

*The Year 2010  
Presidential Awards  
for Filipino Individuals  
and Organizations Overseas*

The cover page design is an ancient Philippine script which means *Gawad ng Pangulo*.  
(Reference: National Museum)

*The facts and accounts of circumstances that are contained in the profiles of the Year 2010 Presidential Awards were taken from the materials submitted to the Awards Secretariat for consideration of the nominations.*





MALACAÑAN PALACE  
MANILA



*Message*

My warmest greetings and congratulations to the recipients of the **2010 Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas**.

This year's awardees exemplify the spirit of unity and public service that is much needed in this time of hope and renewal. I salute the overseas Filipinos that we are honoring through this award, for their professional accomplishments and civic involvements that have helped uplift the communities they serve. You are a source of pride and inspiration for us all. I also commend our foreign partners for their solidarity with us as we rebuild and transform our nation.

Through the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, our administration will keep working to strengthen the ties between the Filipino communities worldwide, and we will always support the personal progress of our countrymen abroad. Let us continue together along the straight and righteous path to peace, prosperity, and stability.

**BENIGNO S. AQUINO III**

Manila  
14 December 2010

Office of the President of the Philippines  
**COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS**

*Message*



On the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas and the observance of the Month of Overseas Filipinos this December 2010, once more, we pay tribute to the distinguished men, women, and organizations in whose hearts and minds love of country has been enshrined.

Likewise, we publicly acclaim the exemplary role of our foreign friends who unselfishly give of their time and resources to mitigate the challenges that confront our people, here and abroad.

To all of you—we extend our heartfelt gratitude and deep admiration.

Since 1991, the search for the more than 314 awardees can be likened to a diver's quest for the perfect pearls from the Philippine south seas that have found their way to the showrooms of the world. The harvest has been bountiful, the luster of your achievements and contributions is appealing. Like a string of pearls, we proudly claim you and brag about you so that we can put meaning to the claim that the competitive advantage of the Philippines lies in its valuable human resource interlinked the world over.

And we can be certain—that there are and will be more where they came from as we work together to move beyond promises and realize genuine Philippine development for all under the second Aquino administration.

Mabuhay!

**IMELDA M. NICOLAS**  
Secretary

Manila  
14 December

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# *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino*

*The Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino (LINKAPIL) Award is conferred on Filipino associations or individuals for their exceptional or significant contribution to reconstruction, progress and development in the Philippines.*

## **Awardees**

**Teresita Calderon Alarcon**  
*United States of America*

**Ruth C. Martinez**  
*Australia*

**North Central Virginia Association of Philippine Physicians**  
*United States of America*

**Philippine American Association of Connecticut**  
*United States of America*

**Philippine German Community Oberberg e.V.**  
*Germany*

## *Teresita Calderon Alarcon*

United States of America

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American educator, Dr. Booker T. Washington once said, "The most useful and influential persons are those who take the deepest interest in institutions that exist for the purpose of making the world better." One such person would certainly be Ms. Teresita Calderon Alarcon.

In the late 1980s, Ms. Alarcon moved to the United States to work at the International Monetary Fund as a Senior Administrative Assistant. Notwithstanding her personal challenges as a young widow by that time, she was still able to allocate time for other causes and eventually became the president of the World Bank/IMF Filipino Association from 1991 to 1993. It was during her stint as president that the organization received the *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* (LINKAPIL) Award in 1993 from President Fidel V. Ramos in recognition of the many humanitarian and civic initiatives implemented during her stewardship.

In 1998, another organization, Feed the Hungry, Inc. (FtH), which she co-founded in 1992 with her husband Pablito Alarcon, received the LINKAPIL Award from President Joseph Estrada for its various development-oriented contributions to the underserved in the Philippines.

An organization that was borne out of Ms. Alarcon's vision and mission to share the blessings of the fortunate with the least fortunate, the FtH started with a budget of \$6,500 which was used to distribute gifts and food bags to Filipino street children and orphans. More than two decades later, the FtH has legions of volunteers both in the U.S. and in the Philippines who spend their own resources to go on FtH missions. It has evolved into a 501 (c) (3) organization and established itself as one of the leading organizations in the U.S. known for its altruism and responsiveness to the needs of destitute Filipinos.

