

# Xavier

Ateneo de Cagayan

magazine

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BEYOND

CHARACTER

BY

BORDERS





# Contents

- 4 2033: Beyond Character. Beyond Borders.
- 5 XU gears up for AEI 2015 with new vision, mission
- 18 XU turns over houses to Sendong-hit employees
- 24 VEST gears toward people's participation to prevent 'another Sendong'
- 26 IYFF marks a 'green push' for agriculture
- 28 XU shines brightest at Blue Responsibility Awards in Malaysia



19

## Not just houses but community: Xavier Ecoville recounts beginnings

Roughly three years after Tropical Storm Sendong displaced thousands of families in Cagayan de Oro City, a resettlement project now flourishes as a new community and shares the story of its beginnings.

## A Festival #BEYONDCOMPARE

It was the liveliest time of the year for the Xavier University community—the campus brimming with people, the resounding musical performances and Christmas carols, the rippling of hashtags on social media, the rush of gimmicks, the raving dance party, and of course, the grand fireworks display to cap it all.

6  
Cover  
Story

20

## Rediscovering the country's first folkloric museum

Through the artifacts and works of art displayed in its three galleries, rediscovering the 47-year-old Museo de Oro, also known as the "Museum of the South," promises a worthwhile and creative experience for the literati, artists and museum-goers alike.



5<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary  
1964-2014

## 22 SEARSOLIN on its golden anniversary: 'Exemplify the Legacy of Fr Masterson'

The late Fr William F Masterson SJ not only dared, but he also dreamt "the impossible dream" as he formed men and women for others, for rural development and leadership.



# 2033: BEYOND CHAR ACTER

## BEYOND BORDERS

This year marks the journey of Xavier University to take on greater heights and broader challenges. The launching of its revised vision and mission reaffirmed its commitment to expand its scope and to forge diverse opportunities for a world that transcends borders.

Xavier remains intent at propelling the development of Cagayan de Oro City and Northern Mindanao, but also sets its engagements to actively contribute to the growth of Southeast Asia. A new vision guides it to be "A Leading ASEAN University Forming Leaders of Character by 2033."

The 2014 theme of the Xavier University Festival Days, celebrated from December 3 to 6 in honor of its patron St Francis Xavier, fittingly describes and embodies the new goal of the University.

### The Atenean character

What does it take to be an Atenean with character?

Xavier has been shaping its students to keep the fire of *magis* and *cura personalis* alive, that they may be living testimonies of being "men and women for others." Xavier underscores the virtues of the Jesuit brand of education among the youth, to promote competence, conscience, commitment and compassion.

In a line, "building character" is holistic formation.

### Diversity beyond borders

Even as Xavier aims to be a major player in education in Southeast Asia, the institution continues to promote the Filipino culture and heritage. While we grow to appreciate and understand other cultures and foster respect and open-mindedness, we, too, develop pride for the diversity of our own culture—an integral fiber to personal and national growth.

For the ASEAN Economic Integration, Xavier brings together the strength in the differences among us and pursues a world of inclusive progress.

The integration challenges the entire Xavier community to construct and nurture an ASEAN perspective, ready for a globalized exchange of knowledge, culture and cooperation towards synergy in development.

### Empowering leadership

In this challenging age, leadership truly matters. Empowered leaders are what Xavier graduates are being molded to become competitive game-changers, visionaries and innovators.

The University aims to form leaders of truth, who can see beyond what is transitory and who can think of sustainable solutions to the intertwining social, environmental and economic issues of our time. ■



## S XU gears up for AEI 2015 with new vision, mission

By Louren B Aranas and Stephen J Pedroza

*te inflammare omnia* (Go, set the world on fire) was what the founder of the Society of Jesus, St Ignatius of Loyola, said to his good friend St Francis Xavier, when Loyola sent him on a mission to the Far East.

It was with this in mind that Xavier University revisited and revised its vision-mission.

In the year 2033, XU will be 100 years old and the new vision-mission is meant to inspire the XU community forward.

The revised vision reads: "A leading ASEAN university forming leaders of character by 2033."

"We set our sights toward becoming a leading ASEAN university. We are very conscious of the process of globalization and integration," said XU president Fr Roberto "Bobby" C Yap SJ during the official launching of the new vision-mission statement at the XU Covered Courts on September 8, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mother.

"We want to be a major educational institution who will serve the whole of Southeast Asian region."

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Economic Integration in 2015 allows the

free movement of investments, goods and services among the 10 member-nations and provides further context behind the direction set by the revised vision.

The new mission was also summarized as: "Xavier University is a Filipino, Catholic and Jesuit University forming leaders of competence, conscience and commitment serving the Church, the global community and the Filipino people."

The XU president explained that the gist of the mission statement can easily be recalled by its one noun (University) and three adjectives (Filipino, Catholic, Jesuit).

As an academic community, XU is "united in the authentic search of the truth."

This community is made up not only of administrators, faculty, staff and students but also of the parents and alumni who were all well-represented during the launch.

"We care about what happens to the Philippines. ... We want to promote sustainable development of the [Northern Mindanao] region and the country," said Fr Bobby on XU being a Filipino university. As such, XU is concerned with

preserving the country's culture and heritage, and is involved in the work towards inclusive economic development and the equitable distribution of resources.

He also highlighted that XU, being a Catholic university, has a preferential option for the poor.

Meanwhile, as a Jesuit university, XU commits to the mission of the Society of Jesus—serving the faith, engaging in dialogues and caring for creations.

In his message, Fr Bobby appealed to the XU community to embody the new and broader ideals of the University.

"Ideals are like the stars," he said. "We may never reach them but they will always guide our course. We may never be able to achieve them fully and

completely, but tonight, may we commit ourselves as individuals that we come together as one community that this mission and vision will always guide our course."

A marker etched with the new vision-mission has been set beside the statue of St Francis Xavier, along the XU Main Lane to serve as a reminder. ■





## Xavier Festival kicks off with wreath-laying, mass

The XU Festival Days 2014 started with honoring the University patron St Francis Xavier through a wreath-laying ceremony held at the XU Main Lane on his Feast Day.

Flowers, songs and a military tribute were offered to show appreciation for the saint's mission and values which continue to inspire the XU community.

During the ceremony, Fr Mars Tan SJ, rector of the Loyola House Jesuit Community, highlighted the three exemplary traits of St Francis that the people may embody. First, everyone is encouraged to strive not only for work and academic excellence, but also for spiritual excellence. Second, we must be catalysts for inclusive development especially for the poor and the marginalized. Then, as a Filipino community, we must be sensitive to different cultures and traditions especially in Asia.

The wreath-laying ceremony was followed by a mass held in front of the University Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the homily of XU High School principal Fr Joaquin Jose Mari C Sumpaico III SJ, he emphasized the importance of preparing for the centennial of XU, which is in the year 2033.

"We should think like a university; we should think Xavier," shared Fr Sumpaico. He said the idea implies two meanings—to carry the spirit of *magis* and to exemplify the values of the University in every endeavor.

Following the mass was the official countdown for the opening of XUFD 2014 led by the University president Fr Roberto "Bobby" C Yap SJ. This year's celebration centered on the theme "2033: Beyond Character. Beyond Borders," in line with the institution's vision to become a leading ASEAN university. ■

It was the liveliest time of the year for the Xavier University community—the campus brimming with people, the resounding musical performances and Christmas carols, the heartfelt tribute to the University patron St Francis Xavier, the rippling of hashtags on social media, the rush of gimmicks at different booths, the crowd-favorite horror house, the raving dance party, and the grand fireworks display to cap it all. More than 91,000 guests were estimated to have participated in the four-day (Dec 3-6) revelry that was the 2014 Xavier Festival Days—a celebration beyond compare.

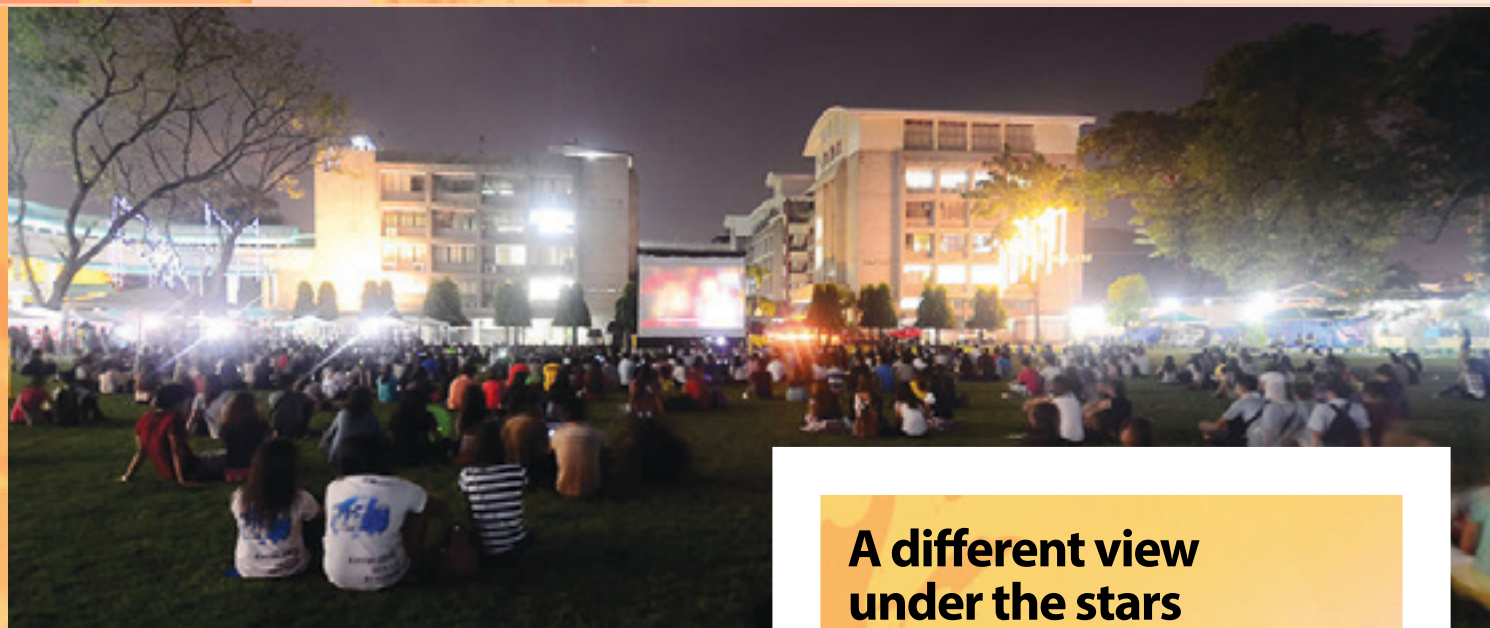


# A Festival #BEYOND COMPARE

Stories by Mary Antoinette M Magallanes, Jose Angelo Lorenzo S Gomos, Kimberley Mae V Llano, Rezza Mae B Tolinero, Ma Isabela AC Agawin, and Gari Jamero | Compiled and edited by Stephen J Pedroza and Lennie K Ong | Photos by The Crusader Publication, Anthony Jacob C Karagdag and Jerome Lasuña Torres







## A different view under the stars

Amid the musical performances, the rush of people, the fuss of gimmicks at various booths and the different exciting activities, was a different sight right at the center of the XU Main Campus.

