



USALUMNEWS

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Alumni Bring Water, Basketball, and School Supplies to their Communities

Participants from the recently concluded "Creative Writing and Social Entrepreneurship Seminar" sponsored by U.S. Embassy Manila's Public Affairs Section, led outreach projects in General Santos and Basilan City upon their return home. During the seminar in Manila, participants were divided into groups and received small grants to implement community projects. Two groups from Basilan installed water systems to provide access to potable water in two municipalities. As a result, 350 households now have access to water.

Another group from Basilan used the small grant to construct a basketball court and organize a basketball league to promote peace in their community through sports.

Participants from General Santos City made use of their newly acquired social entrepreneurship skills to donate school supplies, organize a seminar on health and hygiene, and lead a clean-up drive at a local school.



Alumni and members of the community working together to construct the basketball court in Basilan



Alumni and members of the community working hand-in-hand in the construction of the water system

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Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the fourth edition of USAalumnews! This was a very exciting quarter, and I am impressed by the awesome achievements of our alumni throughout the country!

Many of you heard about the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) workshop and town hall held last month in Kuala Lumpur. Ten Filipino alumni joined the workshop and learned how to turn their ideas into action. On top of that, they attended a town hall with President Obama—check out this issue for pictures and stories!

I want to acknowledge our two 2013 AEIF winners, Rex Bernardo and Robbie Yasi, who successfully completed their projects this quarter! It was an honor for Richmond and I to attend your events. This year, three Filipino alumni projects have made it to the finalist round – please log on to www.alumni.state.gov to “cheer” for your favorite project!

Thanks to everyone who contributed to making this a great newsletter. To all our other amazing alumni - please send us your stories! We want to highlight your successes so other alumni can learn about the good work you are doing and use your ideas to improve their own communities.

I have had the opportunity to meet many of you during my travels, and I look forward to meeting many more of you soon!



Jennifer Foltz
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ALUMNI REFLECTION

Obama Addresses ASEAN Youth Leaders in KL

By Anthony Esguerra,
Study of the U.S. Institutes Alumnus



U.S. President Barack Obama addressed some 400 students and youths from the 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in a town hall session of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders’ Initiative (YSEALI) inaugural workshop, Sunday, March 27 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur was the third leg of Obama’s week-long visit to Asia to “rebalance” U.S.’s strategic attention in the region.

Obama managed to squeeze in his tight 3-day state visit to Malaysia a conference with the ASEAN youth in a hope to inspire them to pursue impacting initiatives for the region.

Youth must lead forward

President Obama, who grew up in Indonesia, encouraged the ASEAN youth to lead forward. He started with his experience growing up as boy in the region and how he was exposed to the work his mother was doing to help the communities and women in Indonesia gain education so they could better earn a living.

YSEALI

YSEALI is new program of the U.S. Department of State that seeks to engage young leaders aged 18-35 in solving economic, environmental, education and civic engagement challenges through creative, innovative and youthful initiatives in their communities. The program provides opportunities to strengthen people-to-people ties, training and workshops, fully-funded study trips to the U.S. and funding for inter-country community-based projects of U.S. government exchange program alumni. Obama himself announced the program in December 2013 during the LEAD ASEAN Youth Summit organized by the U.S. Embassy in Manila and the Ayala Foundation in Makati City.

Generating ideas into action

103 youths from ASEAN, all alumni of U.S. international exchange programs, participated in the inaugural YSEALI workshop in April 26-29, 2014. The workshop, co-organized by Start Up Malaysia, equipped the young leaders from generating ideas to translating them into actions in their local communities. Assigned into groups that focus on environment, education, social entrepreneurship and governance among others, the delegates developed community projects with international partnerships in mind. They were assigned mentors who challenged them to refine their pitches before presentation. The winning project pitches were announced at the end of the workshop. Winning team URBAL (Urban and Rural) seeks to encourage entrepreneurial activities among Cambodian youths through giving them unique internship experiences. The workshop will feature exchanges among urban and rural youths encouraging them to share their unique capacities. “We come up with this project because we see the needs for rural youth to understand entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation. So the idea is to send urban youth to rural area to organize this training on entrepreneurship to rural youth, which will create mutual benefits,” Elita Ouk, project team member, explained. Ouk said the project will be implemented in Cambodia as they return home and soon will be replicated in other SEA counties.