Even after it was conferred the LINKAPIL Award in 1998, FtH remains committed to its goals. It continues



to be the largest contributor to the Link for Philippine Development program of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) at any given year. From 1999 to 2009, FtH has donated a total of PhP 83,733,530.34 worth of development assistance to the Philippines. It has reached out to beneficiaries in 77 of the 79 Philippine provinces and provides supplemental feeding, gifts, calamity relief, educational and scholarship assistance, classrooms, and livelihood opportunities.

In 2009 alone, FtH brought in some PhP 8.5 million worth of assistance to 19 provinces in the Philippines including Metro Manila. FtH assistance accounted for 15.17% of the total development assistance received by the CFO for that year. Nearly 60% of FtH donations in 2009 were for long-term use infrastructure projects such as classrooms, water wells, and low-cost housing while nearly 10% was dedicated to livelihood projects. All these were accomplished because of Ms. Alarcon's indefatigable and unrelenting efforts.

Under Ms. Alarcon's leadership, FtH is able to sustain its efforts through the years. She has raised the needed funds to meet the FtH's targets through personal solicitations, golf tournaments, formal balls, and other fund-raising initiatives. To date, she continues to inspire FtH members and volunteers to assist those who are experiencing serious difficulties in learning how to help themselves.

As a testament to her dedication in providing services to help the poorest of the poor, Ms. Alarcon has been a recipient of various awards and citations such as the *2008 Chicago Filipino-American Hall of Fame Award*, *100 Most Outstanding Filipino Women in the U.S.*, and the *20 Most Outstanding Filipino-Americans*. She was also a finalist in the *Bayaning Pilipino sa Amerika-Gawad Geny Lopez, Jr. Award* of the ABS-CBN Foundation.

***In conferring the Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award to Teresita Calderon Alarcon, the President commends her effective leadership and unselfish dedication to community service specifically through the Feed the Hungry, Inc. and her sustained personal commitment to address the needs of the underprivileged in the Philippines.***

## *Ruth C. Martinez*

Australia

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"We make a living by what we get, but it is through hard work, effort, and willful tenacity to help the underprivileged that we make a life by what we give." This adage has been the driving force behind the humanitarian service of this remarkable Filipina.

Ruth Carlos Martinez is the current president of the Rotary Club of Brighton Beach (RCBB) in Victoria, Australia. Attracted by the organization's spirit of service and its commitment to do good in the world and have a positive impact on people's lives, she joined Rotary International in 2003. Given her status as a foreigner, it was not surprising that Ms. Martinez chose to be assigned to handle RCBB's International Services.

With the full support and encouragement of the club, Ms. Martinez visited the Philippines in 2004 to identify and evaluate opportunities for RCBB to engage in an aid project. Finding such an opportunity and getting it off the ground are two of the biggest challenges faced by Rotary clubs. For a small club like Brighton Beach with only 25 members, this also requires a personal commitment on her part to allocate time and be able to personally attend to funds sourcing.

The visit inspired the RCBB to commit to funding a Clean Water Program in the provinces of Pampanga and Tarlac. It involved the installation of a pump and a well that provided clean and safe water for impoverished families in the Madapdap Resettlement area in Mabalacat, Pampanga. With additional funding from the Rotary Foundation, it was followed by a major water rehabilitation project which included a reservoir of spring clean water that was gravity-fed at eleven kilometres below sea-level for the benefit of three Aeta villages in Bamban, Tarlac.

In 2008, Ms. Martinez spearheaded the Bio-Sand Water Filter (BSWF) Project in coordination with the Rotary Club of Metro Sorsogon. With a fund of US\$9,500 that she was able to secure from the RCBB and the Rotary Club of Boroondara, Ms. Martinez supervised the production of over 200 units of bio-sand water



filters which were used to purify water, make it more potable, and reduce cases of gastro-enteritis and other water borne diseases. The filters were distributed to different barangays in 16 municipalities in the provinces of Sorsogon and Camarines Sur.

As an off-shoot of the project, the *Muklat Kabataan* BSWF Cooperative was organized in Bulan, Sorsogon. The cooperative is composed of out-of-school youths who were trained in the making of bio-sand water filters which now serve as their source of livelihood.

In that same year, Ms. Martinez launched RCBB's Aid to Municipalities Project, by facilitating the construction of a major water distribution system which now supplies clean filtered water to over 6,000 people in the Municipality of Bacon, Sorsogon. This involved the construction of two water reservoirs, a small dam, two intake tanks, and four water stations. The project also includes the donation of an ultrasound machine to the Sorsogon Provincial Hospital and medical supplies to the Sta. Magdalena Health Center and the Castilla Health Center, both in Sorsogon.

