

PHILKOFA NEWS

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PHILKOFA holds 2009 General Assembly

The 8th General Assembly of PHILKOFA was held on December 5, 2009 at the Convention Hall, Bureau of the Treasury in Palacio del Gobernador Building, Intramuros, Manila.

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from page 1. 2009 GA

It was participated in by 105 members and guests from the Korean Embassy, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Korea Chamber of Commerce Philippines (KCCP), Korean Overseas Volunteers (KOV), and Philippine government officials.

The Korean Ambassador to the Philippines, His Excellency Choi Joong Kyung, Resident Representative Kim In of KOICA Philippines Office and Jae Jang, former KCCP president, gave inspirational messages, highlighting the vital role of PHILKOFA as their partner in Korean projects and activities, and as a friend.

2009 PHILKOFA President Atty. Esmeralda Ladra presented the accomplishments of PHILKOFA for the year. The report showcased the group's planning workshop; medical missions in Zambales, Valenzuela and Bohol; livelihood project for women and relief giving in Sorsogon; school supply donation in Valenzuela and Mindanao; rice distribution to flood affected areas in Valenzuela; and Regional Coordinative Mechanism meeting in Mindanao. Atty. Ladra expressed deep appreciation for the continuous

support to PHILKOFA of the Government of Republic of Korea through the Embassy of Korea in the Philippines, KOICA and the Korean business community led by KCCP.

The 2008 GA proceedings and Treasurer's Report were presented by Board Secretary Aurora Collantes and Board Treasurer Teresita Puente, respectively.

The election for the 2010 PHILKOFA Board of Trustees was also conducted during the assembly. The new Board of Trustees are as follows: Esmeralda Amora-Ladra (COMELEC), Rhean Delos Reyes (KOICA-PO), Aurora Collantes (NEDA), Teresita C. Puente (LGU-Pasig City Health Office), Mike Marasigan (Quezon City Health Office), Judy Vermudo (ADB), Voltaire Palaña (OP-PMS), Editha S. Abergas (PA3i), Bernabe Sanchez (MSU-IIT-Iligan City Campus), Lilibeth Coronado (ADMU), and Modesto Baloloy (DOT). The newly elected officers had a separate short meeting after the assembly to discuss initial plans for 2010.

Sindaw Philippines of CCP rendered cultural dances and a soloist from the DOST sang to the delight of the audience. 

PHILKOFA holds 1st Luzon-wide assembly of KOICA trainees



PHILKOFA held its 1st Luzon-wide Assembly of KOICA trainees on September 25, 2010. The assembly's theme is "Opening Opportunities for Effective Regional Coordination Mechanisms (RCMs) and Exploring PHILKOFA's Program Tie-Up with Central Luzon Businessmen".

continued on page 5. 1st Luzon GA

2010 PHILKOFA officers take their oath of office

The newly-elected PHILKOFA officers for 2010 took their oath of office from Korean Ambassador to the Philippines His Excellency Choi Joong Kyung on March 14, 2010 at the Korean Embassy.

The new set of officers are:

President	Judy Vermudo
Vice-Presidents	Michael Marasigan Aurora Collantes Esmeralda Ladra Bernabe Sanchez
Secretary	Lilibeth Coronado
Treasurer	Teresita Puente
Auditor	Modesto Baloloy
PRO	Rhoan Mamba
Committee Chairs	Editha Abergas Voltaire Palaña

The oath taking was also attended by Mr. Pacifico Vizmonte, a former Board of Trustee, and RCMs Danilo Piñera, Marizon Loreto, Bai Bing Bacar, Mila Lasquites were also present during the ceremony.

The officers were also introduced to the incoming KOICA Resident Representative, Kim Jinoh and to the outgoing Resident Representative, Kim In who ended his term in March 2010.

