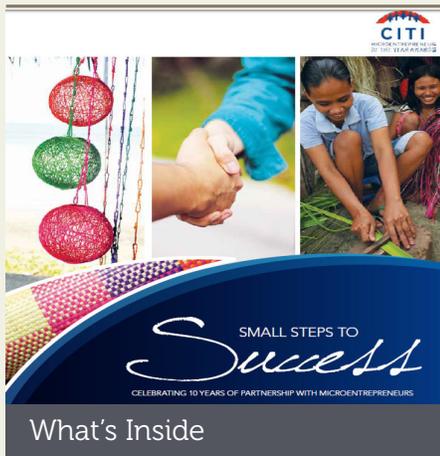


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Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards showcase 10 microenterprise heroes with "Small Steps to Success"

Citi Philippines, together with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and the Microfinance Council of the Philippines, Inc. (MCPI), paid tribute to ten men and women whose economic heroism have improved their lives as well as their communities.

The three are partners in the annual Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards (CMA) program, which recently marked its first decade. In celebration of this milestone, CMA published a book that features 10 inspiring stories of Filipino microentrepreneurs who were awarded over the history of the program.

Entitled "Small Steps to Success", the book showcased that success can come in many forms and tastes, from peanut butter to buko pie, to cassava cake and suman tinambiran.

Each individual featured in the book built their enterprises from hard work and a strong determination to succeed. Today, they have secured steady income for their families as well as opened employment opportunities for others.

The book also gives a brief history of CMA against the backdrop of the microfinance industry over the last ten years. What was intended to be a one-time celebratory event to commemorate the 100 years of Citi in Asia and in the Philippines turned out to be a huge success, and the CMA has now evolved

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BPI Globe BankO and Ateneo renew partnership to support MFI development



BPI Globe BankO President Teresita B. Tan and Ateneo de Manila University President Fr. Jose Ramon Villarin, S.J, (seated) during the agreement signing last January 9. Also in attendance were (standing L-R) BankO executives Josaias dela Cruz, VP for Institutional Banking Group; Nell Salvador, BankO Training Academy Head; Francis Abcede, IBG Manager and Gigi Gatti, VP for Emerging Markets; with Divina Quemi, NSCC Chief Executive Officer; Analiza Nacua, OCCCI Team Leader; Rolando Victoria, ASKI Executive Director; Vincent Rapisura, Program Manager for the Ateneo Microfinance and Capacity Building Program and President of SEDPI; Dr. John Paul Vergara, VP for Loyola Schools, Ateneo de Manila University; Edwin Salonga, Chairperson of SEDPI; and Leland Joseph dela Cruz, Ateneo Development Studies Program Director.

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secretariat@microfinancecouncil.org

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into a global program adopted in 35 countries.

Funded by Citi Foundation, CMA recognizes outstanding microentrepreneurs from across the country. According to Citi country officer for the Philippines Sanjiv Vohra, the true success of the program is evident in the many compelling stories of different men and women whose humble beginnings are now shaping the future of their community. Vohra serves as co-chair of the National Selection Committee that chooses the winners each year together with BSP Governor Amando M. Tetangco, Jr.

“Microentrepreneurs are the new hope of this generation and the force that will take this nation to new heights. In this book, we selected 10 outstanding microentrepreneurs honored by the CMA. Their inspiring stories of heroism and hope attest that the program has contributed to the development of the Philippine

economy,” said Vohra.

In his message published in the book, BSP Governor Tetangco said: “CMA has given us a unique vantage point to see the developments that have taken place in the microfinance industry in the Philippines. The effective partnership between Citi, MCPI and BSP has allowed us to provide a fitting venue to highlight the exceptional stories of our country’s industrious and resilient microentrepreneurs.”

“The CMA program is a celebration of economic triumph amidst great odds at the grassroots level. We have seen the transformation of microentrepreneurs from budding handicraft makers to producers of world-class quality products. And we are very privileged to have known them and honored to have assisted them, one way or another,” said MCPI chairperson Mila Mercado-Bunker.

Taking part in CMA’s milestone is a distinguished group of men and women who chose the winners of the 2012 Citi Microentrepreneur Awards.

Apart from Gov. Tetangco and Vohra, the CMA National Selection Committee is composed of former Monetary Board member Antonino Alindogan, Jr., Philippine Daily Inquirer chairperson Marixi Prieto, Ayala Corporation president and chief operating officer Fernando Zobel de Ayala, RFM Corporation president and CEO Joey Concepcion, GMA Network, Inc. chairman Atty. Felipe Gozon, Robinsons Retail Group president and COO Robina Gokongwei-Pe, and Ateneo de Manila University associate professor Dr. Darwin Yu.

Small Steps to Success features the touching accounts of Jennilyn Antonio, Corazon Bautista, Dionesia dela Peña, Orlando Dulay, Nolie Estocado, Carina Gonato, Felicidad Kalalo, Ester Lumbo, Consuelo Valenzuela, and Cherry Yack, Sr.

To read the book online, please go to <http://www.microfinancecouncil.org/citi-microentrepreneur-of-the-year-awards>. ♦

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BPI Globe BankO and Ateneo renew partnership to support MFI development

BPI Globe BankO, the Philippines’ first mobile-based, microfinance-focused savings bank, reinforced its efforts towards sustainable development with the continuation of its partnership with the Ateneo de Manila University on enhancing capacities of microfinance institutions (MFIs).

The joint project, called “Ateneo-BankO: Building Capacities of Microfinance Institutions”, was established in 2007 and is now on its fourth renewal. Since its inception, the partnership through the Ateneo de Manila University’s Development Studies Program and its partner-trainers from the Social Enterprise Development Partnerships, Inc. (SEDPI) has successfully equipped MFIs such as rural banks, cooperatives, non-government organizations and people’s organizations all over the country with the necessary skills and knowledge to further aid them in delivering microfinance services. It has also extended technical support

and mentoring assistance to program participants, thereby strengthening the policies and operations of their institutions.