With supplementary funding from five other Rotary Clubs in Victoria, Ms. Martinez implemented the second phase of the Aid to Municipalities Project in 2009, facilitating the donation of anti-rabies vaccines, antibiotics, and other medicines to various district health centers in the province of Sorsogon; the provision of medical supplies to the Castilla District Hospital and the Sorsogon Provincial Hospital; the establishment of a fish and aqua-culture livelihood program in Juban, Sorsogon; the education sponsorship and donation of school materials to children at the Our Lady of Virgin of Guadalupe Orphanage in Juban, Sorsogon; and the donation of relief goods to victims of typhoon Ondoy in Rizal.

Ms. Martinez is currently coordinating the implementation of a renewable energy project and the construction of a water distribution system in Lubang and Cabra islands in Mindoro.

***In conferring the Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award to Ruth C. Martinez, the President recognizes her dynamic leadership and sustained commitment to community service through projects that have made clean water, health care and relief programs accessible to impoverished communities in the Philippines.***

## North Central Virginia Association of Philippine Physicians United States of America

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The North Central Virginia Association of Philippine Physicians or NCVAPP is a professional organization of Filipino physicians practicing and residing in the state of Virginia. Since its inception in 1983, NCVAPP has reached out and fostered goodwill among its members and the communities they serve through involvements in local community services in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and neighboring counties.

In 1983, NCVAPP initiated the first annual community health fair in Spotsylvania Mall, Virginia, to check and screen patients for diabetes, hypertension, glaucoma, breast cancer, cervical cancer, sexually transmissible diseases, foot problems, scoliosis, and dental problems. In partnership with the Fredericksburg Catholic Church, NCVAPP also conducts free weekly health check-ups at the Fredericksburg's Homeless Shelter.

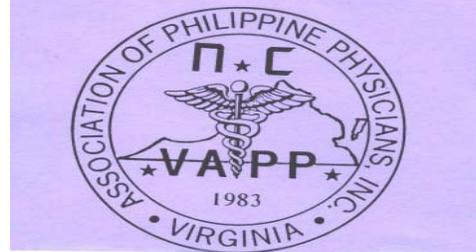
For more than three decades, the group has been conducting free flu and pneumonia vaccinations to indigents and senior citizens of Fredericksburg. They have provided free school and sports physical examinations in Planning District 16, the most populous district in Virginia with an estimated population of 300,000 and includes the counties of Spotsylvania, Stafford, King George, and Caroline.

The NCVAPP took an active stance in the prevention of teenage pregnancies and provided seed money to the Rapahannock area program on teenage pregnancy prevention (RAPTAPP). This support enabled the organization to hire a communications director and enlist 13 public schools to participate in weekly educational lecture series underscoring healthy living by abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, sex, and violence. In three years, RAPTAPP's efforts led to a 35-40% decline in teen pregnancy rates, teen violence, and alcohol use. Its teaching module also earned state government recognition and became a template for teen education in Virginia.

NCVAPP also helps promote Filipino culture in the Virginia area through their *Sinagtala* Dance Troupe which performs various Filipino folk dances during the

***In conferring the Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award to the North Central Virginia Association of Philippine Physicians, the President recognizes its many accomplishments and continued commitment to extend health care services and other philanthropic activities to benefit underserved communities in the United States and the Philippines.***

### North Central Virginia ASSOCIATION OF PHILIPPINE PHYSICIANS



### Foundation

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organization's annual convention, fund-raising ball, and in other gatherings and celebrations.

Since 1986, NCVAPP has evolved into an organization which supports not only health-related community initiatives in Virginia but also in underserved communities in the Philippines. It funds and conducts medical missions in cooperation with other Philippine medical societies in the United States, including the Association of Philippine Physicians of America and the Society of Philippine

Surgeons in America, among others.

NCVAPP funded the renovation of the Aklan Provincial Hospital through the Philippine Economic and Cultural Endowment's (PEACE-USA) Adopt-a-Hospital Program. The renovation included the expansion and air conditioning of the operating rooms and facilities, the purchase of medical equipment, and the construction of an additional room for minor surgeries. The group also co-sponsored the conduct of medical-surgical missions in Aklan. They support the educational and health care projects of the province by providing scholarship grants to local nursing students and through donations of medicines and hospital equipment.