A simple dinner at the Ayala Museum Café followed the oath taking. It also served as warm send off for the outgoing KOICA Resident Representative who expressed his love for the Filipino people and to the PHILKOFAns. Atty. Ladra and Ms. Vermudo expressed their gratitude for the support and special assistance he extended to the PHILKOFA during his term. They expressed their hope to meet him again in future engagements of the Association with KOICA. 



Republic of Korea appoints new ambassador to the Philippines

Hye-Min LEE, career member of the Korea Senior Foreign Service was appointed as Ambassador to the Republic of the Philippines in June 2010.

Prior to this appointment, he served as Deputy Minister for FTA in March 2008 with a portfolio overseeing Korea's FTA policy and negotiations. He led the KOREA-EU FTA negotiations as Korea's chief negotiator.

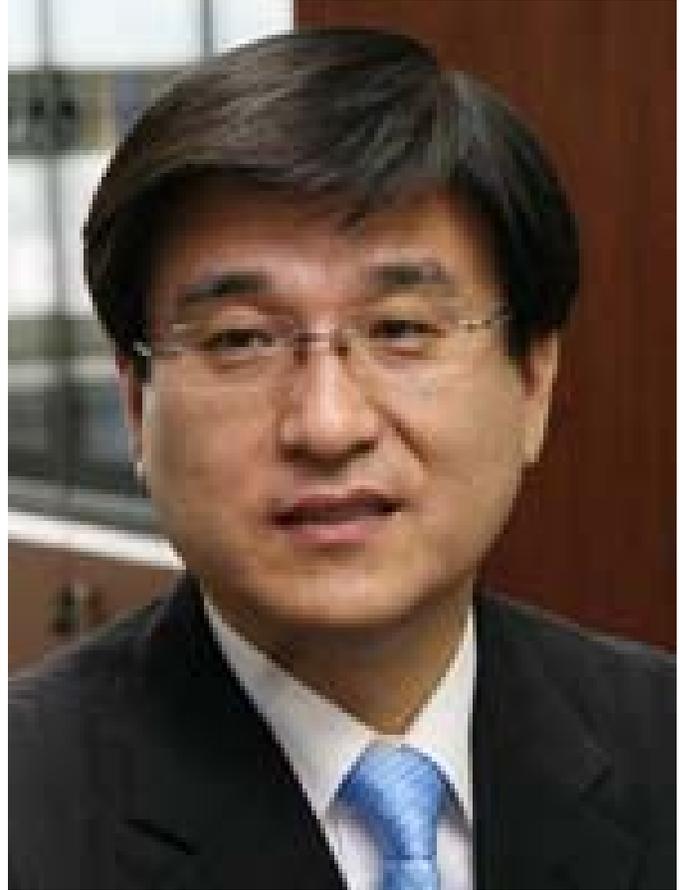
From 2006 to 2008, he served as Director-General and Deputy Chief negotiator for the KOREA-US FTA.

His overseas assignments include Minister-Counsellor, Korean Permanent Delegation to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris (2004-2005) and Counsellor, Korean Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia (2002-2004); assignments in Korean Embassy in the United States of America (1997-2000); as well as Korean Mission to the European Community in Brussels (1990-1993).

In Seoul, he served as Director for International Security Affairs, Office of the President (1995-1996) and was in charge of bilateral trade relations with the United States and Canada as Director (2000-2002).

Ambassador Lee has two masteral degrees, International Law from Seoul National University and Political Science from Université de Clairmont-Ferrand, France. He studied English Literature at Seoul National University. He speaks English and French aside from their national languages. He joined the foreign service in 1980.

He was born in 1957 and is married with a son and a daughter. 



PHILKOFA Strike 3

PHILKOFA held its 3rd Bowling Tournament on 18 April 2010, at Paeng's Skybowl, Ortigas Center. About 30 PHILKOFANS, friends and guests had fun bowling.

Five teams played in the tournament. The winners in the male division are: 1st place, Norito Sarmiento; 2nd place, Xerxes Nitafan; and 3rd place, JOON Jlung.

The winners for the female division are: 1st place, Nely Butic; 2nd place, Gina Borinaga; and 3rd place, Edna Dizon.

