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Innovative fishball maker from Bulacan named top winner of 2018 CMA



In photo are all the nine winners together with members of the National Selection Committee. (Standing, back row L-R) Romeo Ponio, Special Awardee for Agri Micro-business; Mary Grace Bayalas, Youth Microentrepreneur of the Year; Jesette Oquendo, Special Awardee for Community Leadership; Estrella Balnao, Special Awardee for Agri Micro-business; Marisa Ganding, Special Awardee for Startup Micro-business. (Standing, second row L-R) Rosario Amoroto, Regional Awardee for Visayas; Maria Elena Estadola, Regional Awardee for Luzon; Erwin Ramos, CMA Microentrepreneur of the Year; Arnold Viado, Regional Awardee for Mindanao. (Seated L-R) BSP Deputy Governor Chuchi G. Fonacier; Citi Philippines CEO Aftab Ahmed; Philippine Daily Inquirer Former Chairperson Marixi Rufino-Prieto; and Presidential Adviser on Entrepreneurship and RFM Corporation President and CEO Jose Ma. A. Concepcion III.

Manila, December 7, 2018 – An entrepreneur’s innate ability to fish deep for innovative ideas to propel his fishball-making business to success earned him the top spot in the 2018 Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards (CMA), a program funded by the Citi Foundation and hosted in partnership with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), and the Microfinance Council of the Philippines, Inc.

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The CMA is a signature initiative of the Citi Foundation aimed at generating economic opportunities for low-income people, including youth, around the globe. The awards program provides entrepreneurs with resources to strengthen their business, including access to networks; capital; tools and training; and enables individuals to create economic sustainability for themselves, their families, and their communities.

UPLIFT Philippines client, Erwin Ramos, who turns bibbid fish into

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fishballs and other processed products, was presented the CMA Microentrepreneur of the Year award in ceremonies held at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Complex, Manila. Ramos was joined by other awardees: Maria Elena Estadola (People's Alternative Livelihood Microfinance Foundation of Sorsogon, Inc. client), nito handicrafts business owner, Regional Awardee for Luzon; Rosario Amoroto (CARD Bank client), calamansi processing business owner, Regional Awardee for Visayas; Arnold Viado (Rizal MicroBank client), balut producer, Regional Awardee for Mindanao; and Mary Grace Bayalas (RAFI Micro-finance, Inc.), midwife and owner of a birthing home, Youth Microentrepreneur of the Year.

The Special Award for Agri Micro-business was given to two equally deserving winners this year: Estrella Balnao (Alalay Sa Kaunlaran, Inc. client), a coffee farmer and producer; and Romeo Ponio (Peoples Bank of Caraga, Inc. client), a corn and vegetable farmer. The Special Award for Community Leadership went to Jessette Oquendo (Negros Women for Tomorrow Foundation, Inc. client), owner of a pasalubong (souvenir) center for Palawan crafts; while Marisa Ganding (Kabalikat para sa Maunlad na Buhay, Inc. client), a spa and wellness center owner, received the Special Award for Startup Micro-business.

During the launch of the 2018 CMA, BSP Governor Nestor A. Espenilla, Jr. pointed out that "It is only appropriate that we continue to showcase truly inspiring success stories of our microentrepreneurs. Since its creation in 2002, the CMA program has served as a vehicle to encourage other aspiring microentrepreneurs nationwide and to spread the message that through the value and nobility of hard work, anything is possible." He added that "our partnership with MCPI and Citi Foundation is a significant contribution to the BSP's Continuity Plus-Plus Agenda - one aspect of which is ensuring that our financial system is inclusive and

leaves no one behind."

"We are honored to recognize and celebrate successful entrepreneurs whose perseverance, determination and conviction to pursue their dreams serves as an inspiration to others. These outstanding entrepreneurs have made a difference for their families and now serve as catalysts to encourage and motivate other entrepreneurs to follow in their footsteps. Citi Philippines is dedicated to supporting financial inclusion initiatives that help Filipinos achieve financial independence and enable them to make a contribution to their communities," said Citi Philippines CEO Aftab Ahmed.