A foremost supporter of PEACE-USA's artesian wells project, NCVAPP helped raise the needed funds for the construction of water wells in needy areas in the Philippines that have no access to potable water. NCVAPP is also a staunch supporter of *Gawad Kalinga* (GK) projects and has significantly contributed to the construction of the Fil-Am Friendship GK Village Community Center in Taguig City.

NCVAPP is also at the forefront in the promotion of Filipino unification in America by actively assisting the founding of the Filipino United Network (FUN), a national civic organization of Filipino-American leaders. In 2006, NCVAPP promoted FUN's Unity Congress by hosting the Global FUN Summit, which was attended by leaders of various Fil-Am national and medical organizations as well as representatives from *Gawad Kalinga*.

# *Philippine American Association of Connecticut*

United States of America

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Over its 45-year existence, the Philippine American Association of Connecticut or PAAC has never waned in actively presenting the Philippines to the region as the country's dynamic cultural ambassador, advocate of causes to benefit U.S.-based *kababayan*, and the strong link to the motherland through its developmental projects.

The humble beginnings of Connecticut's oldest Filipino community organization can be traced back to 1965 when a group of young Filipino Yale University students and health care professionals came together in search for a "home away from home." Finding comfort in each other's company, they in turn attracted and welcomed other Filipino immigrants based in Connecticut. Thereafter, they created a refuge for homesick Filipinos and came together to share familiar traditions and customs of the Philippines.

Today, the membership of the PAAC includes experts and skilled individuals engaged in various trades, industries, and fields from all over the state. The association has matured in profound ways. It no longer exists just as a social club but serves as a vehicle for the promotion of Filipino culture in the United States and for the delivery of needed assistance to improve the lives of their countrymen back home.

PAAC is recognized as a resource base of Philippine culture. Its Youth Dance Troupe is the cultural ambassador and performs in schools, universities, town fairs, hospitals and nursing homes in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. It is proud of the talent pool that makes up the *Rondalla* and chorale groups which reflect the ethnic diversity of the community at-large.

The PAAC's involvements put a premium on the education of second generation Filipinos in the Greater New Haven and nearby areas by undertaking culturally-oriented projects. The *Camp Mabuhay* is an intensive 3-day camp that provides Filipino children who have been adopted by American families a taste of the homeland customs and traditions. The *Paaralang Pilipino* is a summer learning program where children are introduced to Philippine history, culture, dance, music, language, crafts, and the arts.

***In conferring the Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award to the Philippine American Association of Connecticut, the President recognizes its unwavering commitment and support to medical, educational, and social projects in the Philippines, and its sustainable initiatives to keep overseas Filipinos and their descendants aware of our rich cultural heritage.***



The members participate in the annual March of Dimes, and volunteer for the Special Olympics and Soup Kitchens. The group co-sponsors the annual *Simbang Gabi sa Konsulado* and joins in the yearly Philippine Independence Day Parade in New York City with members performing street dancing routines.

PAAC's assistance to the homeland is extended in the form of medical missions, scholarship programs, and financial assistance to various causes that benefit the underserved sectors in the Philippines.

The *Tulong Kapwa* surgical mission which was initiated in 2008 has since become an annual project of PAAC. The group has conducted these in the provinces of Negros Oriental and Laguna. The surgeries involved operations of the cleft palate and other deformities as well as gynaecologic procedures. During its surgical missions, PAAC donated medical supplies and equipment worth over PhP 200,000 to the Teresita Jalandoni Hospital in Negros Oriental and PhP 500,000 to the Laguna Provincial Hospital and the JP Rizal Memorial Hospital in Laguna.

PAAC has been providing scholarships to deserving students in the United States and the Philippines since the 1980s. In 2007, the association started a more comprehensive scholarship program by sponsoring three college scholars in the Philippines. Each scholar received a grant of US\$1,000 per annum over a four year period. The scholars were chosen based on needs and academic criteria. In March 2010, two scholars graduated with degrees in education while in October 2010, the third scholar graduated with a bachelor of science in chemistry degree from UP Los Baños. Under the PAAC scholarship program, an additional five grantees have been chosen and will complete their degrees by 2013.