The Xavier Box Office Film Showing, held at the the soccer field, offered people a different avenue for memorably crafting their XUFD experience.

Friends, couples, families, students and guests found a place under the stellar sky as the soccer field was transformed into a huge free walk-in theater ground.

The crowd enjoyed different genres of movies as they sat back during starry nights. The 3-day Xavier Box Office Film Showing showcased the Cinemagis Film Festival entries of high school and college students, and blockbuster movies.

## The VEST Concert: An Ode to Mother Nature

Valuing Ecosystem Services Together (VEST), the social marketing arm of the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) project of XU through its McKeough Marine Center and the Xavier Science Foundation as resource manager, together with XU Soundtable, presented the "VEST Concert: An Ode to Mother Nature."

The VEST project is aimed at employing the PES mechanism for the services provided by the dwellers of Mt Kalatungan to the territories in the lowlands. The concert repertoire included the songs composed by several local artists, including members of XU Soundtable and VEST project supervisor Evans Yonson.

The production was kept simple, with performances seamlessly blending together. The different compositions had different techniques and tapped various genres, yet they created a unifying sound—a tune for our environment. Powerful vocals and high notes evoked a certain brand of uprising—a movement towards more conscious involvement in environmental preservation.



**DAY 1**  
A Festival  
#BEYOND COMPARE



## Festival night: A showcase of talent and culture

Colorful costumes representing different nations in Asia, unique beats of music signifying a particular culture, and world-class talent — all these were matched with a high energy and loud cheers of the audience at this year's XUFD festival night at the covered courts.

With a stage set for the fusion of Asian dances, flowers and tapestry motifs, artists from Xavier Center for Culture and the Arts (XCCA) like Muriel Lomadilla, Gerikha Amper, Moses Jamero, Jeremiah Torayno, Tat Soriano and Percival Abadilla presented song performances that were well-applauded by the audience. The XU Glee Club, XUGS Little Madrigals, Xavier University Cultural Dance Troupe and Chimera also performed stellar numbers at the event.

XU president Fr Roberto C Yap SJ cited the patron saint of the University in his message. "St Francis Xavier teaches us at least two things in this journey as we try to become a leading ASEAN university forming leaders of character: That all of us must have passion and that no one journeys alone."

The grand opening was capped with a soulful presentation by Muriel Lomadilla together with other performers of Beyoncé's "I Was Here."







## Off to a good start: Bike Caravan, Food Fest and Pasiklaban 2014

With favorable cloudy skies and the momentum from the previous night's jam-packed opening festivities, none could be a better and healthier way to start off XUFD's day two than the brisk Bike Caravan early Thursday morning.

More than 50 participants from the XU community, along with bikers and skaters from different organizations in Cagayan de Oro City, took to the streets advocating environmental stewardship aboard *sikads* (sidecars), bicycles and skateboards. As they cycled their way through the busy streets of Divisoria, spectators swelled along the route, laughter and chatter filled the energetic atmosphere, and fancy crepe paper designs and balloons swayed in the wind.

What would XUFD be without the enthusiastic participation of the XU faculty and staff? XU personnel further exhibited their undying vigor and revived their youthful spirit as they participated in the first-ever "Pasiklaban 2014" — a lineup of Filipino traditional games.

The Main Lane was filled with laughter as teachers and staff took the challenge of jumping over Chinese garters, twirling their hips with hula hoops and walking sideways with *bagol* (coconut shell) on their heads. *Tumba Lata* was also something many enjoyed playing; in fact, some teachers actually took off their sandals and used these as their "pamato."

XUFD's Pasiklaban 2014 also featured one of the country's unique indigenous games — the *Habulan ng Baboy* (Chase and Catch the Pig). A large crowd gathered in the soccer field to participate and witness this amusing and energizing game.

The winners, of course, got the pigs or in this case, the piglets.



## Kinauyokan 2014: Alluring dances of Southeast Asia

The covered courts were packed with people, while flashing lights, resounding music and grand production sets further filled the area. Once again, the XU community witnessed another spectacular night of music, fun and dancing during this year's "Kinauyokan" dance festival — a showcase of contemporary dances in the Southeast Asian region.

Kicking off the night's event, the XU Cultural Dance Troupe staged a world-class performance highlighting the beautiful traditions of Mindanao.

In alluring costumes and with impressive props, participants from the different colleges presented unique contemporary dances representing their designated Southeast Asian country. The countries of Myanmar, Cambodia, Brunei, East Timor, Philippines, Laos and Singapore were showcased in diverse performances of the colleges.

Out of the seven participating colleges, the School of Business and Management emerged victorious, topping the contest with their Cambodian cultural dance set to a modern upbeat tune.

The College of Nursing placed second while the third spot was won by the Center for Integrated Technologies representing our very own country.

## Warriors remain undefeated in ultimate frisbee, 15-12

The heat of a scorching sun did not hinder the Engineering Warriors from trampling down their rivals, beating the CompStud Wizards during the Ultimate Frisbee Challenge Championship game, 15-12, at the soccer field.

With the top four colleges from the last intramurals participating in the challenge namely, the College of Engineering, College of Computer Studies, School of Business Management and the Center of Integrated Technologies, the players couldn't help but unleash their inner animals even though the event was only a friendly competition.

The Frisbee Challenge was held on Dec 4 and 5 with a total of 6 elimination games. The Wizards defeated the SBM Eagles during its first game, 11-8; Warriors slashed at the CIT Knights during game 2, 11-9; it was a close fight for the Wizards against Warriors for game 3, 10-9; during game 4, Eagles clawed Knights, 11-6; Wizards zapped out Knights for game 5, 11-3; and Warriors eliminated Eagles during game 6, 11-7.





## An entertainment from the grade-schoolers

The XUFD is definitely not only for the college students as the elementary pupils from XU Grade School Pueblo and Macasandig campuses entertained everyone with a field demonstration. Hoops wrapped with silver and gold foils, giant flowers and colorful flags filled the soccer field on Dec 5 (for Pueblo pupils) and the covered courts on Dec 6 (for Macasandig pupils) as the children dressed in their Physical Education uniform showcased their performances.

These pupils, categorized according to their grade levels, showed synchronization by dancing using their props to the beat of lively songs. The parents, most especially, look forward to this annual participation of their children in XUFD's field demo as it promotes health and wellness, and builds friendship and discipline.



## Soundtable gives musical treats at XUFD

Whether for an afternoon acoustic or a rock n' roll night, XU was filled with music as bands, students and visitors gathered around the Main Lane to celebrate with XU Soundtable's *Tugtugan* Fest.

"*Tugtugan* Fest is a fresh take on an already successful mainstay of the XUFD. Like everything we do, we wanted to make it bigger and better than anything before it, while still paying respects to its roots," said Cedric Rodriquez, Soundtable president.

The *Tugtugan* Fest was so well-attended that some of the audience had to stand at the sidelines to witness the singers and bands perform their numbers. Many of the spectators chose to sing and sway along with the music.

## A free trip to the past

For four days during the XUFD, one did not need money to revisit the history of Cagayan de Oro and Mindanao as XU's Museo de Oro opened its three galleries devoted to local history and cultures to the public for free.

Located in the room labeled Ethnohistory of Northern Mindanao are remnants of native cultures and fossils of *Stegodon*, extinct mammals similar to elephants which, in the past, inhabited the area. Different paintings and items collected from the Spanish and Japanese eras depict Cagayan de Oro and its peoples over the years.

The second room showcases the Ethnology of Mindanao through life-sized mannequins bearing the distinctive features of the different indigenous tribes of Mindanao. Aside from costumes, also displayed here is a collection of the tribes' musical instruments, hunting tools and weapons.

Known as Fr Francisco R Demetrio SJ Gallery, the third room brings together memorabilia on the man behind the establishment of the Museo de Oro and features his works focused on Philippine history and culture. Showcased here also are his authored books, photos and awards.







## The sounds of Mindanaw

Peace is not achieved in a day or two; but for Sean Baonga, a volunteer of the *Kristohanong Katilingban sa Pagpakabana* – Social Involvement Office (KKP-SIO), it is something worth advocating. Held on the last afternoon of the XUFD, *Huni sa Mindanaw*, a peace concert, made its way to XU's Main Lane with songs packed with messages of hope.

The concert forum was also in line with the Mindanao Week of Peace. Various local artists graced the concert with their original compositions. Nestor Banuag, KKP-SIO director explains, "This concert is aimed at raising awareness on the common messages we often take for granted, especially those for peace and development."



## The Horror House

### A spooky adventure

As you walk along the lanes of XU, Christmas songs fill your heart and festive gigs and activities greet you. But as you near Faber Hall, a whole different experience awaits you.

Despite the long lines and tedious hours of waiting, crowds endure for one of XUFD's most popular spectacles—the Horror House. Whether you are an XUFD-regular or a first-timer, your experience is not complete without going through Psychology Department's spooky gig. Themed on "The Purge" and "Circus," this year's Horror House highlighted "Purgers," bloody murder victims, mad killers holding daggers, possessed individuals, and creepy circus clowns and mimes.

As the tour guides direct your way and as you slowly move up the stairs to a room filled with shouting, crying and laughing voices, chills will surely run down your spine. From flickering red lights to pitch-black rooms, from freak-filled hallways to creepy classrooms and from frightening men in masks to laughing clowns, all will surely take your breath away—literally.



## Christmas Carol 2014: Bringing tidings of joy beyond compare

With recycled materials as costumes and props, ten contingents from different XU units, including the grade school department, sang their hearts out inside the Immaculate Conception Church on Dec 6 as they fought for the title of Best Christmas Carol 2014.

With a maximum of 50 members, composed of students, faculty and staff, each group was given five minutes to present their unique and creative Christmas carols with the accompaniment of percussion instruments. Each performance was judged for its clarity, choreography, costume and props.

The contingents did not fail to impress the audience and the judges with their creativity and talents.

The merry competition concluded with the XUGS being awarded as 3rd placer, College of Nursing placing 2nd while the School of Medicine emerging as the champion.



## Improvisations? No problem

For those who are not much fond of vigorous activities and busy crowds, a chill vibe and a good laugh add up to a superb and unforgettable XUFD experience. These were what Dulaang Atenista proudly offered during the last day of XUFD 2014.

Dulaang Atenista, on its 26th year, staged its fifth improvisation show titled "No Probs, It's Improvs" at the XU Little Theater. The improv performance showcased comedic short form acts constructed from predetermined games yet with impromptu and random situation suggestions from the audience.

There was no dull moment with the crowd constantly bursting into laughter as actors spoofed different scenes and threw hilarious punchlines. Since its first performance in 2010, DA's improv shows have been receiving a lot of positive feedback from the audience.