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New Resident Representative heads KOICA Philippines

KOICA Headquarters appointed KIM Jinoh as the new Resident Representative to the Philippines for three years. Born on June 1, 1963, Mr. Kim Jinoh obtained his Bachelor of Arts in English Literature in Pusan National University. He worked in KOICA Headquarters in Seoul, Korea in various capacities such as Managing Director for Public Relations, Managing Director for Climate Change Task Force, Director of ICT Team, Governance and Regional Development and Director for Afghanistan Rehabilitation Task Force.

He was also assigned in KOICA Overseas offices as Deputy Resident Representative for Ethiopia KOICA Office; Resident Representative for Sri Lanka KOICA Office and Resident Representative for Ukraine KOICA Office.

He published a book "The Global Outreach from KOICA (1991-2009)" in September 2009 together with other KOICA staffs. 



from page 2. 1st Luzon-wide GA

It was a meaningful event for all KOICA trainees in Luzon for they were able to meet their counterparts from various regions and share training and work experiences. The gathering is a symbolic expression of the trainees' commitment to be part of PHILKOFA.

The one-day assembly program included the opening ceremonies, networking/interaction meeting, RCMs planning workshop, and tours of selected places in the afternoon.

The opening ceremonies started with a welcome remarks from VP for Luzon Ms. Aurora Collantes. She thanked all the guests and PHILKOFAs for attending as a means to sustain and strengthen PHILKOFA as an organization and enhancing its networking activities. Mr. Noel Sevilla, founding president, shared how the association started and the challenges encountered as well as the challenges ahead.

Kim Jinoh, KOICA Resident Representative, gave an inspirational message in which he emphasized the need for understanding and cooperation among KOICA scholars. He also underscored the potentials of the scholars to realize PHILKOFA's vision and mission through their active involvement and participation in implementing programs and projects.

Ms. Judy Vermudo, 2010 president, presented PHILKOFA's vision, mission and its priority programs and projects, including the major project milestones implemented since its formation. She also shared the result of the strategic planning workshop held at Lancaster Hotel in Manila on July 29, 2010.

The networking/interaction meeting among the businessmen of Central Luzon and the Korean community was the highlight of the assembly. The Korean business sector was represented by Mr. Joshua Cho, owner of Korea Restaurant in Mimosa and president of the Good People International, a non-government organization based in Angeles City. Noted businessmen in Angeles City welcomed the delegation and took active part in the networking meeting. Among them were Mr. James Park, chair of the Korea Business Association in Angeles City; Mr. Mario Tito Lazatin, past president and director of the Metro Angeles City Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (MACCII) and Ms. Michelle Tayag, MACCII Executive Director. The business sector expressed its willingness and cooperation to help PHILKOFA achieve its vision and mission. The networking meeting identified opportunities for possible tie-up mechanisms in implementing PHILKOFA's projects.

The RCM planning workshop gathered KOICA trainees and discussed the plans and programs to be implemented in their regions. An election of RCMs took place during the workshop. The elected RCMs are: Ma. Aurora Quiray (CAR), Marlon Flavier-Tagorda (Region 1), Danilo Pinera (Region 2), Edna Dizon (Region 3), Grace Gallardo (Region 4A) Rizalde Rogelio (Region 4B) and Elenita Fuente (Region 5). They took their oath of office afterwards.

In the afternoon, the delegation toured around Clark Museum and the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport. The day ended with a sumptuous merienda. 

Highlights of Livelihood Project for Women of Marilao, Bulacan

Project : Donation of six (6) sewing machines and 90 kgs of raw materials (cloth for rags)
Objective : To provide livelihood opportunity for housewives-members of Katajan Homeowners' Association
Location : Purok Katajan, Barangay Loma de Gato, Marilao, Bulacan
Beneficiaries : 6 primary families; 8 additional housewives who alternately use the sewing machines
Year Implemented : 2008
Date monitored : 7 November 2010
Monitored by : Judy Vermudo, Editha Abergas and Aurora Collantes



Progress Report

- All 6 sewing machines are operational
- Products are rags, pillow cases, curtains
- Market: factories, vehicle owners especially jeepney drivers
- Income: Php 300.00/day (full-time)
Php 360.00/week (part-time use of sewing machine)

Benefits

1. Rag-making helped the beneficiaries send their children to school.

2. Beneficiaries expressed the needs for additional machines so that other women who they have taught to sew could have additional income too.