The association has also raised funds to support the *Classroom Galing sa Mamamayang Pilipino Abroad* Program of the Philippine government, the renovation of the Philippine Pediatric Pavilion of the Quezon Institute, the charitable projects of the Sisters of Charity in Tacloban City, the relief efforts for victims of typhoon Ondoy in Metro Manila, and the displaced settlers resulting from the fighting in Mindanao.

# *Philippine German Community Oberberg e.V.*

Germany

In 1996, a group of Filipinos in the Oberbergischer, a small district south of Cologne, Germany, met in Gummersbach to discuss ways of uniting Filipinos and Germans living within their area by means of holding monthly celebrations of the Holy Mass. The well-attended masses paved the way for the inception of the Philippine German Community Oberberg e.V. in 1997. Its mission is to foster international understanding and culture, particularly between Filipinos and German nationals. Cognizant of their differences and their various needs, the members come together to provide humanitarian assistance to destitute Filipinos in the Philippines, apart from addressing their own issues and concerns.



Since most of the members of PGCO are employed in hospitals in Germany, they have been very resourceful in soliciting for medical equipment and laboratory supplies for various hospitals in the Philippines. The PGCO addresses the need of these hospitals which either have obsolete or lack of medical supplies and equipment. The hospitals which benefited from these donations were the Sablayan General Hospital and Mamburao Hospital in Occidental Mindoro, the Ilocos Training and Regional Medical Center in La Union, the Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Hospital, the Quirino Memorial Medical Center, the Barangay San Agustin Health Center, and the Batasan Lying-in Clinic in Quezon City. The PGCO also donated an ambulance unit to the

Provincial Government of Isabela and paid for the shipment costs from Germany to Isabela.

Over the years, PGCO has greatly contributed to the upliftment of the lives of diverse sectors in the Philippines: the underprivileged, the abandoned and abused children, the calamity victims, alumni associations, youth groups, and the religious and medical institutions. Fr. Tranquilino de Ocampo, the Chaplain from the Archdiocese of Cologne, regarded the PGCO as the social concern arm of the Filipino community in Gummersbach and an organization in Germany whose heart beats for Filipinos, especially those who are in need.

In 2009, PGCO has become an instrument for rebuilding the lives of the victims of typhoon *Ondoy*. Aside from its donation of basic necessities such as food and toiletries, the PGCO provided materials for the construction of the houses of 60 families from Barangay Bagong Silang, Quezon City, and Montalban, Rizal.

Considered as one of the significant contributions of the PGCO is the construction in 2005 of the *Maria, Inang Mapag-Ampon Children's Village*, a shelter for emotionally, physically, and sexually abused children located in Bustos, Bulacan. When the Mission Director of the shelter sought the assistance of the PGCO, the shelter was only 5% developed. The 2.76-hectare Center was built as an expansion site of another shelter, the *Bahay at Yaman ni San Martin de Porres*, to accommodate more children and provide complete facilities. For the last five years, their donation has amounted to a total of PhP 1 million. Continuing its support for children, in 2009, the PGCO also donated to the *Tahanan ng Pagmamahal Children's Home*, a center for orphans and abandoned children in Pasig City, and, in 2001, to the *Angeles Bahay Bata Center*, a shelter for street children in Angeles City, Pampanga.

Under its livelihood program, in 2007, the PGCO has provided the start-up capital of the micro-credit assistance project of the Aklan Agricultural College Class 1979 Alumni Association. There were 17 families who have availed of the micro-credit program amounting to PhP 5,000 each to finance various income-generating projects such as swine raising, quail egg production, crop farming, fish trading, meat selling, and canteen operation.

Recognizing the need to improve the facilities of the public schools in the Philippines, the PGCO contributed funds for the construction of two water tanks at the Cornelia Reta, Sr. Elementary School in Sasa, Davao City; the construction of the school library at the Nicomedes Tubar National High School in San Dionisio, Iloilo City; the roofing extension of the function hall at the Mamburao Central School in Occidental Mindoro; the improvement of the school library at the Kalumbaya Elementary School in Bauang, La Union; the renovation of comfort rooms at the Tinurik High School in Batangas; and other school improvement projects at the Boot Elementary School and the Boot National High School in Tanauan, Batangas.

In 2006, the PGCO supported the *Kabataang Perdonista, Inc.*, a religious youth organization which advocates for the conservation and protection of forests. The youth group conducts yearly summer development training camps to promote environmental protection in its campsite in Mariveles, Bataan. Their donation was used for the construction of additional bamboo huts for campers and facilitators in their campsite.