**DAY 4**  
A Festival  
#BEYOND COMPARE





## Beyond: XU Dance Party and Fireworks Display

To conclude the entire four days of the XUFD celebration, the XU Dance Party drew everyone to the soccer field. Breathtaking electro house music had everyone dancing with the colorful lights — a rave party for students, alumni and guests.

Around 40,000 people visited XU on the last day of the revelry. As the whopping party was lit by astonishing and dazzling fireworks, the celebration also ignited the Atenean spirit. It was, after all, a suitable finish to a “festival beyond compare.”







## XU turns over houses to Sendong-hit employees

By Stephen J Pedroza



**X**avier University employees who were severely affected by Typhoon Sendong in 2011 received the keys to their new homes through XU's rent-to-own housing program at Xavier Heights Subdivision, Upper Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City on Dec 14.

"When Sendong happened, the first response was relief work. For XU employees, we canvassed who were affected by the typhoon and so this project came about," recounted Fr Roberto "Bobby" C Yap SJ during his message to the beneficiaries.

"We started to work [with the beneficiaries] and offered a scheme where it's rent-to-own for a period of 15 years," he added.

The houses are scattered on several XU lots of the said subdivision and 18 full-time personnel availed of the program.

Designed by architect Lawrence Jeffrey C Maceren, each house features included two bedrooms, one bathroom and a loft, among others.

"I would like to thank the beneficiaries; I'm happy to see how this project proceeded because it was very participatory and consultative," Fr Yap continued.

The beneficiaries themselves helped to formulate the policies for their new community which they named "Xavier Row."

The XU president also expressed his gratitude to the people who made this project possible.

Among other attendees during the turnover ceremony were XU treasurer Engr Lennie K Ong, XU vice-president for Administration Br Noel B Cantago SJ, VP for Mission and Ministry Irene Grace A Guitarte, campus development project head Engr Noemi A Dacudao and the beneficiaries together with their families.

On behalf of Xavier Row, Engr Jolou F Miraflor expressed his gratitude to XU for initiating this housing program for them.

"A smile today means a lot but most importantly it means fulfillment of a promise anchored on love. This means a lot to all of us," he said.

The blessing of the houses was led by Fr Yap, Br Cantago, Fr Richard Ella SJ and Fr Joaquin Jose Mari C Sumpaico III SJ.

The turnover ceremony transpired in line with the third year commemoration of the calamity that lashed across Northern Mindanao, where CDO was one of the worst-hit areas. ■

## Not just Houses but community: Xavier Ecoville recounts beginnings

By Shane Hyacinth J Tagupa

**R**oughly three years after Tropical Storm Sendong displaced thousands of families in Cagayan de Oro City, a resettlement project now flourishes as a new community and shares the story of its beginnings.

The Xavier Ecoville Project (XEP) has produced a book "Xavier Ecoville: Brick by Brick," chronicling its earliest phases and providing insights on initiating a resettlement and rehabilitation project. It hopes to inspire and guide other organizations which want to aid and relocate disaster survivors in the future.

Edited by Palanca awardee Dr Ma Elena Paulma, "Xavier Ecoville: Brick by Brick" is packed with narratives, snapshots and personal reflections from both the XEP team and its beneficiaries. The book is told from the perspective of Xavier University – Ateneo de Cagayan, the pioneering institution of the XEP.

"A UN personnel told us that seldom does it happen for a private entity [like XU] to take a lead in this kind of work," shared Roel R Ravanera, the project chair during its first three phases. "XU took the risk and faced the challenge."

XU president Fr Roberto C Yap SJ added in the same book, "In spite of our uncertainty and lack of experience in developing relocation sites, we were, however, sure right from the start about our vision: We will not just build houses, we will build a community."

The Xavier Ecoville resettlement site, located in Barangay Lumbia, is now the permanent village of more than 550 Sendong-ravaged families. In line with

XU's vision for the project, Xavier Ecoville has given its residents not just houses and physical facilities, but also psychological guidance, values formation and livelihood opportunities, among others.

XEP also empowers its beneficiaries to be self-sustaining and ecologically wise.

Residents are in turn grateful for the comprehensive relocation aid that the XEP has provided.

"I have gone around the other resettlement sites and, for me, Xavier Ecoville is the best among all of them," said German Tumala, a beneficiary of the XEP.

For it to become a successful resettlement endeavor, the XEP went through numerous challenges especially in its first year. Such challenges included the coordination of various partners, the selection of beneficiaries, the construction of facilities and many others.

But the staff and volunteers of the XEP willingly gave their time and energy to surpass the project's obstacles. One of the major points revealed in the book is how these people proactively took on leadership roles and treated the project as their mission.

The XEP launched the book on Dec 2 at the AVR1 of the XU Old Library—a celebration of a milestone with the XU community, government and non-government partners, volunteers and the beneficiaries of the project. ■





A legend narrates that, once upon a time, there was a dark and brutish giant in the South named Makeyvakey

who fell in love with a mortal. Enticed by the beauty and grace of the native, Makeyvakey used his godly powers in order for the woman to reciprocate his fondness and emerging love.

This is the story behind "The Seduction of Makeyvakey" (1983) by Albert "Bet" Vamenta, one of the paintings depicting the mystique and darkness, monsters and heroes of Mindanao folklore hanging on the walls of Museo de Oro at Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro City.

Museo de Oro, dubbed as the first folkloric museum in the country, is not an abode of dead things. It is, rather, bursting with life, clad in vivid imagination and rich history.

Through the artifacts and works of art displayed in its three exhibit rooms, rediscovering the 47-year-old "Museum of the South" promises a worthwhile and creative experience for the literati, artists and museum-goers alike.



*The Seduction of Makeyvakey* (1983)  
by Albert Vamenta

### Retrospection and treasures

Numerous guests and visitors packed the Museo during its reopening, endorsing the Museo as one of the top local destinations in NorMin for domestic and foreign tourists.

Among the artifacts showcased in the first exhibit room are fossilized remains of the *Stegodon* found in Laguindingan, Misamis Oriental, archaeological materials dug from the Huluga Cave in Taguanao and Tagbalitang Cave in Villanueva, MisOr, which date back from the late Iron Age (300BCE to 1000CE), and religious paraphernalia during the Christianization period in Mindanao.

Relics from the Spanish, Japanese and American periods are also displayed in the first gallery, including the charcoal sketches and water color paintings of Joaquin and Vicente Elio from Mambajao, Camiguin. Don Vicente Elio was a classmate of our National Hero Jose P Rizal at Ateneo de Manila University (AdMU).

Having the most number of indigenous peoples (IPs) or *lumads*, Mindanao also offers a diverse mix of heritage, fashion and traditional tools.

The Ethnology of Mindanao room exhibits ethnographics of different Islamized and non-Islamized *lumad* communities in the

# Rediscovering



the

country's

# first folkloric museum

By Stephen J Pedroza



### The man behind the Museo

The inception of the Museo was in August 1967, when its founder, Fr Francisco Demetrio, conceived a dream of building a place to accommodate historical and archaeological items that would showcase the traditions and folklore of Mindanao.

Fr Frank, as he was fondly called by his friends and colleagues, started collecting during his travels and study excursions. His humble collection comprised the Museo's exhibit during its infancy.

Due to the astounding progress of the collection, what used to be known as the Xavier University Folklife Museum was expanded and acquired its present name of Museo de Oro.

Currently, the Museo has three major collections—The Ethnohistory of Northern Mindanao, The Ethnology of Mindanao and the Fr Francisco Demetrio SJ Gallery—forming a pivotal repository of culture, arts

and knowledge for understanding the past of the second largest island of the Philippines.

"After many years of wishing and waiting for Museo de Oro to have a facelift, it has finally come to a realization," Dr Erlinda Burton, the curator of Museo de Oro said in her message during the grand opening of the renovated museum on Sept 27.

Dr Burton also expressed her gratitude to the administration of XU, especially to the former president Fr Jose Ramon T Villarin SJ, who supported the initial plan to renovate the Museo and to Fr Roberto "Bobby" C Yap SJ, the present University president, for completing the project.

The Museo, inaugurated by the late President Corazon C Aquino in August 1987, has been under the banner of Xavier Center for Culture and the Arts (XCCA) since 2009 and is also supported by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).



island, including their musical instruments, jewelry, vibrant textiles, weaponry, and the brass-crafted ornaments of the Meranao.

Imposing at the entrance of the second exhibit room is a painting portraying the myths of creation of selected ethnic groups pertaining to the creation of the universe and humankind.

"He [Fr Demetrio] also dreamed of having a research center which is for learning about Mindanao studies and its colors for students to make use of its materials for research," said Dr Burton, who has worked with the celebrated paleoanthropologist Dr

Louis Leakey of the *National Geographic*.

Fr Demetrio first conceived the Museo as a repository for the presentation and preservation for posterity of the rich cultural heritage of Mindanao.

Fr Demetrio's collection of myths and narratives came to life in the portrayals and works of art of local artists over the years.

The paintings of resident artists Bet Vamenta and Pennesencio "Nonoy" Estarte depicting the folklore of Mindanao hang on the walls of the Fr Demetrio Art Gallery as the *Pag-uswag* (Progress) retrospective exhibit.

These artworks—with varying themes from cosmology, fusions of animal and human, epics and other stories—were done by the two local artists under the tutelage of the founder of the museum.

After the demise of Fr Demetrio in 1996, the Museo has remained open to local and international artists.

Located in the second level of the newly-renovated Museo is a gallery for contemporary exhibitions and the memorabilia section of the museum's founder, showcasing his photographs, news and magazine clippings and awards, including a numismatic collection.

*Continued on page 23...*





**5<sup>th</sup> anniversary**  
1964-2014

## SEARSOLIN on its 50th 'Exemplify the Legacy of

By Casandra Hilary B Emata

**"To run where the brave dare not go..."**

This is a line from "The Impossible Dream," one of the all-time favorite songs of the founder of Southeast Asia Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN), an international training hub dedicated to the formation of socially aware and competent leaders for poverty alleviation and holistic human development particularly in the rural areas of Asia.

The late Fr William F Masterson SJ not only dared, but he also dreamt "the impossible dream" as he formed men and women for others for rural development and leadership—those who do not only see agriculture as a business but as a way of life etched in their identities and mission.

This and other stories shed much light to the life and legacy that the great visionary Fr Masterson had built throughout SEARSOLIN's five-decade existence thus far, and the challenges to uplift the lives of the rural community.

In celebration of the golden anniversary of XU-SEARSOLIN and 104th birthday of Fr Masterson, the "Big Man" who established the XU College of Agriculture and some of its units, the forum "On the Legacy of Fr Masterson: Gratitude, Renewal, Mission" brought together the SEARSOLIN and Aggie community to commemorate



the huge impact Fr Masterson has made on their personal lives, on the institutions he set up and on the development of the region. The forum was held on Dec 18.