To date, the program has conducted 89 training events covering 25 microfinance topics in 13 key cities. More than 1,800 participants from 279 MFIs have attended the training programs, which has in turn benefitted over 2 million microfinance clients. Courses offered include fundamentals and methodologies of microfinance, market-based financial product design and development, delinquency management, and financial analysis. The program has also reached out to more participants by partnering with key microfinance players in the provinces to serve as training hubs. Alalay Sa Kaunlaran, Inc. (ASKI) in Nueva Ecija, Nueva Segovia Consortium of Companies (NSCC) in Vigan, Metro Ormoc Community Cooperative (OCCCI), Eastern Visayas Cooperative Federation (EVCF) in

Leyte, Kasagana-ka Development Center, Inc. (KDCI) in Quezon City, Community Rural Bank of Catmon (CRBC) in Cebu, and Negros Women for Tomorrow Foundation, Inc. (NWF) in Bacolod City are among the training hubs providing affordable and accessible training courses on a regular basis. An added part of the program is the consultancy services provided by SEDPI to MFIs. Eligible institutions may avail of wholesale institutional loans from BankO.

The program aims to hold more training events and set up training hubs in additional locations, offer new courses on energy efficiency and target more MFIs for Training and Mentoring Assistance (TAMA) in the next two years.

Interested participants in the Ateneo-BankO: Building Capacities for Microfinance may contact Dimples Sacdalan at +63 2 4338795 or email at info@sedpi.com. ♦

Winners of Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards feted in town hall series



Clockwise: Milagros Hiyas (middle); Abella de Dios; Floraiwin Cainglet (3rd from left); Leniflor Ico (2nd from left); Marilyn Fajardo; and Rabia Mangumpig (2nd from left).

The Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards (CMA) recently launched the CMA Town Hall series to celebrate the achievements of microentrepreneurs recognized by the program.

The first town hall was held in Siniloan, Laguna to recognize 2012 CMA Luzon Regional Winner Milagros Hiyas with friends and representatives from her microfinance partner, Tulay sa Pag-unlad, Inc. (TSPI) in attendance. Hiyas is a rattan handicraft manufacturer in Mabitac, Laguna.

Funded by Citi Foundation, the CMA is a partnership between Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Citi Philippines and the Microfinance Council of the Philippines, Inc. The annual program seeks to recognize outstanding Filipino microentrepreneurs who have improved their lives as well as their communities through entrepreneurship.

Aside from cash prizes, the CMA grants winners with three-year microinsurance coverage and access to entrepreneurship training courses at the Citi Microenterprise Development Center at Bayan Academy.

Celebrating Success

The CMA town hall serves as a homecoming celebration for CMA winners. This also allows the winners' families, friends and community members to partake in their achievement.

According to Citi Corporate Affairs Director Aneth Lim, "The 2012 CMA winners were already awarded last December in Manila but we felt that each individual needs to be recognized in their own hometown. Through the CMA town halls, we are able to highlight the achievements of each CMA winner who can then celebrate their success with their family and community. We hope that by bringing the awards program to the winner's hometown, we will inspire more Filipinos to partner with microfinance institutions and take proactive solutions to improving their lives through microenterprise."

CMA regional winner Hiyas transformed the trade of duyan (cradle) weaving she inherited from her uncle into a production of furniture and other handicrafts made of rattan, abaca and bamboo. The success of her business allowed her to provide income for her family and offer employment opportunities among members of her community. She has also become a valued adviser to those who want to learn the trade.

Inspiring Others

Ma. Stella Escuadro, Southwest Regional Head of TSPI, shared that "microentrepreneurs like Milagros serve as an inspiration for others to achieve more in their business endeavors. TSPI is a microfinance institution that gives its members business opportunities through small loans while teaching them to live spiritually fulfilled lives. The CMA has been a great encouragement to both microentrepreneurs and microfinance institutions."

In addition to the town hall series, the CMA also introduced the Alumni Network in 2012 to serve as a forum for all awardees to share their success stories and motivate one another to persevere in their own businesses.

At the first town hall in Laguna, 2011 CMA winner Corazon Bautista, also a client of TSPI, was present to show support for Hiyas. Bautista's outstanding story of success in the ready-to-wear business showed many microentrepreneurs that with discipline and determination, one can thrive in their chosen trade.

More CMA town halls were held across the country for the rest of 2012 CMA winners. National winner Floraiwin Cainglet was hailed in Iloilo for her use of innovative technologies including an automatic feeder for swine and use of biogas that reduced their operating costs as well as increased productivity. She started with two piglets in 2004, and now manages a PhP2.5 million business.

Visayas winner Abella de Dios was feted in Malapascua Island, Daanbantayan, Cebu while Mindanao winner Rabia Mangumpig was honored in Cotabato City. Abella's burger joint has become a full blown buffet bar and restaurant with as many as 15 workers during peak season while Rabia's dress shop for Muslim brides and grooms has grown to a PhP2.3 million enterprise.

Special awardees for social innovation, Marilyn Fajardo and Leniflor Ico, also showed remarkable drive and success starting with almost nothing. Marilyn was selling cosmetics and now owns a fleet of pedicabs with 41 drivers, many of whom are ex-convicts that she wanted to give a second chance at improving their lives. Leniflor had only PhP100 in capital when she began her icing flower candies business, and now enjoys sales of more than PhP3 million. Fajardo's town hall was held in Antipolo, while Ico was toasted in Nueva Vizcaya. ♦

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