Recommendations

1. Evaluate project in 2011
2. Consider the possibility of donating additional sewing machines, say two (2) more, subject to availability of funds 

from page 4. PHILKOFA strike 3

A cheering competition added more fun to the tournament.. The winning team was judged on content, audience impact, and stage presence. The winners of the cheering competition was Team 5 composed of Gina Borinaga, KIM BOMIN, Mike Marasigan, Norlito Sarmiento, Ding Baloloy, Ronnie Ragasa and Vincent Castillo. 



PHILKOFA conducts strategic planning

On 29 August 2010, a strategic planning to revisit Vision, Mission and Goals exercise was conducted by PHILKOFA in Lancaster Hotel, Mandaluyong City. The strategic planning aimed to determine if the current vision, mission and goals of the association is still appropriate with the present situation of PHILKOFA.

Edwin de Nicolas, City Planning and Development Officer of Bago City, facilitated the planning. He started the session with a presentation of the current VMG, as follows:

Vision

PHILKOFA envisions itself to be a premier organization of Filipino KOICA scholars in promoting understanding and cooperation among peoples and nations.

Mission

PHILKOFA commits itself to:

- Maintain linkages between and among KOICA scholars in the Philippines and abroad;
- Link with other organizations for continuing education and resource mobilization; share its expertise to Philippine society; and
- Continue exchanges of relevant information and resources, establish and maintain sustainability mechanisms.

Goals

- To promote mutual and friendly relations and partnership ties between Korea and the Philippines;

- To facilitate the sharing of knowledge, skills and resources between and among KOICA fellows;
- To establish a multilateral network of specialists from many disciplines, professional fields, institutions and agencies who have been beneficiaries of KOICA-sponsored scholarship and training programs;
- To undertake programs, projects and activities that are mutually beneficial to KOICA fellows; and
- To extend widespread exemplary services for the good of the Filipino community.

Then, he discussed the components of a good vision which are “outward-looking” and “inward-looking”. Outward-looking includes (i) desired role of the organization or the best contribution it can make towards the development of the area it operates; (ii) what role does one like for his/her organization to perform in relation to the “outside world” (i.e., country); (iii) what is the unique characteristic of the organization that will enable us to perform a unique and exclusive role in the country.

For the “inward looking”: (i) desired state of the organization as an environment for its members to dwell in and where they can contribute; (ii) what do we want our members to be? (iii) what do they desire to be the state of their resources? (iv) What do they desire from their leaders? With these components, the group conducted gap analysis by filling up a Vision Reality Gap Matrix.

The proposed VMG are as follows:

continued on page 8. PHILKOFA conducts strategic planning



from page 7... PHILKOFA conducts strategic planning

Vision

By 2015, PHILKOFA is an internationally recognized service-oriented, self-sustaining and competent organization of KOICA scholars vital in promoting understanding and cooperation among peoples and nations.

Mission

PHILKOFA commits itself to:

- Be a link between and among KOICA scholars and other organizations for continuing education and resource mobilization.
- Provide relevant services to its members and the community.

Goals/Objectives

- Maintain linkages between and among KOICA scholars here and abroad through social networking sites, newsletter and website.
- Collaborate with other organizations for continuing education and resource mobilization.
- Conduct community services.



PHILKOFA and UP Open University join hands to protect biodiversity

PHILKOFA and UPOU have signed a memorandum of understanding to conduct a caravan to promote biodiversity among school children. This was spurred by the celebration of 2010 Year of Biodiversity.