Guests shared their gratitude and experiences with Fr Masterson that have shaped their personal and organizational paths in the

cooperative movement, rural development and extension work, social enterprise, academe and in working at SEARSOLIN.

Aggie students and other attendees who have not personally known Fr Masterson felt like they have known him in some ways through the stories shared by the SEARSOLIN-ers and those who had the opportunities to know the Big Man.

Cagayan de Oro Archbishop Antonio J Ledesma SJ DD, SEARSOLIN director Fr Rene Tacastacas SJ, XUCA dean Dr Ma Rosario Mosqueda and Aggie Student Council (ASC) president Christian Quilang encouraged the "transformers" to rekindle the passion and purpose towards achieving greater missions, guided by the Ignatian values just like what Fr Masterson did.

The activity culminated with a heartfelt singing of "The Impossible Dream," which aptly reflected his life mission, legacy and big heart.

## anniversary: Fr Masterson'



In the book "Fr William F Masterson SJ: The Story of a Brooklyn Jesuit Missionary and The Xavier U Aggies," Archbishop Ledesma wrote in the Foreword:

*The first person accounts in this publication attest to the cura personalis shown by Fr Masterson for his wards—e.g., as a matchmaker for some of the early weddings, or as a strict dean-disciplinarian with a father's solicitude for the long-term welfare of his students, or as a doting "grandfather" to the children of some of his former students.*

*As an administrator, Fr Masterson was also a visionary—looking at the idle land where the pot of gold was not hidden underground, but lying there on the ground waiting to be developed over the passage of time. This was the case with Loyola Heights in Metro Manila today as well as Manresa Heights and Xavier Heights in Cagayan de Oro. He is also seen as the Father of Cooperatives in Cagayan de Oro in establishing with other pioneers its first credit union—which has now grown and branched off into billionaire coop federations.*

*Fr Masterson has gone ahead, leaving behind a legacy that will always be associated with the college of Agriculture and Xavier University—a legacy that lives on in the field. May his memory continue to inspire and be as long-lasting as the road that now bears his name, passing along Manresa until Lumbia and beyond: "Fr William Masterson Avenue."*

Published in 2014 by the Xavier University Press, the book was edited by Corazon G Calub, Dr Eduardo S Canlas, Dr Ismael P Getubig Jr and Anselmo B Mercado. ■

MUSEO - from page 21

**The historical 1898 French banquet and Museo's modern efforts**

One of the prized assets of Museo is a rare copy of the French dinner menu (French *carte de jour*) during the ratification of the Declaration of Independence during the Malolos Congress on Sept 29, 1898.

The precious menu, designed by Arcadio Arellano, details the food and drinks served during that special evening of our nation's history.

The Museo only displays the menu—now with an English translation beside its glass case—on special occasions.

More than ever, the Museo has intensified its preservation and archival efforts through digitization of the pertinent yet susceptible historical documents such as the 1898 French *carte de jour*, copies of 1940s newsletter "Commonweal," paintings about Mindanao folklore, including some 1800s baptismal and death records (in Spanish) of Camiguin which were salvaged after the eruption of Mount Hibok-Hibok.

Museo de Oro aligns its *raison d'être* to be the heart of history and cultural formation in this part of the country and to be a structure which engages the Filipinos of the present generation to appreciate and look back to our roots, a fundamental fragment in understanding our present and, nevertheless, our future.

As Fr Demetrio said on the April 14, 1971 issue of *The Manila Chronicle*: "For these beliefs and customs gathered all over the archipelago are but concrete manifestations of the cultural themes and basic assumptions that underlie Philippine life and culture. And it is imperative to know this if our concrete plans for development will not prove abortive." ■



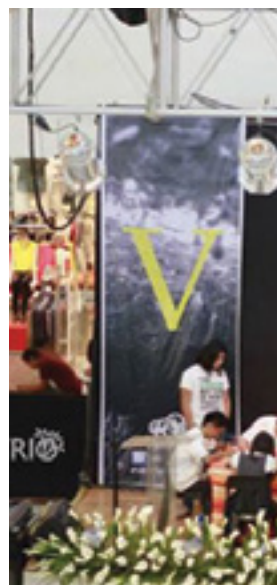


Story by Stephen J Pedroza

Photos by Anthony Jacob C Karagdag

# VEST

gears toward  
people's participation  
to prevent  
'another Sendong'



**T**he region-wide environmental movement dubbed as Valuing Ecosystem Services Together (VEST) of Xavier University had its successful launch, highlighting people's participation and a paradigm shift to prevent another catastrophe from inflicting Northern Mindanao.

Different stakeholders across Region 10 drew together at the Activity Center of Centrio - Ayala Mall on Nov 4-7 for the unfolding of VEST as an offshoot campaign, encouraging the communities to participate in a "rewarding mechanism" for Mt Kalatungan.

"We have in one way or another experienced the wrath of a natural disaster. Do we want to experience another [Typhoon] Sendong? Of course not. We should rather say 'Never! No more,'" said Gertrude M Garcia, the director of XU - McKeough Marine Center. MMC frontlines this environmental endeavor as part of the ridge-to-reef approach in the region.

"The catastrophes we have gone through should propel us all to consider a sustainable means to at least mitigate disasters from happening," Garcia added.

The grand launch of VEST was set in line with the first year commemoration of the destruction of Supertyphoon Yolanda, which plowed across Central Visayas the same time last year and curtailed the lives of more than six thousand people.

## Sendong no more

VEST is grounded upon the philosophy that what happens at the top trickles down to the lowlands. Evidently, during the lash of Typhoon Sendong in December 2011, most water which came down and ravaged Cagayan de Oro City originated from the headwater tributaries in Bukidnon.

"The think tanks have thought of the Payment Ecosystem Services (PES). The PES program has VEST as its campaign aimed at engaging different sectors in the region to take part in the venture of protecting our remaining forests," Garcia said in her speech at the opening ceremony of VEST.

PES acts as a "payment cycle" designed to protect our forest in the highlands of Mindanao so that when it rains, the water will not be devastating by the time it reaches urbanized areas such as CDO.

"This rehabilitation will provide the ecological service of preventing further flooding in the city that is why it is important that we bring in the communities from the downstream and upland to this landscape restoration," said Dr Hilly Ann Roa-Quiaoit, XU vice-president for Research and Social Outreach (RSO).

VEST has targeted five sectors to take part in this ecological undertaking, namely, the corporations, cooperatives, the academe, religious groups and the households.

Roel R Ravanera, the executive director of Xavier Science Foundation (XSF), the non-government organization (NGO) which serves as the fund and resource manager of this green project, posed a challenge for everyone.

"It is not too late to rehabilitate the forests of Bukidnon that is why our partners in the Mirayon-Lapok-Lirongan-Tinaytayan Tribal Association (MILALITTRA) have organized themselves to help us protect and manage well our environment so CDO will not experience another Sendong again," Ravanera said.

XSF and the Mindanao Development Authority have also been closely working with the MILALITTRA, and for the pilot year, three hectares of land served as a model showcase for reforestation and agroforestry.



## A people-led green project

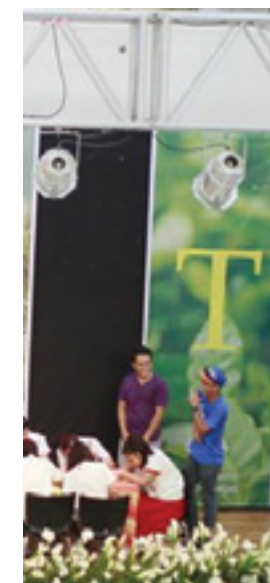
Part of this endeavor is to mainstream the principles of VEST. With this idea, a slew of activities were aimed at raising awareness and encouraging the Kagay-anons to participate in the fund drive to reforest Mt Kalatungan and reward the efforts of the indigenous people community as the forest managers.

The VEST project supervisor Evans I Yonson attributed the success of the VEST grand launch to several factors such as "the concept, the branding, the package and the people behind it."

"The concept is something for everyone in Cagayan de Oro. PES needs to be understood by different sectors at the same time, coming up with a brand for PES, which is VEST, was a challenge. Packaging it was another experience. We needed to have a company of communication and technical persons to make sure that the concept and the brand would be very effective," explained Yonson, a Development Communication professor at XU.

This social marketing plan makes use of various information, education and communication (IEC) materials in the form of traditional and new media (brochures, posters, short films, public service announcements etc) to build a robust presence on social media networks.

As embodied in its SocMar plan, VEST has also organized events such as concerts, roadshows and film screenings; participated in major national and global environmental celebrations with partner organizations; and conducted speaking engagements through fora and workshops with different sectors.



## What's next for VEST?

"We will now move forward by going directly to the household level, visit and conduct more activities and orientation for schools, corporations, churches, and cooperatives," Yonson said as part of the five sectors encouraged to invest in nature.

"The next target is making people value Mother Nature more. How? By donating to the cause," he continued. VEST will be turned over to XU - Center of Communication for Development (CC4D) in July 2015.

The 5-year master plan of MILALITTRA aims to reforest 832 hectares, while 816 hectares will be allotted for agroforestry.

Mt Kalatungan is among the 18 protected areas to be provided with technical and management assistance by both public and private sectors to achieve balanced and inclusive growth.

"Our lives are interconnected with one another. What happens in the highlands will affect the downstream communities and we value our forests because they are part of our identity," MILALITTRA chairman Datu Dungkoan "Rio" Besto said in Bisaya.

"Above all, this project is a great way to show our utmost respect to Mother Nature — to make reparations for what we have caused her." ■





## 2014 International Year of Family Farming

# IYFF marks a 'green push' for agriculture

By Stephen J Pedroza

**H**ow do we make agriculture appealing to the youth?

This was the zenith of the discussion during the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) Forum at the Misamis University in Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental dubbed as "#IYFF: A Green Push for Sustainable Land Use and Food Security."

Refocusing the interest of the youth toward farming remains a major challenge in this country, where the contribution of the youth serves as an imperative foundation to sustain our food demand-and-supply cycle and ensure responsible resource management in the future.

"There are several reasons why the youth have declining interest in agriculture—cultural, social and economical concerns," said Erlinda Dolatre, senior adviser of *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)*, a German organization pushing for a comprehensive ridge-to-reef development approach worldwide.

"Agriculture is viewed negatively; we have societal attitudes like 'planting rice is not fun' and the tease 'go home and plant *camote*' when a student is not doing well at school."

Among other reasons for the decrease of interest, as Dolatre enumerated are, the lack of resources (land, capital, skills and technology), the youth perceive farming as "not a financially rewarding" occupation and the youth are not involved in making decisions for farming

activities of their families.

However, these stereotypes need to be changed, she emphasized.

In this pursuit, students, faculty, public officials, non-government organizations (NGO) and smallholder farmers across Northern Mindanao converged during the celebration of the IYFF on Nov 25, forming part of the culmination of the global event.