(Top Left) Humphrey Alumnus Ilac Diaz was invited as mentor in the program.

(Left) Alumnus Coordinator Richmond Jimenez with YSEALI delegates from the Philippines.

#FORPEACE Campaign Launched in Iligan

By K-L YES Alumnus John Badawi



US Government Alumni from Iligan City launched #ForPeace campaign last February 19. #ForPeace is an online campaign which aims to promote the advocacy of peace through individual photo of students and teachers with their respective attainable and simple commitment written on a metacard. It is designed to make people realize their role in starting a just world. #ForPeace has so far published over sixty snapshots of peace enthusiasts with their feasible allegiance to spark a change for a peaceful society. The campaign is an aftermath project of a peace camp sponsored by the Volunteer Community Engagement Program in collaboration with MSU--IIT Youth Chain of Peace. The peace campaign serves as a sustaining activity for the participants of the annual Peace Camp. #ForPeace is expected to expand more and to reach out more participants.

Alumni Lecture Series: "First Line of Defense: Your Community"

Manila's Public Affairs Section led by Alumni Affairs organized a lecture on disaster preparedness and response entitled, "First Line of Defense: Your Community" on April 8 at U.S. Embassy- Manila. Among the participants were 120 barangay captains and local government leaders, students, International exchange alumni, and members of civil society organizations. Experts on disaster preparedness spoke to the 250 audience members on best practices of emergency response and management. The speakers encouraged the participants to share the information with their communities to better prepare themselves for future disasters.



Vice Mayor Art Gabon of Catbalogan, Samar asking a speaker a question during the seminar.



Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer Jenny Foltz welcoming the attendees.

East West Center Alumni Association Launches Lecture Series



The U.S. Embassy in Manila sponsored twelve members of the East West Center Alumni Association of the Philippines to launch a lecture series for youth entitled, "Building a Prosperous, Peaceful and Just Asia-Pacific Community", on March 27 at Philip's Sanctuary in Rizal. The three day peace camp convened 62 young leaders for a series of lectures and activities to enhance their leadership capabilities. Speakers included alumni of U.S. government exchange programs.



The “Street Law and Developing Community Project” workshop was successfully conducted at Crystal Inn, Iligan City last February 10-12, 2014 and March 20-22, 2014. The activity was organized to help educate forty Madaris students from Lanao del Sur in community-building. It aimed to empower the participants and their fellow students back in their respective areas through simple and feasible projects. Informative and beneficial, the workshop also engaged the students in identifying problems in their immediate community and finding ways to resolve these problems. In addition, the students were trained to speak basic conversational English skills. The Street Law and Developing Community Project Workshop was sponsored by U.S. Embassy- Manila and was organized and facilitated by the Naawan Drug Awareness Support Group, Inc with the support of selected USG Alumni.

State Alumni Recruits New Breed of Eco-Warriors in Baguio

By Dhoibie De Guzman,
International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) Alumnus



Artist Art Tibaldo and newsman Dhoibie de Guzman, both International Exchange Alumni, recruited a new breed of eco-warriors. The tandem led sixty-three participants of the Youth Empowerment for Stronger Communities (YES-C) project on an eco-walk at the Busol watershed, the source of water in the City of Pines.

For two hours, Yes-C participants were briefed by environmentalist and veteran newsman Ramon Dacawi on the importance of the watershed and how they can help in the preservation of the city source of life.

When asked if they will care for their environment to prevent such tragedy, they responded with a deafening roar of YES!

Following the briefing, they were engaged in several games that would increase their awareness on environmental preservation and conservation. The eco-walk ended with a pledge by the new breed of eco-warriors to walk their talk

Earlier, Art Tibaldo discussed new ways of dealing with vandals, one of the worsening problems of Baguio. Tibaldo reiterated that graffiti can be transformed into beautiful art. As an artistic self-expression, it can be an instrument in raising environmental consciousness. In carrying out such mission, the city government is urged to hold dialogues to transform this problem as an attraction.

Meanwhile, de Guzman, an alumnus of IVLP on Investigative Journalism in the U.S., discussed the role of media in environmental preservation and conservation. De Guzman, the main anchor of the local newscast TV Patrol Northern Luzon of ABS-CBN TV 3 Baguio and founder of Berdeng Karunungan (NGO), told the participants that media can awaken the conscience of the public. By awakening their conscience, the public would shift their behavior.

