

*This article (CYDF Newsletter, 2003) is being reprinted to remind CYDFI and our readership on the weight of the issue of poverty in Calantas/Nabuclod and around the Philippines. We are being invited to think of “**what and how we can participate in breaking the cycle of poverty in our midst.**”*

We don't need to be materially blessed to do this but be sensitive and creative enough in our own efforts in trying to reach out for others who need our help most and empower them to be at their best as we empower ourselves in the process. Let's bundle ourselves together in mind and spirit, and translate that into action.

SOME ROOT CAUSES OF POVERTY

One of the objectives of Calantas Young Dreamers Foundation, Inc. is “to break the cycle of poverty by helping youth help himself and in turn, expect him to help incoming scholars as well”. This objective is too big to accomplish because there is no way, at a glance, one can really solve the depth of poverty in our midst.

Poverty is a universal phenomenon that there is no apparent end or solution to it. It seems like the world we live in is created as such that we develop our immune system into recognizing it but not willing to do something about it. We excuse ourselves in saying, “if they are bothered, they do something about it. It is not me! For so long as I am not bothered, I am ok! I don't need to lift a finger because I don't care”.

It seems to me that the birth of poverty could be traced with the attitude of “I don't care”. When a person has an attitude of “I don't care”, apparently he begins to live for himself only. When a person lives for himself and unmindful of those around him, the world stops spinning around. As far as he is concerned, it does not matter!

“I don't care attitude” rings the bell of selfishness. For when a person thinks only of himself, he will not care to share. When a person does not share, he deprives others who live with less

and who are less privileged. If you are less privileged, you suffer the consequences manifested by your living socio-economic conditions and find yourself in abject poverty. When you are in abject poverty, you are apparently condemned to your human “survival” condition of basically meeting your human needs. “For so long as I have food to eat, clothes to wear, shelter to sleep and rest at night time, I will be alright”. But the problem is, there are those who are even deprived to have some of these basic needs.

When the Calantas Young Dreamers Foundation, Inc. embraces this objective as part of its mission “to break the cycle of poverty”, it is attempting to respond and contribute to the solution of poverty by starting a program model in the two communities in the Philippine rural areas like Barrio Calantas and Nabuclod Aeta Community by initiating a Scholarship Program, with implications not only to personal but, also, community growth and development, as well. The said communities are like social laboratories to implement the methodology (SWREM Theory In Action) designed to address the issue of “breaking the cycle of poverty”. The Foundation is demonstrating that the antidote to the “I don't care attitude” is exactly its opposite: “I care”. The Foundation cares and therefore, it shares! Sharing means maximizing the potential use of limited resources to benefit the intended beneficiaries as they are empowered to become the best of what they are capable of being and becoming.

Once the beneficiaries are empowered, they become self-empowered and it is, then, the issue of poverty is truly addressed. Therefore, the scholars under the Scholarship Program Model of the Calantas Young Dreamers Foundation, Inc. are like seeds planted being nurtured and nourished to become healthy so that they can bear fruits for others to eat. This process, when done on a continuous loop basis, will definitely and significantly “break the cycle of poverty in the two social laboratories” planted with the seed of CYDFI Scholarship Program Model. May we all see and follow the kindled light in this effort.

The following article is being reprinted unexpurgated from a San Francisco Filipino-American "MANILA MAIL" Newspaper published on May 3-9, 2006, Section Jump Page, A12 to communicate to the website readers the gravity of the issue of poverty in the Philippines for which the Calantas Young Dreamers Foundation, Inc. (CYDFI Philippines) has taken a position to positively respond and do something about the issue of poverty in the Philippine rural areas like Calantas and Nabuclod Aeta Community through a Scholarship Program Model with a methodology called SWREM Theory In Action that is designed to "empower indigent but deserving talented youth help themselves so they can help incoming scholars leading to breaking their cycle of poverty as they learn to become socially responsible, with implications not only to personal but community growth and development, and to promote replication advocacy of said model in other communities beginning with Benedicto." All three places are within the town jurisdiction of Floridablanca, Pampanga, Philippines. ...The CYDFI Founders

4.1 Million Pinoys Still Living In Extreme Poverty

Some 4.1 million Filipinos continue to live in "extreme" poverty despite government claims that the nation's economy has improved and the peso has become stronger, an anti-poverty alliance said last week.