The region-wide forum was spearheaded by the Xavier Science Foundation (XSF), Institute of Land Governance (ILG), Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian and Rural Development (ANGOC), Council of Deans and Heads of Schools in Agriculture Education (CDHSAE), Federation of Agriculture Students in Mindanao (FASMIN) and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).

More than 300 participants drew together to discuss the significance of family farming and small-scale agriculture in alleviating poverty, protecting the environment and achieving inclusive growth specifically in the rural areas.

"We encourage the government to empower family farming especially women and youth by creating policies conducive to equitable and sustainable rural development," said Gumerindo Tumbali, national project team leader of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

According to the Labor Force Survey (April 2012-April 2013), 624,000 Filipino agricultural workers are losing and quitting their jobs.

In addition, the farmers who are going to feed an additional two billion population worldwide in 2050 must be 13 years old by now.



### Pushing the youth into farming

A Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) study shows that outdated curricula, outmoded research and academic facilities are among the top issues on agricultural human resources in Asia.

For instance, the enrolment in agriculture courses at the University of Philippines - Los Baños has declined over the past 30 years from 51% of the total student population in 1980 to only 4.7% in 2012.

However, there are a number of ways to attract the youth to bridge the gap in the agricultural sector, which remains one of the most vulnerable segments in the country.

"Modernized training and practical skills must be provided to the youth including access to information made easy through the Internet," Dolatre said, adding that repackaging agriculture course curriculum must be attuned to the current challenges in the sector.

"Farming is a dignified profession," Dolatre drummed. Image building is important for this generation especially

with the incorporation of the ASEAN Economic Integration in 2015. "There is big money in agriculture; there's a prospect of high economic returns."

Support services are also crucial in this regard and it is where the government can help, said lawyer Anthony Parungao, undersecretary for legal affairs of DAR.

"Rural development will not be realized to its fullest extent if there is no agrarian reform—and agrarian reform can only be pushed to its maximum potential if we push for family farming," Parungao said.

### "No farmer, no food"

"We know that the farming population in the Philippines is ageing. If no one wants to farm in the near future, where will we get our food?" asked Ana P Sibayan, a Mindoro-born young farmer champion of the Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA) - Asian Farmers Association (AFA).

Sibayan, 25, believes that greater involvement of the youth in agricultural trainings and ventures can heighten their social consciousness on the woes of Filipino farmers and on how to address these challenges.



Although Sibayan finished Bachelor of Science in Education major in Biological Science at Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology (MSCAT), she has always been drawn to farming and she dreams of managing her own farm business one day.

She is also a proud graduate of the Integrated, Diversified, Organic Farming System (IDOFS) with Farm Planning Training, the core thrust of PAKISAMA's Sustainable Agriculture Program.

"After the IDOFS training, I started vermicomposting, building a fishpond, making a vegetable garden and raising free range chicken in a 2,500sqm farm."

Sibayan is now training other young farmers in Mindoro on IDOFS.

"If no one wants to farm in the near future, where will we get our food? No farmer, no food. So we have to make ways to attract the youth to agriculture."

Both the public and private sectors are forging numerous collaborations on this regard. In the Philippines, young farmers like Sibayan have proposed the enactment of the Magna Carta for Young Farmers.

MCYF will have the following provisions, among others: (1) Promote and protect rights of young farmers aged 15-40; (2) Establish programs for young farmers such as agriculture-sensitive educational curriculum and broader scholarships for agri-related courses; and (3) Institutionalize young farmers' representation in all agricultural policy-making bodies.

"The IYFF is an opportunity to tell the world to invest in smallholder agriculture, to invest in women in agriculture and to invest in the rural youth."

As her parting words, she urged everyone to uphold the invaluable contribution of agriculture in our lives, and to contest and change misconceptions about farming.

"The youth can be attracted to agriculture if they see meaning in this profession, find income opportunities and feel a sense of pride." ■





## XU shines brightest at Blue Responsibility Awards in Malaysia

By Sam Stephen Mangubat

Out of the 24 entries from 14 different countries, Xavier University reaped the top honors at the “Blue Responsibility Awards: Manufacturing for a Sustainable Terra Preta Sanitation System” during the 12th Global Conference for Sustainable Manufacturing (GCSM) at the Puteri Pacific Hotel in Johor Bahru, Malaysia on Sept 24.

GCSM is an annual colloquium designed for students, engineers, scientists and professors across the globe in pursuit of exchanging sustainable ideas to rejuvenate our environment and improve the quality of life.

The competition’s rationale included two main principles: (1) Sustainability is not only limited to the common concept of the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (3Rs) which most developing countries have applied over the years. (2)

Ongoing depletion of the Earth’s natural resources necessitates three more new concepts—Reprocessing, Redesigning, and Remanufacturing.

These so-called 6Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Reprocessing, Redesigning, and Remanufacturing) constitute a new environmental protocol in the manufacturing industry.

Application of these sustainable concepts served as the major criterion at the Blue Responsibility competition, where the sanitation system design entries must be a reflection of the 6Rs.

XU, through the collaborative work of its two Research and Social Outreach (RSO) units—the School of Medicine’s Sustainable Sanitation (SuSan) Center and the College of Engineering’s Engineering Resource Center (ERC)—submitted the entry called “Terra Preta Sanitation System for Post-disaster Transitional Communities in the Philippines.”

The said entry received the top award among the 7 finalists during the competition.

Representing XU and the Philippines during the final presentation were Dr Gina S Itchon of the School of Medicine and SuSan director, and Engr Dexter S Lo, faculty member of the College of Engineering and ERC director.

XU was considered as “the game changer” of this design competition because its entry was not only manifested through a blueprint and theories but it has been used and proven effective in several evacuation and resettlement communities after a number of disasters hit the country (Tropical Storm Sendong in 2011, the Bohol Earthquake and Supertyphoon Yolanda in 2013).

Backed with solid research, community experiences, assessment and remodeling, XU’s entry demonstrated the capacity of a developing country, such as the Philippines, to conceptualize and apply

a multidisciplinary and collaborative solution to sanitation issues despite the limited resources.

“Finally, we stand here today not just as scientists, but as persons echoing the cry for human dignity,” Engr Lo said in his message.

In the field of community development, the ERC director underscored the Ignatian value of *magis* (doing beyond what is expected and going beyond excellence) and the theme of the bicentenary of the restoration of the Society of Jesus, “Go, set the world on fire.”

“Every time we work in the community, especially with the poor and the powerless, it is our commitment, our mission—to forge a better life for our people, for a sustainable future, and for a truly blue planet!” ■



Blue Responsibility Competition Awarding Ceremonies (L-R: Professor Gunther Seliger, Dr Gina Itchon, Engr Dexter Lo and Sam Stephen Mangubat)

**“Every time we work in the community, especially with the poor and the powerless, it is our commitment, our mission—to forge a better life for our people, for a sustainable future, and for a truly blue planet!”**



# GCSM

## 12th Global Conference on Sustainable Manufacturing Emerging Potentials



# Xavier

magazine

Ateneo de Cagayan

Research and Social Outreach | June 2015 Issue





- 4 Xavier will never give up on pursuing peace
- 5 Deles breaks barriers through peace process
- 6 Ferrer: 'Courage to stand firm'
- 7 Iqbal: 'Man is necessarily peaceful'
- 8 2015 Honor Graduates
- 10 Valedictory address of Paolo Araune
- 11 'Festival of Ideas' brings RSO themes closer to community
- 12 Puzzle
- 13 The story continues for a promising filmmaker
- 14 City gov't, XU form CDO People's Council
- 15 XU holds '#ZeroCasualty' BDRRM conference



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Scan the QR code to read their speeches at XU's 76th University Convocation.

Courage to fight for peace. Commitment to ask questions and propose solutions. Compassion to overcome enmities, biases and prejudices. These are the qualities of genuine peace champions worthy to be revered, admired and emulated by the present and future generations of Filipinos.

Xavier University – Ateneo de Cagayan, at its 76th University Convocation, bestowed an Honorary Doctorate in Humanities to Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Teresita Quintos-Deles, and conferred the prestigious Fr William F Masterson SJ Award jointly to Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief peace negotiator and Professor Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, chairperson of the GPH Peace Panel, for their valuable contributions to the peace process and social development.

Stories by Ma Isabela AC Agawin, Chelsea Dana Rapanot and Stephen J Pedroza

Turn to pages 4 to 10

Send your stories (maximum of 750 words) to [commgroup@xu.edu.ph](mailto:commgroup@xu.edu.ph)



# 'Xavier will never give up on pursuing peace'

*This is the closing remarks delivered by Xavier University President Fr Roberto "Bobby" C Yap SJ during the University Convocation on March 26 at the XU Gymnasium.*

As a Mindanawon and Filipino university, Xavier grieves profoundly for our gallant SAF troops who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty in Mamasapano. We grieve deeply with their families.

As a Catholic university, Xavier likewise grieves for the other Filipinos, Bangsamoro combatants and civilians (including one child), who perished in the same horrible tragedy. We grieve deeply with their families.

With the families of all the victims, we clamor that justice be done; that answers to the many questions raised by the whole nation be given forthrightly; that those responsible for the tragedy be brought to justice. We insist on accountability for the wrong decisions that were made in this tragic, clearly avoidable, combat.

We weep with those who weep for the loss of their loved ones. And we take to heart the words of Pope Francis: With "eyes cleansed by our tears" we will truly see that "Peace is a precious gift, which must be promoted and protected ... Never has the use of violence brought peace in its wake (Angelus Message, 1st September 2013)." Amidst the shock and sorrow, Xavier University calls for peace. Ateneo de Cagayan signifies its support for staying the course for pursuing peace. Xavier stands for peace.

After Mamasapano, many asked, should XU still proceed in conferring the awards which were approved almost two months earlier? We firmly believe that the answer should be yes. There can be no wavering in our commitment for peace and our support for those who work hard and sacrifice a lot to make peace happen.

Our three awardees are clearly committed to peace. The MILF has come to the table not seeking independence but with substantial compromises. Together, the peace panels have come up with just solutions that would give the Bangsamoro meaningful autonomy in a limited territory while preserving national sovereignty and national integrity. Our peace negotiators have shown that, within the framework of the 1987 constitution, the Moro quest for a homeland where they live in prosperity as Filipinos fully integrated in the Filipino nation is possible through a path of peace.

Today, Xavier University is profoundly privileged to honor three courageous and compassionate leaders who have walked the demanding road to peace for so many years. Three peace negotiators who have patiently and conscientiously engaged in democratic dialogue for peace in Mindanao. Three peacemakers who have moved the nation closer to realizing the aspirations of our Bangsamoro brothers and sisters for meaningful self-determination to live their religious convictions and shared culture in peace and prosperity. Thank you very much, Professor Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, Chair Mohagher Iqbal, Secretary

Teresita Quintos-Deles for answering the call for the heroic leadership badly needed by our troubled island and by our nation. *Maraming, maraming salamat, po!*

Our three leaders are partners in peace who reject the ways of extremism and terrorism. Amidst much distress (they have been 'steamed and boiled and fried' these past few weeks), they persevere in working for negotiated principled political solutions. Amidst great trials (they have been 'demonized'), they continue to labor hard to build mutual confidence and trust, coupled with mutually agreed upon processes and mechanisms. With much sacrifice, they endeavor to keep alive the hope that dialogue, negotiations, and kept agreements will replace guns, violence, and war. Our three leaders have shown us that the only way out of our much too long conflict in Mindanao is the way of peace. Mabuhay kayo, Professor Ferrer, Chair Iqbal, Secretary Deles! *Mabuhay kayo at pagpalain kayo lagi ng Poong Maykapal!* Good friends, let us give another round of applause to our awardees.