This was immediately achieved when de Guzman showed a minute video presentation of a landslide that killed almost a hundred residents in la Trinidad Benguet last 2009. The presentation suddenly changed the mood of the participants and some were seen holding back their tears as they vow their heads.



AEIF Winner Links PWDs with Business and Education Opportunities

International Visitors Leadership Program alumnus, Rex Bernardo, held the final workshop of “Project WIRED for PWD Sector,” his Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund winning project. At the workshop in Davao, International Exchange Alumni discussed the rights and work opportunities for persons with disabilities (PWDs). Local civic organizations also provided the participants with information on businesses and schools in the Philippines that accommodate the needs of PWDs.

IVLP Alumnus Abdel Disangcopan talks about the rights and laws for PWDs in the workplace.



The Great ASEAN Eco-Debates held in Dumaguete



Robbie Yasi, Study of U.S. Institute (SUSI) alumnus successfully implemented his team's Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund winning project “The Great ASEAN Eco-Debates” at Silliman University in Dumaguete City April 7-12. The project was an inter-collegiate debate tournament focused on environmental issues affecting the ASEAN region. Debaters from the University of the Philippines- Diliman took home the championship trophy with Xavier University and University of San Carlos receiving the 2nd and 3rd prize.

Members of the team from University of the Philippines- Diliman as first Champions of the “Great ASEAN Eco-Debate”

AEIF 2014 FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

Out of 1,083 project proposals from more than 100 countries, the Department of State selected 181 finalists for this year's Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund. From the Philippines, three strong project proposals were chosen to enter the next phase. The finalists are:

ASEANYouthNewsNetwork
Led by Anthony Esguerra, Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI)
<https://alumni.state.gov/node/13901>

This project is a multimedia, multiplatform development-oriented news and current affairs website run and edited by ASEAN youth. It will empower ASEAN youth by providing a platform to exchange ideas and fuel offline, real world action through digital media. The site will feature news, opinion, features, video reports, and video hangout.

Indigenous Community Tourism
Led by Ivan Anthony Henares, Professional Exchange and Training (PET) <https://alumni.state.gov/node/10715>

Cultural tourism is a potent tool for poverty alleviation. There is potential for indigenous communities in the Philippines to benefit immensely from cultural tourism if given the information,

proper training, infrastructure and guidance. The project will empower indigenous groups to create sustainable tourism programs for their communities.

Get to Zero and Be a Hero
Led by John Piermont Montilla, International Visitor Leadership Program, (IVLP) <https://alumni.state.gov/node/8105>

As the MDG ends in 2015, the ASEAN integration begins and trafficking-in-persons (TIP) continue to be a growing threat in the region. The project aims to create a pool of “Be a Hero” advocates in Asia-Pacific using a victim-centered and survivor-driven River of Life methodology developed in the Philippines and seeks the inclusion of TIP in the ASEAN and post-MDG agenda.

Remember to vote for your favorite project!
Register at International Exchange Alumni website (www.alumni.state.gov). Voting ends on June 16.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Hubert H. Humphrey alumna, Rep. Kaka Bag-ao, was awarded the University of Minnesota's Distinguished Leadership Award for Internationals on April 25. Ms. Bag-ao was one of the distinguished panelists and awardees at the University of Minnesota Law School and Humphrey School of Public Affairs celebration of the 35th Anniversary of the Humphrey Fellowship Program.

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](https://www.facebook.com/StateAlumniPhilippines)

**If you have an upcoming Alumni Event
or interesting stories and experiences
to share, please contact:**

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Welcome to the Alumni Community!

Philippine Youth Leadership Program Batch 11

Rina Flor Mutiangpili
Jeriss Mishania Muarip
Nicole Shayne Vacalares
Jae Anne Asperin
Ronna Christma Englista
Jasmerah Amod
Alyssa Fatima Sali
Nor-Reham Masigal
Shalom Malaya Feranil
Marrfaisa Que
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Useful Links

Links to grants:

- <https://alumni.state.gov/member-resources/grant-opportunities>

Links to job opportunities:

- http://manila.usembassy.gov/employment_opps.html
- <https://alumni.state.gov/member-resources/job-opportunities>