Lectures, film showings, storytelling and poster-making were conducted on November 26, 2010 at the Dayap Elementary School in Calauan, Laguna.

Fifty students from grades 4 to 6 were trained as earth ambassadors. Tree planting was likewise done by the pupils. The earth ambassadors agreed to nurture tree seedlings.

Based from the interaction with the earth ambassadors, it's quite important that their enthusiasm be sustained. They were all excited to do their share of taking care of their environment (family, school and immediate community).

On November 30, the next batch of students for the school caravan will be held in Santo Domingo, Bay.

After the caravans, the earth ambassadors from the two schools will visit UPOU on December 13 for a planning-workshop. They will plan their activities as earth ambassadors. They will also be trained on maximizing the

use of the Internet and digital media in protecting and conserving our biodiversity and the environment. Their outputs will be presented on December 14. On this day, the earth ambassadors will be officially inducted and will be given their official badge as earth ambassadors.

PHILKOFA provides the needed materials for the school caravan while UPOU conducts the school caravan.



Gamsahamnida¹, Korea!

A Filipino Experience in the Dynamic Land of the Morning Calm

by Marlon Flavier Tagorda²

“Annyeong Haseyo!” A very usual yet so distinct salutation to anyone, crafted more than five centuries ago³ during the Joseon Dynasty. This effortless greeting embodies how Korean value politeness. “Mabuhay!”, “Magandang Umaga!”, “Magandang Araw!”, “Magandang Tanghali!”, “Magandang Hapon!”, “Magandang Gabi!” – these are the Filipino equivalent of the phrase; too complicated to foreign-speaking individuals visiting the Philippines. Yet in Korea, it encompasses in just one simple five-syllable phrase.

In my 21-day stay in Korea, I have noticed but one thing—they are very strict with schedule. All is set to be followed; side-trips may be taken into account but on lighter weight of consideration. The only “side” Koreans have *en masse* is the side dish—*kimchi*—regular *kimchi*, white *kimchi*, water *kimchi*, roll *kimchi*... up to more than 160th power of *kimchi* varieties⁴.

Kimchi is fermented vegetable dish used to substitute fresh vegetable during winter months. However, Koreans have solved vegetable-shortage. Yet, housewives still prepare *kimchi* to complement the main course they serve to their families. *Kimchi* continues to be a part of the conventional Korean table setting.