Secretary Ging, Professor Iye, Chair Iqbal: *daghan kaayong salamat* for gracing us with your presence and for accepting University Awards from Ateneo de Cagayan. By your acceptance, you have honored Xavier and it is really XU's pride and joy to consider you as champions of peace, model leaders, compassionate and courageous.

As a Jesuit University, Xavier participates in the Jesuit mission of reconciliation with God, reconciliation with others, and

reconciliation with creation; it seeks to serve the faith, promote justice, dialogue with cultures and religions, and protect the environment. Secretary Ging, Chair Iqbal, Professor Iye: for showing us how to be steadfast in promoting justice, dialoguing with cultures and religions, reconciling with others, XU is glad to claim you, starting today, as our fellow Ateneans.

Xavier Class of 2015, may the inspiration you have received from our awardees this morning always be a source of strength as you go forth in your mission to become leaders, the Ateneo way. May you be brave and bold and not afraid to walk the demanding but necessary path of peace in our troubled island of Mindanao.

I am confident that our merciful God is watching graciously over our assembly this morning. For our Lord Jesus declared "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God (Mt 5:9)." At this very moment, our God of compassion is blessing our convocation for peace.

*Gideklara karon sa XU nga mobarog gayod kanunay ang Xavier alang sa kalinaw. The Ateneo will remain steadfast in the difficult but indispensable quest for peace. Xavier will never give up on pursuing peace! May the God of peace bless us always. Panalanginan kitang tanan sa Ginoo kanunay. Kapayapaan. Kalilitad. Kalinaw.* ■



## Deles breaks barriers through peace process

"What are the roots of the so-called Muslim-Christian conflict in Mindanao? We all take pains to explain that it is not a religious conflict, as indeed it is not—we are not fighting about religion, but a long-drawn out and vicious conflict that involves, by and large, Muslims on one side and Christians on the other side."

There are a lot of conflicts—political, economical, familial and even personal. Difficult situations may cause a drift, a division – causing one to take a side or a stand. But what if these situations, like the Muslim-Christian conflicts in Mindanao, are better handled by looking from outside the box? Does taking a side really help solve anything?

Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Teresita Quintos-Deles, commencement speaker during the 76th University Convocation last March 26, believes that working for peace is not seasonal work but is constant, needing one to be ever-watchful, to build and rebuild as many times as needed.

The presidential adviser shared how feminism, equality and charity can greatly affect a community. Deles believes that women are stronger than the

image they portray. She also believes a sense of equality starts at home, the first source of a child's education.

Deles has been working for peace for quite some time. The EDSA Revolution in 1986 stirred her heart to fight for what the country needed. She realized that attaining peace must be done through the right way. One cannot put out fire with fire—as evidenced by the non-violent people's uprising which led to the end of Martial Law.

"Deaths, we can count. Budgets, we can figure out. Injuries, we can treat. But there are wounds that cannot heal."

Deles focused on the ongoing conflict between the Muslims and Christians. In her speech, she explained the roots of the problem and the undercurrent of anger and resentment against the MILF and Muslims.

"There are faultlines etched in our national psyche as well – divisions or rifts based on philosophical, ideological, religious, or ethnic differences—which may lie undisturbed for years but so quickly flare into vicious, if not violent, confrontation when provoked, often unintended, sometimes by accident."

Deles pointed out that dualism is one of the causes of dispute. Division bespeaks of a deep-

seated dualism cemented by culture and history which has brought not just a group but an island to suffering.

"Other sectors in Mindanao have publicly issued appeals for peace as well: the religious – both Christian and Muslim, business – both big and micro, the academe, civil society. And rightly so, because Mindanao bears the brunt of the fighting; the entire country must pay the price of war."

In the last part of her speech, she shared: "When Djalila declares 'The Bangsamoro story is also the story of the Filipino,' it is at once statement of fact and a statement of faith. She is saying that Moros are also Filipinos, part of a nation in the making. Through the peace process and in other ways, we seek to heal the wounds of history that have pitted us against each other, because of religion, because of historical circumstances."

As her parting words, Deles told the crowd to celebrate diversities, honor differences and affirm commonalities. ■

## 5 things you must know about Sec Ging

1. Deles is an English major graduate and she taught English Literature and Composition for seven years (1970-1977) at Maryknoll College, presently known as Miriam College. She started her peace work in 1986, shortly after the EDSA People Power Revolution.
2. In 2012, she received the prestigious N-Peace Philippines' Role Model for Peace Award from the United Nations Development Program.
3. Rina David, Philippine Daily Inquirer columnist, publicly declared that she bloomed under Deles' tutelage.
4. Deles' maternal grandmother, a founding mother of Moncada, Tarlac, who was appointed town mayor at the end of World War II, gifted her with a strong sense of feminism, way before she even encountered the word.
5. During the inception of Social Development Index, she met Jojo Deles who became her husband. "Not all roads lead to Makati, for corporate life is not the only choice there is."





## Peace 101: Crash course

by Miriam Coronel-Ferrer

- To seek peace and be a peacemaker demands so much more from us.
- To seek peace means foregoing revenge, in favor of compassionate justice.
- To seek peace means taking extraordinary steps to change the patterns of our human existence, of politics and society.
- To seek peace is to nurture trust.
- To seek peace is to be bold, to take risks.
- Peace can only mean constant striving.
- Peace requires new templates.
- Peace indeed is tough love.



## Ferrer: 'Courage to stand firm'

**"E**verybody wants peace, *ilang beses na natin narinig ito*. And yet peace seems hard to achieve. War has in fact figured prominently in the human history."

### Everyone wants a piece of peace.

It may sound clichéd as many candidates in beauty contests and the leaders in Congress say that they want to bring about "world peace." Peace, in fact, is a big word. It is one of the most common words in the dictionary—like love, passion, unity—vast and yet difficult to find and achieve.

Professor Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, chairperson of the Philippine Government Peace Panel, addressed the graduates during

the 76th University Convocation on March 26 and her main message was that peace can be achieved through courage.

Ferrer acknowledged Fr William Masterson in his efforts and advocacy for the peace process. She pointed out that Fr Masterson was misunderstood when he made the courageous act of transferring Ateneo de Manila University to Quezon City.

Coronel appreciated Fr Masterson's bravery and courage. Had Fr Masterson lived during this time, he would have been trashed and threatened in social media.

*"Kung anu-ano na sigurong sumpa, tadyak at insulto ang nakuha niya sa mga nagpo-post. But he would have stayed the course."*

For Coronel, to hate is easy. It's easy to throw away relationships because of this one thing.

### But why is it so hard to do something right?

Coronel answers: "To seek peace and be a peacemaker demands so much more of us. To seek peace means foregoing revenge, in favor of compassionate justice. It asks us to put aside pride, and to respect the feelings of the other person – a friend, a neighbor, even a complete stranger."

Yet still, Coronel puts efforts to proceed with the peace process, asking the Congress of the Philippines to support the peace negotiations and the recognition of the Bangsamoro identity.

"The House of Representatives under the leadership of Cagayan de Oro Rep Rufus Rodriguez and speaker Feliciano Belmonte have gone out of their way to shepherd this process. It already held 36 consultations nationwide and spent millions of peoples' money to get all the input and to inform the public."

Coronel expects that there will still be challenges along the way. "There are many what-ifs and many people do not give their full support unless they have all the guarantees. We tell them that only God can give all the guarantees. But God will help those who help themselves."

Everyone needs to take a leap of faith and to not lose heart. Courage is the armor for peace, especially for Professor Ferrer. ■

## Iqbal: 'Man is necessarily peaceful'

**"F**ranksly speaking, peace negotiation is not an easy endeavor. The truth is that it is easier to make war than to make peace. In war, one party can start war; but, in peace-making, it requires both parties to agree to talk."

"Man is necessarily peaceful"—these were MILF chief peace negotiator Mohagher Iqbal's words at his speech during the 76th University Convocation of Xavier University. These were his humble words on peace as he received the Fr William F Masterson SJ Award for his contribution and commitment to the peace process.

As controversial as the awarding of the Masterson Award to Iqbal, the quest for peace in Mindanao also continues to be questioned and overshadowed because of the Mamasapano incident last January 25.

The incident brought out opposing views on the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL). This incident also became the cause to question whether XU should pursue the decision of awarding the prestigious award to Iqbal.

Mohagher Iqbal's journey for peace was not easy. He was once a foot soldier for the Bangsamoro. There were times that his only option was to take a bullet and a gun or surrender, but it was his commitment and perseverance that convinced him to never give up on pursuing peace.

"It was not bravery that made me stay to this day in the service of the MILF. It was, rather, our commitment to the cause of my people for deliverance that made me persevere in all those four decades of trials and tribulations."

He said that with the value of peace ingrained in the Islam principles and ideals, he was sure that war was only temporary.

Iqbal elaborated on peace and war in his speech. According to Iqbal, anyone can spark a war, but to achieve peace, both parties must find a common ground, a common understanding that will lead to shared goals because peace is never just one man's effort.

Peace negotiations have come a long way for both the government and the MILF. Lives were wasted and battles were lost. The success of the BBL has been more than just a topic of discussion but an objective to many to ensure permanent peace in Mindanao.