In 2003 and 2004, the PGCO also partnered with the *Gawad Kalinga* for the establishment of the German Village in Bagong Silang, Caloocan City, which benefited 277 communities.

Being religious themselves, the PGCO donated through the St. Joseph Parish, for the renovation of the barangay chapel in Barangay Agbanawan, Banga, Aklan, and the construction of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Baliwag, Bulacan.

***In conferring the Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award to the Philippine German Community Oberberg e.V., the President recognizes its unrelenting efforts to unite the Filipinos and Germans in Oberberg, and render invaluable assistance and services for the benefit of various sectors in the Philippines.***



# *Kaanib ng Bayan*

*The Kaanib ng Bayan Award is conferred on foreign individuals or organizations for their exceptional or significant contribution to Philippine reconstruction, progress and development, or have significantly benefited a sector or community in the Philippines, or advanced the cause of overseas Filipino communities.*

## **Awardees**

**Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center**  
*Lebanon*

**Phoebe Bik Che Lam**  
*Hong Kong SAR*

**Sunny Kai Chor Lam**  
*Hong Kong SAR*

**Simha Salpeter**  
*Israel*



## *Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center* *Lebanon*

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In 1994, the Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center (CLMC) was established to implement various activities in line with its vision and mission to recognize, respect, strengthen, and protect the human rights of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Lebanon. It provides a combination of social and legal support and advocacy in partnership with private sector groups and relevant government agencies.

In support of migrants, the Center provides shelter, medical, legal, and repatriation assistance to those who are in detention or those who have suffered maltreatment and physical abuse in the hands of their employers or foreign spouses. From 2003 to 2010, about 2,000 Filipino migrants in Lebanon have benefited from the Center's assistance. CLMC partners with the Philippine Embassy in Beirut to provide these services to Filipinos in distress including their search for justice against Lebanese or other nationals who have taken advantage of their weakness.

In December 2009, a Lebanese court convicted its own national for beating up his Filipino domestic helper in 2006. The CLMC assisted the Filipina in filing and pursuing the case which has been viewed as an important legal precedent in the country since it was the first conviction of a Lebanese employer for the abusive treatment of a migrant worker.

Pregnant Filipino workers have also been accommodated in the Center's special shelters while awaiting repatriation to the Philippines. The Center also shouldered the expenses for the routine medical check-up and delivery of these victims who ran away from their employers or recruitment agencies. CLMC also assists the Philippine Embassy in the processing of the needed documents for the repatriation of Filipinos in distress.

The Center also organizes seminars, produces public service announcements, and conducts similar activities to raise awareness on human rights issues among migrants and the Lebanese population as well. Records of the Center show that from 2003 to 2010, about 2,400 Filipinos have attended the CLMC's



orientation seminars on the rights and responsibilities as migrants in Lebanon.

Since 2000, CLMC has been organizing Summer Camps for children of migrants and refugees. The Camp's objectives include the following: to contribute to the forging of closer ties between nations, to foster tolerance and respect for others, to introduce children to other religions and cultures, and to provide them with a fun summertime away from the difficulties of their daily lives. The camp is marked by recreational

activities, outings, and tours to the various Lebanese regions as well as visits to major historical and natural sites.

In response to the continued pleas and the pressing needs of migrant families, the CLMC initiated the Specialized School Project in 2003 to provide education that is adapted to the particular circumstances of migrants' children within the age range of 4-12 years and have either dropped out or never had schooling.

In July 2003, the CLMC started implementing a program to protect and assist victims of trafficking in Lebanon. This project is programmed to afford protection, integrated social assistance, and options for lasting solutions to the problems of women victims of trafficking. It involves extensive cooperation with the General Directorate of General Security, the governmental authority responsible for monitoring the legal status of foreigners in Lebanon. The project also plans an intensive training for general security agents to reinforce their knowledge of trafficking-related issues.

The Center also implements a Peace-Building Project. It aims to build a solid foundation for the attainment of Justice and Reconciliation, and to repair broken relationships in order to transform situations of injustice. This is achieved through group meetings, summer camps, forums on human rights, community health education, and cultural reunions. The target population includes Palestinian, Iraqi, and Lebanese communities consisting of various denominations and age groups.