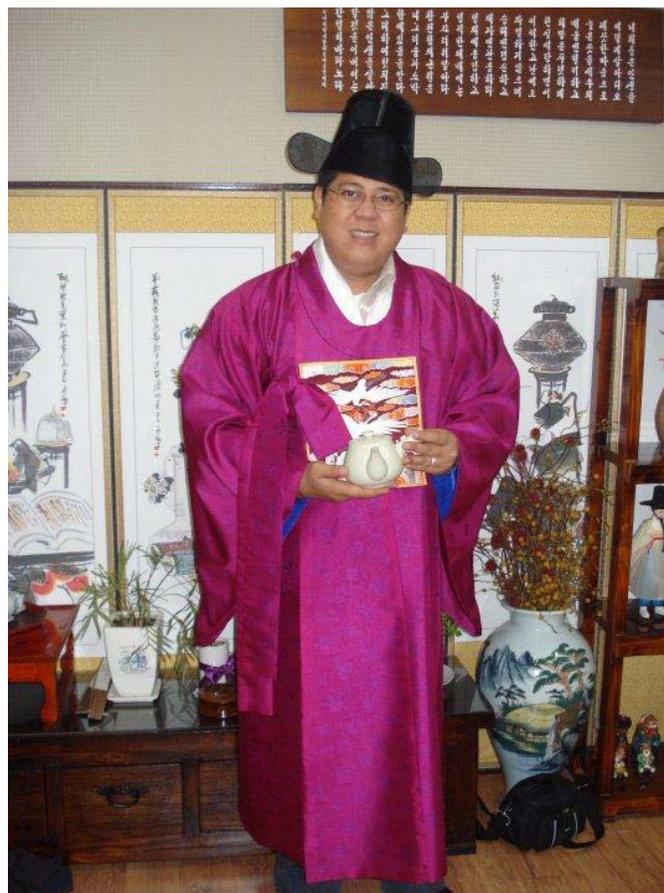
Local Administration Training

The training orientation by KOICA was held on March 8 at the International Cooperation Center’s Conference Hall where for the 19 global mix of participants. After concise briefing on the works of KOICA and ICC facilities, Prof. Jang Yong-Won presented Basic Korean Language. Too basic yet the most essential phrases were taught.

The Local Government Officials Development Institute (LOGODI) provided the training module. The subsequent discussions show the training proper.

- **Green Growth Vision** (Ms. Kim Ji-young)

“Green Growth is not an option, it is the only choice.” After successfully meeting and even surpassing its economic growth in the last 60 years, Korea for the next 60 years is going back to the basics, i.e., a vision for environment-friendly policies—the Green Growth Vision, a new paradigm of progress and it desires to change people’s behaviour and way of thinking.



- **Korean Economic Development at a Glance** (Prof. Sung Keuk-je)

Since resources are limited, Koreans put no limit on their imagination on how to accelerate from almost nothing in the ‘60s to a \$20,045 GDP, the 13th largest in the world in 2007. Korean morphed from a timid and unproductive person to tireless work-oriented individual surpassing working hours of the G7 and New Economies.

- **Territorial Development Strategies in Korea** (Prof. Lee Jeong-sik)

Korea’s limited land use benefited the country with proper administration to this constraint.

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- **Korean Local Administration and Financial Management** (Prof. Hwang Yun-won)

Similarly, Korea has tiers of local governments—the provinces (*do*), cities (*si*, *gun*, *gu*) and administrative districts (*eup*, *myeon*, *dong*). With the initiatives of these local governments, they have managed to have control over their governments and revenues.

- **Rural Development and New Village Movement in Korea** (Prof. Kim Kung-joo)

With the remains of the World War II, Koreans were hard up to stand and move forward. Good thing Pres. Park has institutionalize the *Saemaul Undong* (SMU) that gave village/rural people the chance to advance their lives, both economically and morally. With resources, the people volunteered for infrastructure works with mind-set that the project is for their own benefit.

- **Advancing Good Governance in Local Governments** (Prof. Moon M. Jae)

Global issues and problems on governance exist in almost all of governments. Democracy is essential to achieve good governance. For a government to shape its future, it needs to develop and implement an agreed vision and policy priorities together with the citizens and stakeholders.

- **Regional Development Policy** (Dr. Hwang Kum-hoe)

To take advantage of the demographic area of the Gyeonggi Province, several zoning area were implemented. This was to prevent over-concentration of population and industry and to disperse selective land use functions for balanced national development.

- **IT Revolution and E-Government in Korea** (Mr. Jeong Kuk-hwan)

The presentation focused on the initiative of Korea to bravely engage in e-government that essentially brought success and global recognition. Apart from these citations, important element in the success was the response of the citizens to efficiently utilize the system.

Study Visit

Several ministries, agencies, cities and commissions were visited. Study visits were the practical and visual experience of what were discussed in the lecture rooms. Two of the most memorable and essential visits were The Cradle of *Saemaul Undong* Pohang Munseong Village and the Korean Institute for Gender Equality Promotion and Education (KIGEPE).

Field Trip

Apart from the study visits, the participants were given numerous chances to tour Korea. Various experiences were shared by Korea and inspired the participants with the success of the cities and industries in Korea. Traditional culture were felt such as tea-preparation, Korean art and even Korean national costume.

Recommendations

Experiencing Korea in 21 days has opened my mind to panoramic view of greatness. Should the Philippines has accelerated in its persistence to advance the economy in the '70s and '80s, Philippines may have been a G20 or even a G8 member now. But sad to note that there were some who have permitted the country to fall into pieces.