Iqbal had an important message for the graduates: **"It is not us, your elders, who will benefit from these peace negotiations. I urge you, therefore, to join our journey of peace! Speak up and be heard! Ask questions. Propose solutions. The future is yours. You have a stake in it."** ■

### Iqbal's 5 ingredients for peace

- 2 cups of collective efforts, for peace is never just one man's effort
- 5 tablespoons of commitment, to endure trials and tribulations
- 3 teaspoons of resourcefulness, use education to solve the more complex problems of our time
- 4 cups of patience, for years of peace negotiations and problem solving
- 5 cups of positivity, believe that every war is just temporary



## 2015 HONOR GRADUATES

### SUMMA CUM LAUDE

Paolo B Araune, *BS Math*

### MAGNA CUM LAUDE

Jean Trisha D Abao, *BS BA*

Rochelle D Barros, *BS IS*

Mae Angela D Galopo, *BS FT*

Zamina C Sabenecio, *BS CS*

Caroline Joy C Veronilla, *BS DC*

### CUM LAUDE

Ruel Angelo G Aballe, *BS CS*

Ceddfrey John E Akut, *BS AB*

Timmy Angelina L Alamban, *BS FT*

Ann Carmel M Atillo, *BS BA*

Gracel Jean Q Baguio, *BS Ag*

Rolaine Mary E Basilio, *BS Ac*

Sheena Christy S Bautista, *BS Psych*

Joshua C Besario, *BS Ac*

Stephen Ben John A Biado, *BSECE*

Camille-Jo S Cagata, *AB Econ*

Jose Elmer T Cahilog Jr, *AB IS*

Mary Fibeth L Calunia, *BS ECE*

Merari Joy B Cebrian, *BS CS*

Francis Mae G Chan, *BS CE*

Johnson Carl K Chan, *BS ECE*

Nelson Marvin T Clam, *BS ECE*

Reziel P Dacup, *BS Math*

Michele Van G Dalida, *BS DC*

April Grace G Degamo, *BS AB*

Ma Rozela B Espina, *BS Ed*

Gypsy Gem U Gayonan, *BS Ac*

Karen Kate B Gepanaga, *BS CS*

Crisbelle Ann E Irag, *BS Bio*

Orven Heart T Jaula, *BS Ac*

Irish Maika R Lam, *BS DC*

Cherray Gabrielle A Macabecha, *BS Bio*

Cyril T Maghilum, *BS Ed*

Jaymaica P Maraguinot, *BS DC*

Mario Alejandro Jacinto M Neri, *BE Ed*

Maria Angelli D Pacamalan, *BS Psych*

Gem M Padulla, *BS AB*

Ariana Cristelle L Pagdanganan, *BS DC*

Sittie Aisah A Ringia, *AB IS*

Rocel Mae C Roca, *BS Ed*

Maryknoll M Sanchez, *BS IS*

Dichee Lou P Supremo, *BE Ed*

Maybelyn G Yecyec, *BS AB*

### RELIGIOUS STUDIES AWARD

Adrian Rey L Del Fierro, *BS N*





## Valedictory address of Paolo Araune



This is the full text of the valedictory speech of Paolo Bacarro Araune, Bachelor of Science in Mathematics, who graduated *Summa Cum Laude*, Class of 2015 Valedictorian, and Outstanding Graduate Awardee of the College of Arts and Sciences of Xavier University – Ateneo de Cagayan. He delivered this address during the University Convocation on March 26 at the XU Gymnasium.

To our beloved University President Fr Roberto C Yap SJ; Secretary Teresita Quintos-Deles, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process; Professor Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, Chair of GPH Peace Panel; Honorable Mohagher Iqbal, Chair of MILF Peace Panel and Bangsamoro Transition Commission; Most Reverend Archbishop Antonio Ledesma SJ Doctor of Divinity, Archbishop of Cagayan de Oro; Honorable Oscar Moreno, Mayor of Cagayan de Oro City, administrators, faculty and staff of this prestigious university, our dear parents, and my fellow graduates—good morning!

I fervently believe that peace is universal and is always timely. It is immutable and people of different roots will seek for peace no matter what it takes. I am sympathetic and I aspire to become an agent of peace in ways I could.

Last January 25, [the] Mamasapano incident took place. We were all shaken, and the question of the lasting peace in Mindanao has threatened our nation, despite the completion of a Bangsamoro Basic Law by the Congress. More than the things that have happened, the challenge for all of us now is how to pursue and attain justice and peace.

As XU graduates, we have learned that responsible citizenship is truly a virtue and participation in political life is a moral obligation. In order to apply this learning, we need to go down to the roots to discover and learn the causes of these perennial conflicts. Every opposing want deserves a negotiable aspiration for peace, because peace in its essence stabilizes [the] political, social, environmental, religious, and cultural aspects of life.

Because of what happened, I truly believe that there is no other path except that of peace. As an Atenean and a Filipino, I need to exert more efforts in supporting the peace process even as we restore the momentum we had before the tragic event. Let's continue to remind ourselves that Mamasapano must not be a justification for not moving forward in passing an improved version of this basic law.

The visit of Pope Francis in our country truly inspired and empowered us. He expressed his very heartfelt support for the just solutions in bringing peace in Mindanao. Some of these concrete solutions are manifested through effective peace education and peace communication. I move to strengthen inter-religious, inter-faith, intra-faith, and inter-cultural dialogues that facilitate the attainment of a true and lasting peace. Pope Francis suggests that we continue to dream for ourselves, for others, and for the world. Dream is exactly the perfect formula of love. "When you lose the capacity to dream, then you lose the capacity to love, and this energy to love is lost." Thus, to attain peace, we need to add love, subtract hatred, multiply dreams, and divide what we have for the benefit of others. I move that we set aside our emotions and hatred, and seek the common good with an overflowing sincerity coming from our hearts. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "Anger is the enemy of non-violence and pride is a monster that swallows it up."

To my fellow graduates, always remember that our acquired Ignatian values and principles, knowledge and skills enable us to be responsible members of the society. Together, we erect the pillars and walls of our rising nation — the peaceful nation we desire depends on us.

As young professionals of today, we are all architects, scientists, engineers and artists working together in this enormous project of peace for the Philippines. I hope and pray that over and above our personal dreams will come the larger dream of a united, fulfilled and prosperous Filipino people — a dream that does not only benefit a few, but a dream that benefits all, a dream that will really teach us to become selfless.

We are now spiritually prepared to participate in the Jesuit mission of reconciliation with God, with others and with creation. We are fully committed in striving hard to serve the faith, promote justice, dialogue with cultures and religions, and protect the environment. We passionately embrace and pursue *magis*; do whatever will contribute more to the greater good of all.

Fellow graduates, together with our competence, conscience, and commitment, we can make a difference. We can go, grow, and glow. We can go further searching for our purposes in life. We can grow, as we genuinely exemplify *magis* and *cura personalis* to other people. And we can glow, as we submit everything for the greater glory of God.

Congratulations, Batch 2015! *Mabuhay tayong lahat!*



## 'Festival of Ideas' brings RSO themes closer to community

By Rezza Mae B Tolinero

To strengthen Xavier University's commitment to address the different issues in Mindanao, the Research and Social Outreach (RSO) cluster held a three-part series of talks dubbed as the "Festival of Ideas" at the University's Nursing Amphitheater on Feb 7 and 14, and at the XU Peace Park on Feb 21.

XU vice-president for RSO Dr Hilly Ann Roa-Quiaoit said "We have to address the problems in the world. We focus here in Mindanao in these five thematic areas: environment, governance, health, food security, and peace."

One of the speakers, Dr Noor Saada shared his leadership journey as an assistant



secretary of then-Department of Education, Culture and Sports (now Department of Education) in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

(ARMM). He related how death threats became common to him in the course of his job. Highlighting the importance of integrity in working in a government office, he challenged the audience: "*Kung hindi tayo maninindigan, sino pa ang maninindigan para sa atin?*" [If no one will stand up for us, who else will?]

Dr Saada also gave emphasis to the importance of education. According to him, "If we can build peace in the mind in the classroom, then we can build a better future." He added that students can give more meaning to their education by sharing it to others and volunteering in communities.



The event also featured Thomas Kellenberger, the founding director of Island Kids Foundation and a former Bern polizist. He is noted

as someone who skied on the Swiss Alps but is now involved in improving the lives of those who dwell in the dumpsites.

"For me, landfill is a paradox," Kellenberger stated. He explained that a landfill provides livelihood for the young and old, and provides shelter for misplaced people. However, landfill being a paradox, he said, also takes life. He was referring to the inevitable health issues, which eventually lead to the death of some of its community members. Despite these, Kellenberger testified that the landfill's greatest treasure is its people who exemplify positive outlook in the midst of their difficult situations.

Kellenberger also introduced to the audience some of the children living in the landfill who are now studying at XU through the support provided for them.



The last speaker for the second session was Presidential Adviser for Environmental Protection Dr Neric Acosta. He discussed how climate change is affecting the country in his talk

"The Climate Imperative: Adaptation and Resilience."

"We can change the way we think and understand what is happening in order to respond, adapt, and responsibly make the

changes for policy, for government action, even for the curriculum we teach in schools," Acosta said.

"So atong pagsabot mahimung pagsabot nga adunay unod sa pagbag-o sa kaugalingun og sa atong mga palibot og kinaiyahan." [So our understanding becomes an understanding for the purpose of changing ourselves, our surroundings and our Mother Earth.]

Aside from people's responsibility towards the environment, Acosta also insisted on the importance of LAHAT which means Lupa, Araw, Hangin at Tubig, and nature's LAWS, otherwise known as Land, Air, Water and Sun. "There is no economy without ecology," he said.

The third and final session focused on "The Mamasapano Tragedy: Accounts, Accountability, Music, and Musing." It featured *Mindanews* photojournalist Froilan Gallardo, *Bohol Tribune* opinion columnist Benigno Tutor, *inquirer.net* editor in chief John Nery and Dire Husi musician Rhyann Casio.

The finale session tackled the tragic Mamasapano encounter in Maguindanao on Jan 25 where 44 Philippine National Police - Special Action Force (PNP-SAF) troopers, Mamasapano combatants and civilians, including a child, died.

The Festival of Ideas formed part of the month-long celebration of the RSO cluster, aimed at drawing its five thematic areas (environment, governance, health, food security, and peace) closer to the community. ■



## City gov't, XU form CDO People's Council

By Wilson J Hormeguera



**A**imed at consolidating and strengthening the initiatives of civil society organizations (CSOs) in engaging the city government towards transparent, participatory and good governance, Xavier University, through its Research and Social Outreach (RSO) cluster, facilitated the formation of the People's Council of Cagayan de Oro City.

The organization was done through a multi-sectoral workshop on People's Development Agenda and Creation of the People's Council, held on Sept 24-26 at Pearlmont Hotel, CDO.

The creation of the People's Council is one of the major initiatives of the project funded by Asian Development Bank (ADB), "Providing Social Accountability Interventions to Foster Constructive Engagement of Stakeholders in Local Government Affairs of Cagayan de Oro."

Dr Hilly Ann Roa-Quiaoit, XU vice-president for RSO, gave the welcome remarks and recounted how the initiative was conceived from the CSOs involvement during the 2013 electoral fora where the political candidates were made to answer questions based on people's agenda.

The workshop had three conferences. The first one was on the introduction of Local

Government Planning and Budgeting Process where Dr Dixon Yasay, XU-Governance and Leadership Institute (GLI) director and workshop facilitator, introduced how and when the CSOs can engage, bringing the people's agenda for city development and poverty reduction. Conference 2 was a visioning workshop for the CDO People's Council where Engr Ermin Stan B Pimentel facilitated the collective identification of the People's Council's purpose of existence, its desired future and the values shared by the council. Lastly, the third conference centered on the People's Development Agenda where Engr Gail de la Rita steered the group in the identification of priority development issues needed to be raised by the People's Council in the different local special bodies of the city government.

The development issues were derived from XU's 2013 poll survey and sectoral focus group discussions with thematic development areas on food security, environment, health, governance, and peace and order.