The Global Call to Action Against Poverty - Philippines (GCAP - Philippines) said the government has failed to implement genuine pro-poor programs.

"The lives of the poor and socially excluded are not getting any better simply because of the government's neglect of the needs and demands of the poor," Marivic Raquiza, GCAP - Philippines national coordinator, said.

Raquiza said the government appears to be postulating a "distorted reality" when it claimed that the Philippine economy improved while millions of Filipinos remain in "extreme poverty."

Hunger levels continue to rise while unemployment and under-employment rates are "extremely high" at 11 percent and 21 percent, she added.

Raquiza said this condition forcing 10 percent of the country's population to find jobs abroad, while others have resorted to

working in the informal economy as vendors and peddlers, among others.

"While the government usually celebrates Labor Day through meetings with pro-government labor unions to boast success of its employment programs and trumpet the strengths and opportunities of the country's labor force, thousands of trade unions, labor and urban poor groups across the political spectrum have massed up in the streets and freedom parks of Manila to speak up and tell the truth about the real state of the economy and poverty in the country," she said.

Raquiza criticized the government for the absence of accountable and transparent governance, for the massive charges of corruption and lack of political will which hamper the genuine implementation of a social reform agenda.

"This is the irony of May 1," she said. "Despite the government claims that the Philippine economy improved...Over 700,000 poor Filipinos live in slum communities in Metro Manila alone and the numbers are growing."

"Pro-poor spending for basic social

services is at an all-time low, while debt service continues to claim the lion's share in the national budget."

Yesterday, more than 3,000 members of urban poor people's organizations and coalitions under the GCAP - Philippines joined mass demonstrations as part of the Labor Day commemoration of workers' struggle for their rights.

Members of GCAP - Philippines marched to convey solidarity with other labor groups, express disgust at the government, and dramatize the bleak realities of poverty and social exclusion.

The GCAP - Philippines contingent was comprised of the Kalipunan ng Samahang Maralita sa Pilipinas, Assalam Bangsamoro People's Association, Piglas-Kababaihan, Kilusan para sa Makatarungang Lipunan at Gobyerno and National Urban Poor Coalition. ...PhilStar.

HUNGER LEVEL AMONG FILIPINOS AT ALL-TIME HIGH, SAYS SWS.

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More Filipinos are going hungry, according to a recent survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations.

Some 2.8 million families in the country experienced having had nothing to eat at least once in the past three months, as the hunger level in the country hit an all-time high of 16.9 percent in March, 2006.

The figure surpassed the previous peak of 16.7 percent recorded in December 2005. Hunger has been on the rise since the end of 2003.

The number of Filipinos going hungry declined from 16.1 percent in March 2001 to the record-low of 5.1 percent in September 2003. Then the hunger pangs started to increase.

Meanwhile, almost 700,000 families or 4.2 percent, reported experiencing severe hunger - defined in the survey as going

hungry often always - in the past three months.

Moderate hunger - defined as experiencing hunger once or a few times in the last three months - was at 12.7 percent translating to roughly 2.1 million families.

Hunger was highest in Mindanao at 21 percent, Visayas registered 16 percent, while hunger in the rest of Luzon was at 14.7 percent.

Metro Manila was ravenous at 18.3 percent. It had reached a record-low of 3.4 percent in March 2004, but then people started getting famished in the second half of 2004 and then posting a record 21 percent in December 2005.

The SWS Survey also surveyed the public's awareness and personal experience with Tindahan Natin. Some 7 million households or 42 percent said they were aware of

of the project.

Tindahan Natin provides cheap, good quality rice and noodles through stores jointly identified and endorsed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Barangay Council, the National Food Authority and the City/Municipal Social Welfare and Development offices.

Meanwhile, about 1.5 million families or 9 percent reported that Tindahan Natin stores were present in their areas, while 4 percent or over 650,000 families reported having bought items from these stores.

The survey was conducted from March 8 to 14 using face-to-face interviews of 1,200 adults divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, with sampling error margins of plus-minus 3 percent for national percentages and plus-minus 6 percent for area percentages (INO7).