Filipinos then were just contented with “good” when in fact, Filipinos could be “great”. The following are very simple recommendations, yet sometimes, these are being overlooked to be the remedy to bearish Philippine trend.

1. **Investment.** One famous Filipino saying goes “*magsuksok nang may madukot*” meaning “save to have something in the future”. In economics, savings differ from investment. In accounting, savings are assets and investment is outright expense. Logically, investment is expense; but with futuristic outlook, investment becomes asset.
2. **Ecological Rehabilitation.** Even without the issue of climate change, Filipinos should be dead serious in rehabilitating the ecology by doing a single deed—plant a tree. For the last two or three years, Korea has stopped planting trees on April 5th (the nation's tree-planting day) not because of lack of interest but because they have covered all possible land area and there could be nowhere to plant any tree anymore. This scene I envy the most since we Filipinos always had tree-planting events in our annual activities. But why then are we still experiencing catastrophic tragedies such as *Ondoy* and *Pepeng*⁶. In unity with the environment, we should revitalize green revolution and offer what our mother nature deserves.
3. **Transferability of Saemaul Undong System.** As a movement for national development to escape from absolute poverty, spiritual reformation, local community development overcoming splits and conflicts among social classes, *Saemaul Undong* (SMU) is the easiest yet the best road to drive through development.

In the province of Ilocos Sur, a much related program was conceptualized in 2006 and tagged as “Joint Community Services” or the JCS Program. JCS is a pool of

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professional and technical persons, public officials and volunteers that cater to various fields: health, education, environment, livelihood and other needs of the poor and indigent that eventually aspire to achieve *Sapasap a Balligi* (absolute victory).

Gamsahamnida, Korea!

Indeed, Korea has gone far. It has even surpassed the economic development of the nations that once extended assistance to them. *Gamsahamnida*, Korea for opening our eyes to reform our behavior towards our desire to advance and develop our nation—the Philippines. Guided with your experiences and with proper values reformation, I am certain that each Filipino KOICA fellow will transfer the benefits not only to papers like this, but with all the possible absorber of success stories.

We admire you, Korea! Imitation isn't bad at all if it will better off the society. Allow us to replicate significant and applicable systems you have. *Gamsahamnida, Korea!* 

Footnotes

- 1 "Thank You" in Korean language.
- 2 One of the two Filipinos among 19 global mix of participants for the International Program on Local Legislation sponsored by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) held at KOICA and Local Government Officials Development Institute (LOGODI), Korea last 7–27 March 2010. Mr. Tagorda is an Administrative Assistant II of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Ilocos Sur.
- 3 *Hangeul* (the Korean alphabet) was developed by group of scholars commissioned by King Sejong the Great in 1443. It is composed of 10 vowels and 14 consonants.
- 4 travelguide KOREA. 2010. Korea Travel Organization. Page 63
- 5 Columbia University Prof. Jeffrey Sachs at ODA International Conference, March 2007, Seoul. As cited at *Making a Better World Together*. Page 6.
- 6 Two super typhoons that struck the Philippines last August–September 2009 that has damaged properties, crops and even took away lives of the people of Metro Manila, Central and Northern Philippines.

PHILKOFA co-sponsors massage therapy training in Quezon City

A livelihood training in massage therapy was organized by PHILKOFA together with the Natural Health Foundation of the Philippines (NHFP), the Barangay Federation for World Peace (BFWP) and Barangay Tatalon on February 27, 2010 in Barangay Tatalon, Quezon City. Dr. Ronnie A. Royo, NHFP president, conducted the 1-day training for 50 participants, mostly housewives from the barangay.

Designed for the participants to gain basic knowledge on massage therapy., Dr. Royo conducted the training through lectures and hands-on demonstration. It included detailed explanation on (i) fundamental theories and practice of massage therapy/reflexology; (ii) understanding basic concept of massage therapy; (iii) how it works, (iv) principle of stress management, and (v) the cause of disease.