### The People Council's thrusts

As a result, the workshop has produced the People's Council's initial mission which is "to engage Kagay-anons in good governance for city development" while the vision

reads: "A collaborative and engaged People's Council for good governance by 2020."

The People's Council identified priority issues on the said five thematic areas which need immediate action by the city government.

On food security, the priorities are on implementation of backyard gardening and community gardens, creation of the Barangay Food Security Council (BFSC), and the establishment of a multi-sectoral group to act as watchdog on food security in the city council.

On environment, the priorities are the effective implementation of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, Solid Waste Management Act, and Barangay Greening Program. The effective management of our watershed and water resources is also included as a priority.

On peace and order, the priorities are the periodic assessments of the prevailing security and safety measures of CDO, the provision of logistical and operational needs of the city police, the capacity-building for moral recovery and change in the attitude paradigm, the functionality of City Peace and Order Council, the implementation of community participation mechanisms, police visibility and law enforcement, barangay census updates, and public education on safety and security.

On health, the priorities are on the improvement and effective management of Justiniano R Borja Hospital and the proper allocation of health budget, the functionality of the city health strategies and the implementation of public health policies.

On good governance, the priorities identified are proper management of public funds, strict enforcement of capability development of barangay public servants, and the functionality of the people's council especially in ensuring accountability of the city government, the coordination and empowerment of barangay councils, resolution proposals, and policy disclosure and review.

### Responding to present challenges

As it evolves, the People's Council has to consider as challenges the crucial role of the barangays, the capability building of the public workers, the strengthening of logistical support to government services through evidence-based interventions, mechanisms and policy implementations.

The workshop ended with a finalization of the priority development agenda and an organizational plan as they continue to expand and improve the council.



Participating CSOs and church-based organization leaders were from the Archdiocesan Commission on Social Apostolate, Archdiocesan Good Governance Apostolate of Cagayan de Oro (AGGAP), Archdiocesan Migrants Ministry (AMM), Archdiocesan Prison Ministry (APM), Archdiocesan Women Ministry (AWM), Cagayan de Oro Federation of Persons with Disability Associations (CAFEDPA),

Cagayan de Oro River Basin Management Council (CDORBMC), CDO Federation of Elders (CAFÉ) Inc, Cagayan de Oro Evangelical Ministers' Association (COEMA), Christian Reformed Church, Development Options and Social Entrepreneurship Inc, Federation of Motorela Operators and Drivers in Cagayan de Oro (FEMODCO) Inc, Federation of Urban and Rural Poor of CDO (FURPOOR), A Foundation for Growth,

Organizational Upliftment of People Inc (GROUP), Evangelicals, Gising Barangay Movement (GBM), German Doctors, House of Hope Foundation, Kagay-an Evangelical Disaster Response Network (KEDRN), Landcare Foundation of the Philippines, Incorporated (LFPI), Love & Care Foundation (LCF), Makasaka Mo Inc (MMI), Malamboong Katawhan sa Katilingban sa Misamis Oriental, Oro Youth Development Council (OYDC), Philippine Island Kids International Foundation (PIKIF) Inc, Pinintoan Cultural and Economic Center (PCEC), Technological Outreach and Community Help (TOUCH) Foundation, World Vision Development Foundation Inc, UP Alumni Association – CDO Inc.

XU, serving as the secretariat of the People's Council, continues to strengthen the engagements of different groups on the thematic areas of food security, environment, health, peace and governance under the auspices of its RSO cluster. ■

## XU holds '#ZeroCasualty' BDRRM conference

By Wilson J Hormeguera

**X**avier University - Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (XU-DRRM) team conducted "ZeroCasualty - The BDRRM Project Evaluation Conference" on Jan 31 at the Southeast Asia Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN) in the Manresa Farm Complex.

The XU-DRRM team targeted to capacitate officials from 45 disaster-prone barangays of Cagayan de Oro City to help them with the finalization of an effective and community-based DRRM plan. The faculty and staff under the Research and Social Outreach cluster of XU served as their BDRRM coaches.

The activity was aimed at highlighting the steps of BDRRM planning, identifying gaps and challenges in the process, and ways to sustain the community engagement.

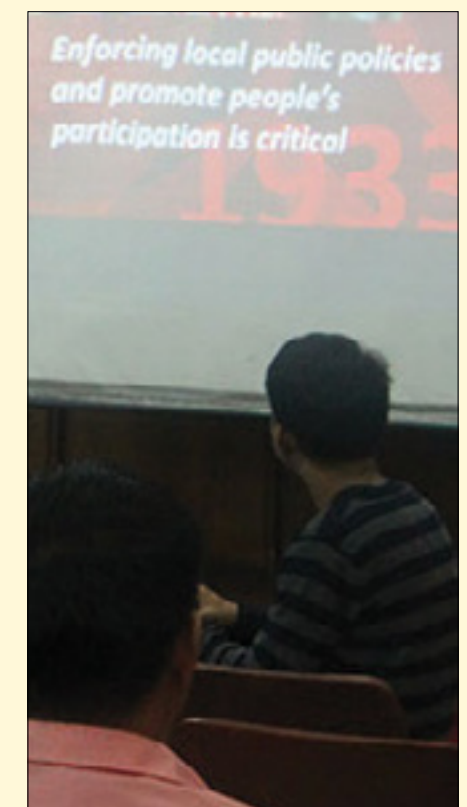
XU vice-president for RSO Dr Hilly Ann Roa-Quiaoit welcomed the participants and highlighted XU's greater societal engagement in five thematic areas: food security, environment, health and sanitation, governance, and peace.

CDO Association of Barangay Chairmen (CDOABC) president Yan Lam S Lim expressed his thanks to XU for its efforts in guiding the barangays with their BDRRM plans.

The conference also showcased the best practices of Brgy Sipitan-Badiang of the Municipality of Guimbal in Iloilo recognized as the 2011 National Awardee for Best Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management.

Brgy Sipitan-Badiang chairman Agustin Nepuncio presented their community's efforts: "Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Capability: From Mitigation and Prevention to Preparedness to Response to Recovery and Rehabilitation."

XU - Governance and Leadership Institute director Dr Dixon Yasay, during his synthesis, emphasized the crucial role of good governance in the barangays where "we must share the common vision of building a climate change-resilient Mindanao." ■





# Puzzle

By Veronica G Nacaytuna

Seeking our purpose in life is a constant journey. I am a seeker of truth, yet I admit I'm quite apathetic to reality.

At the start of 2015, crazy things happened to me. I was just a typical engineering student who strove to finish requirements on time, do homework and study for examinations. I was the treasurer of our

student council—and then things changed! I was appointed as president for two months!

Imagine—from treasurer to president—big jump! I didn't have any background in leading except for class group works. I didn't have any idea of how to run a student council. I literally freaked out!

So, I tried to reflect on it. Was this a calling? Why did this happen to me? Was this an answer to my search? Then I realized that every experience and opportunity is a puzzle piece that I needed in order to see the big picture.

I have been collecting these puzzle pieces for quite some time and the presidency is the biggest chunk so far. Because of it, I was linked to the

Engineering Resource Center (ERC) for a project. At ERC, I saw the importance and necessity of engineers in local communities. I found the meaning of my choice of study.

Along my new journey also came an event called the "Finding X Project." I was stunned by all of

the speakers from the different sectors: education, disaster risk reduction management, social

entrepreneurship, social media, and youth empowerment. They shared so many ideas, inspiring stories, tips and encouragement all in one day.

Here are my 3 takeaways from the Finding X Project:

1) *Passion for a better change.* All people can say that they want change but not all can be the pioneers of change. Change does not have to be something big. It can happen to a certain small community, to a family or even to you. It's change that catalyzes a man to awaken and use his full potential.

2) *Believe that you can be part of change.* Public speaker and public school teacher Sabrina Ongkiko said "*Mahirap maging*

*magaling, pero mas mahirap maging mabait* [It is difficult to be great but it's harder to be kind]." Better change comes from a compassionate and pure heart. I realized that it takes empathy to initiate change in a community and it is not easy.

3) *All must collaborate—the key is synergy.* As seasoned journalist Howie Severino said, "You are the most empowered generation in history. With your power and free time, what will you do?" I was struck by his question. I spent a lot of my time using social media. But, what does the Internet and social media bring? With the Internet, there is greater opportunity for everyone to be connected. With this tool, it may be easy to initiate certain changes.

From all the puzzle pieces I have collected, I glimpsed part of my purpose: "to evolve myself for the betterment of humanity." Maybe the reason I became a student council president is in order to develop leadership, to pioneer change. Maybe the reason I encountered a lot of challenges is to enlarge my heart to be compassionate—maybe I found ERC to learn how to collaborate and communicate even better.

I still don't have the whole picture but at least I'm making progress. I believe that the poorest person is not the one without money, but the one without purpose.

Without purpose, the only thing a man can do is grow older. ■

# The story continues

By Jasmine Anna Trisha Limas

Development Communication student Jasmine Limas' "*Carmen*" won the Best Student Short Film during the 4th Cinemagis Film Festival at XU in 2012 and had its international debut at Yerba Buena Arts Center in San Francisco, California, USA. Her third and latest film "*Ang Lihim ni Natividad*" (*The Secret of Natividad*) was hailed as the Best Short Film for the professional category during the seventh installment of Cinemagis. Since its inception in 2009, a number of Cinemagis films have already gone to national independent film festivals and even international events.

## Filmmaking is my way of activism.

It is my way to communicate to people, it is my contribution to the society, it is my way of telling a story in my perspective. Activism and the eagerness to have a say in the society is part of being young. With all the good and awful things I have observed in our society, I cannot just keep quiet about them.

I chose film as a medium of communication not because I want to become a filmmaker but because I didn't have other options. I was not so good at speaking nor writing so my acquired knowledge and my little understanding of scriptwriting (or filmmaking in general) made filmmaking my best option. I started with nothing but a story and few friends who were *insane* enough to believe me. I didn't have equipment and funds, we only worked with what we had at that time—a camera, a laptop, a story, and one another.

Our first attempt in filmmaking was difficult. We decided countless times to give up, but I couldn't.

The few friends who helped me became fewer and those who remained are the people who are still with me up to now. They always say they have stayed because they believe in the story.

More than the story, I draw inspiration from my teammates as they are my source of strength. The storytelling goes on for as long as I have few people who believe. I have grown to realize that filmmaking is just half creativity and the other half is the ability to manage funds, time and people. Filmmaking is a gathering of artists to create a single art form. A director needs to be patient and respectful, to listen to each of the crew members and to give them enough space to become experts in their field.

Filmmaking takes time; it is expensive and tedious. But the prize is great—I am not talking about awards, I am talking about watching your creation in the cinema, hearing the applause and the appreciation of your audience.

In a society where everyone wants to talk and have an opinion about everything, it is only in the cinema that the people are willing to pay, to give their time, to sit still and to listen. That makes film a powerful medium of communication.

I consider it a miracle that they listen to my stories. It is an honor and a privilege I can't take for granted. That's why no matter what happens, my storytelling continues. ■

for

a

promising

filmmaker