founding employee, Alex De Leon, speaking on "Being Proudly Filipino."

Alumni Talks

Global Undergraduate Program alumnus Ryan Louie Madrid spoke to faculty and staff of the Infant Jesus School of Bukidnon. Ryan highlighted the power of vision and how to make it a reality. He also shared his humble beginnings as a budding journalist in grade school and high school, and how a typhoon stirred him to pursue humanitarian and development work.



International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) alumna Rosario Juan served as a panelist at the YSEALI Project Connects event on Jan 13. Ros introduced Google online free tools available and explained how they could be integrated into business. She also introduced the Google Business Groups, where entrepreneurs can join and share best practices and experiences using Google tools. (Learn more on page 7)

On January 26, Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (KL-YES) alumnus Al-Bari Macalawan was invited to speak to officials of Nepal's Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction on the conflict in Mindanao and the contributions of Young Moro Professionals Network to peace-building. The Nepalese officials are in the Philippines under a program of the Asian Institute of Development Studies, Inc.



JOIN! ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT INNOVATION FUND 2015

The State Department created the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) in 2011 to support alumni initiatives that promote shared values and innovative solutions to global challenges. The competition provides small grants to teams of past and current participants of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs to carry out public service projects that utilize skills and knowledge they have gained through their exchange experiences. To participate, alumni must be members of the International Exchange Alumni (IEA) global online community and form teams of at least five IEA community members. Proposed projects must embody one of the AEIF themes. In 2014, 66 grants of up \$25,000 were awarded to alumni teams to support their public service projects.

Visit <https://alumni.state.gov/aeif> for more information.



#ICYMI

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT....



NOVEMBER 2014

-> Young bloggers joined the first “ASEAN Blogathon, Blogged In: ASEAN” to discuss ASEAN integration. Participants were challenged to engage in a unique and powerful social-media driven blogathon to spread awareness, produce insight and inspire action from the entire social media universe on key social issues.

-> Over 50 students participated in discussions on ASEAN integration and regional issues at the ASEAN Youth Dialogues in St. Louis University in Baguio City.

-> The final series of the ASEAN Youth Dialogues brought together young advocates at A-Space, Makati to talk about human rights in ASEAN.

-> YSEALI members led promotional activities in ten cities in the Philippines: Ilocos, Baguio, Rizal, Manila, Dumaguete, Marawi, Iligan, Cotabato, Zamboanga, Basilan and Sulu. Participants also took part in fun workshops and seminars to develop their leadership skills and strengthen networking among youth in their communities.

--> YSEALI members joined Ambassador Philip Goldberg in a Thanksgiving event (story on page 7).

DECEMBER 2014

--> U.S. Embassy-Manila celebrated YSEALI's first anniversary at 12 Monkeys in Makati City.

--> As part of the first year anniversary celebration of YSEALI, University Caravans were held in Ilocos Norte, Bacolod and Cagayan de Oro City. (story on page 7).



JANUARY 2015

--> Over 70 YSEALI members took part in a Digital Video Conference with members from Hanoi, Vietnam and Jakarta, Indonesia as part of the YSEALI Project Connects (story on page 7).

--> Four YSEALI members from the Philippines departed to the U.S. for the YSEALI Winter 2015 Institute on Religious Pluralism. They will go through a five-week intensive academic program to learn more about religious pluralism in the U.S.



YSEALI Members Join Ambassador Goldberg in a Thanksgiving Event

U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Philip Goldberg participated in a Thanksgiving Luncheon at the Haven for Children in Muntinlupa City on November 25, 2014. With members of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI), Ambassador Goldberg distributed gifts and packed Thanksgiving lunches to 120 orphans.

Haven for Children is a temporary shelter under the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) that provides healing and empowerment to 120 children aged 13 and below.



YSEALI Caravans Travel Across the Philippines

Over a thousand students from universities in Ilocos Norte, Bacolod and Cagayan de Oro came together to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) and to highlight the benefits YSEALI membership.

The caravans were held in Mariano Marcos State University in Ilocos Norte, University of St. La Salle in Bacolod, and Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan in Cagayan de Oro. YSEALI members, in partnership with the U.S. Embassy, led the one-day events to raise awareness among Filipino youth about YSEALI, the importance of community service and civic engagement, and how becoming a YSEALI member connects communities throughout ASEAN. During the caravans, YSEALI members also highlighted the four pillars of YSEALI (economic development, education, civic engagement and environment) and led discussions with students on how Filipino youth can help make ASEAN integration a success.



DVC Connects YSEALI Members from Three Countries

On January 13, around 200 youth participants from the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia “gathered” at the U.S. Embassy in their country and met virtually for the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Project Connects Entrepreneurship Forum on January 13, 2015.

A panel of business experts and entrepreneurs from each of the three countries gave insights and tips on how to start a business. Participants also had a chance to give a one-minute pitch about their own business ideas.

The event gave participants an opportunity to network with one another, learn from other young entrepreneurs, and hopefully collaborate on future projects.





YOU CAN BE A LEADER IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. JOIN YSEALI!

Do you have great ideas and want to make a difference in your community? Then check out YSEALI, the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative!

U.S. President Barack Obama launched YSEALI in 2013 to support youth like you who are concerned with economic development, environmental protection, education and civic engagement in Southeast Asia.

Become a YSEALI member on our website youngsoutheastasianleaders.state.gov. It's simple. Members must:

- Be between 18 – 35 years of age,
- Be a citizen and resident of an ASEAN country, and
- Be interested in working on economic development, environmental protection, education, or civic engagement.

We look forward to welcoming you into the YSEALI family!

Welcome to the Alumni Community!

Young South East Asian Leaders Initiative
(YSEALI) Institute on Religious Pluralism

John Carlo Jalbuna
Ali Melicano
Grisley Villacampa
Al-Ghabid Jamil



Voluntary Visitors (VOLVIS) Program

Cayen Cabiguen
Eldred Cole
Mymannah Lou Dimacaling
Manuel Donato Elumba
Febe Fajardo
Sittie Aliah Limbao
Rhobert Maestre
Meraphi Pimentel
Mary Claire Sansarona

State Alumni Community - Philippines Facebook page

Philippine International Exchange Alumni have their own Facebook page: State Alumni Community-Philippines! This page and alumni.state.gov serve as social media platforms for alumni to share news, updates, insights, and opportunities with the Philippine alumni community. If you haven't yet "liked" our page; please do so and connect, inspire, and empower!

 facebook.com/StateAlumniPhilippines

If you have an upcoming Alumni Event or interesting stories and experiences to share, please email them at AlumniPhilippines@state.gov

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