This was followed by a lecture on (i) understanding of basic human anatomy, (ii) fundamentals of pressure points and body meridians, and (iii) principle and practice of reflexology and shiatsu back massage. The latter included contra-indication, and indication of massage; preparation and health safety practice; and massage therapy skills demonstration.

Hands-on presentation and return demonstration of the participants was conducted in the afternoon. It

involved reflexology technique-hand and feet reflexology; shiatsu back massage application-sequence of application; massage treatment and application and workshop on manipulative therapy. The participants were grouped into two to apply the massage lessons on each other. The training closed with the distribution of certificates of attendance to the participants and photo documentation.

Present during the activity were PHILKOFA officers, to wit: Judy Vermudo (President), Aurora Collantes (VP for Luzon), and Bernabe Sanchez (VP for Mindanao). From the NHFP were Rosemarie L. Royo, R.M.T (Managing Director), Leopoldo Uba and Romel Dionisio (Training Coordinators).

The BFWP was represented by its Secretary-General, Roland P. Alcayaga. Barangay Tatalon, Quezon City was led by its chairman, Benedick B. Banega.

The training objective of learning and doing the massage techniques by the target beneficiaries, particularly the out-of-school youth was achieved. The training participants were very grateful to the organizers through PHILKOFA, because of the new skills they learned and the opportunity to earn income for the family that will help in community development. 

Omy Conde: through my lenses

by *Bec Lucas Coronado*

I came to know the name Romulo D. Conde through PHILKOFA. I have not heard or met him before. However, we share common friends in PHILKOFA and as such we came to move in similar circles since then. We became fast friends, with PHILKOFA serving as the link that binds us. He was and still is as passionate about making PHILKOFA stronger and relevant.

I decided that I shall write the article in a third person perspective and finally ended writing it in a style that uses the “I” perspective. So this article will be partly anecdotal, with the hope that with the “I” perspective, the PHILKOFA community will come to know more of Omy (as we fondly call him) through my eyes.

Omy is now working in Singapore in the water technologies sector (whatever that means). Although foreign-based, he goes home every so often to reunite with his family and to “treat” friends, (just like he did last Christmas season when PHILKOFA friends gathered one afternoon for pizza and pasta). I am looking forward to another “treat” when he goes home again this year. He would always be reminded that when friends gather, the ones who are not there are always the topics of conversation. I am sure that by the time this article comes out, he has booked his flight ticket back to the Philippines.

I would be forever grateful to Omy for his friendship and for his generosity in welcoming me to Singapore when I went there in 2008. He knew that I did not have loads of money that time. He picked me up from the airport, paid for my train ticket all throughout and treated me to a Japanese dinner. He was gracious enough to bring me to several tourist spots in the Lion City until midnight because I needed only to stay a night. All these, he did with a smile on his face. A true friend indeed.

Omy served as Treasurer of PHILKOFA for fiscal year 2003–2004. He was PHILKOFA’s President in 2004. During his presidency he was always striving to work hard for PHILKOFA to remain relevant but at the same time for the Board and members to have fun. As the Treasurer, he was



challenged by the task of preparing the financial report, which he thought was not his strongest point. He considered many things as challenges but he believes that with the help and assistance of the members, the association was able to accomplish a lot. He professes that he is willing to assist PHILKOFA in whatever way he can, be it monetary or otherwise, as long as he has the resources to do that. Through PHILKOFA, Omy said that he has gained many friends, was able to network, developed his interpersonal skills and expanded his knowledge base.

Omy reminisces that the most memorable times with PHILKOFA was when doing project/activity preparations until the wee hours of the morning. He misses the fun and the camaraderie that was formed among PHILKOFA Board and active members. He truly believes that despite the challenges that PHILKOFA is facing, the association remains relevant as it serves as a venue for networking among KOICA scholars and if only the association stay true to its ideals. He wishes that in the future, there will be more workshops and seminars to be conducted relevant to most of its members.

Mabuhay ka Omy. 

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