In 2011, Ramos, together with his wife Lanie, experimented with the use of bidbid fish—considered a nuisance in bangus fishponds—as base ingredient for fishballs. In time, they ventured into dried fish processing and fish chicharon (crispy skin)-making. An initial loan of PhP5,000 from UPLIFT Philippines, Inc. helped Ramos launch their own brand, Erwin and Lanie's Fishball. His production facility in Paombong, Bulacan churns out freshly made fishballs and other products on a daily basis. No part of the bidbid fish goes to waste; even the innards are used as feeds in prawn farms. To this day, Ramos continues to make product innovations while relentlessly marketing his products to clients in person.

The National Selection Committee

(NSC) that chose this year's winners is composed of Gov. Espenilla and Mr. Ahmed as co-chair; with members Mr. Jose Ma. A. Concepcion III, President and CEO, RFM Corporation; Ms. Teresita T. Sy-Coson, Vice Chairperson, SM Investments Corporation; Atty. Felipe L. Gozon, Chairman and CEO, GMA Network, Inc.; Hon. Ramon M. Lopez, Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry; Ms. Mary Ann M. Montemayor, Mindanao Private Sector Representative, National MSME Development Council; Ms. Imelda M. Nicolas, President, Samahan ng mga Pilipina para sa Reporma at Kaunlaran; Ms. Marixi Rufino-Prieto, Former Chair, the Philippine Daily Inquirer; Dr. Michael L. Tan, Chancellor, University of the Philippines Diliman; Mr. Orlando B. Vea, President, Voyager Innovations, Inc.; and Mr. Fernando Zobel de Ayala, President, Ayala Corporation.

CMA is now on its 16th year of recognizing outstanding microentrepreneurs across the Philippines. Through the years, this awards program has highlighted the efforts of multiple stakeholders working together to strengthen microfinance and enterprise development, and financial inclusion in the country. CMA has given recognition to over one hundred microentrepreneurs across the country, including youth microentrepreneurs and those with notable contributions in community leadership, agriculture, and environmental sustainability.



• HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE MCPI SECRETARIAT •

MCPI conducts simultaneous events on client protection and governance

On December 5-6, 2018, the Microfinance Council of the Philippines, Inc. (MCPI), in partnership with the Advancement of Microenterprise Development NGOs, Inc. (AMED), conducted an Introductory Training on Client Protection at the Orchid Garden Suites, Manila. The two-day training was attended by 38 participants representing 18 MFIs. The training introduced the seven client protection principles – Appropriate Product Design and Delivery, Prevention of Over-indebtedness, Transparency, Responsible Pricing, Fair and Respectful Treatment of Clients, Privacy of Client Data, and Mechanisms for Complaint Resolution – to financial service providers that are new to client protection and helped further fortify their respective organizations' client protection practices. The training is part of MCPI's Responsible Microfinance Workshop Series and is supported by Appui au Développement Autonome (ADA), a Luxembourg-based NGO.

On December 6, 2018, MCPI also held an Orientation on the Template Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, and Manual on Good Governance for Microfinance NGOs. The orientation was hosted by ASA Philippines Foundation and was held at the office of ASA Philippines in Ortigas Center, Pasig City. The activity was attended by 79 participants from 26 MF NGOs. During the orientation, Atty. Rachel Gumtang-Remalante of the Securities and Exchange Commission familiarized participants with the template Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws that are compliant with governance standards of the Microfinance NGO Regulatory Council (MNRC). Atty. Remalante also presented the important sections of the template Manual on Good Governance and its importance in the corporate governance of MF NGOs. A representative from the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) also discussed the policies, guidelines, and procedures in the issuance of Tax Identification Number (TIN) to clients of MFIs. The one-day orientation was conducted in preparation for compliance with the accreditation requirements of MF NGOs in 2019.



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