***In conferring the Kaanib ng Bayan Award to the Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center, the President recognizes its exemplary initiatives to defend the rights and uphold the dignity of Filipino migrants in Lebanon.***

# *Phoebe Bik Che Lam*

## Hong Kong SAR

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A social worker of Hong Kong Caritas for 14 years now, Ms. Phoebe Bik Che Lam earned her bachelor of arts degree in social work from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and finished her master of arts degree in philosophy at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Ms. Lam is currently assigned at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Filipinos. Most of the time, she works with foreign household workers in distress to promote better understanding between the workers and their employers.



Ms. Lam is always invited by the Philippine Consulate General to be part of the team that gives post-arrival seminars to incoming Filipino household service workers in Hong Kong. In 2007, she formed a Labor Rights Concern Group composed of Filipino and Indonesian household workers in Hong Kong to raise their consciousness of labor rights. The group meets every 3rd and 4th Sunday morning in Caritas-Caine Road to study Hong Kong labor laws and immigration policies, and to discuss multiple employment concerns of individual members.

She shows her support to other Hongkong-based Filipinos with pending criminal, immigration, and labor cases. She provides them with psycho-social and moral guidance, and accompanies these Filipino nationals during court appearances. Even after the conclusion of their cases, Ms. Lam still remains in constant touch with the victims through text messaging or through the internet. She checks their working conditions, ease their apprehensions, and provides them with relevant advice.

In the human trafficking case involving six Filipino victims which was referred by the Philippine Consulate General to the Hong Kong Police in 2007, Ms. Lam's role as a social worker proved crucial. At that time, the victims were suffering from severe emotional distress due to their traumatic experience in the hands of the traffickers. She provided them with the needed

psycho-social assistance which contributed to the successful prosecution of the case.

Ms. Lam was with the victims whenever they need to report to the police authorities about their case and during the court proceedings until the case against their traffickers was concluded. She arranged recreational activities to ease their boredom and brought them to a retreat so that they could gain spiritual strength as they confronted their exploiters.

In June 2009, two Filipinas were recruited by a relative to work as waitresses in Macau. When they arrived in Macau, they were told that a job was waiting for them in Hong Kong. The victims traveled to Hong Kong but were forced to work as commercial sex workers in a club in Wan Chai. After two days, they were rescued by some Hong Kong-based Filipinos who assisted them in reporting their plight to the Philippine Consulate General. The formal complaint filed with the Hong Kong Police Force resulted in the arrest of three Filipino traffickers during a raid at the club where the victims worked.

Ms. Lam once again gave her full support to the two Filipino victims by providing them shelter, moral guidance, and encouragement which inspired them to pursue the case further. She gave special attention to the condition of one of the victims who was pregnant at that time by accompanying her for routine medical check-ups.

A testament to the exceptional service that Ms. Lam rendered to her clients was the christening of the said victim's baby after her. If deeds are truly greater than words, then this act suffices to recognize the invaluable role that Ms. Lam plays in the lives of her many wards.

***In conferring the Kaanib ng Bayan Award to Phoebe Bik Che Lam, the President commends her dedication in the service of Filipino victims of trafficking and invaluable assistance to the many household workers in Hong Kong who have benefited from her psycho-social interventions.***

## *Sunny Kai Chor Lam*

Hong Kong SAR

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Senior Inspector Sunny Kai Chor Lam has been with the Hong Kong Police Force since 1997. As a member of the elite Organized Crime and Triad Bureau (OCTB), he has always shown exceptional competence in handling cases of trafficking and other organized crimes by setting up investigation and arrest operations which have resulted in the successful prosecution and eventual conviction of the perpetrators of these heinous crimes.

In 2007, the Philippine Consulate General contacted Senior Inspector Lam and sought the assistance of the Hong Kong Police concerning the case of six Filipino women who were lured into working in Hong Kong as commercial sex workers in the Wan Chai District.

The victims arrived in Hong Kong in July 2007 and were reportedly brought to a boarding house in Wan Chai. They were told that they owed the illegal recruiter HK\$10,000 (Php60,000) each and that they could pay back the amount by hanging out in bars and offering sexual services to customers. Hungry, afraid, and deeming it impossible to earn the HK\$10,000 required from each of them, the victims hurriedly went to the Philippine Consulate to seek help. Acting on the information provided by the victims, Senior Inspector Lam and his team conducted a sting operation which led to the arrest of two suspected human traffickers.

Senior Inspector Lam made sure that all available incentives were provided to the victims to encourage them to pursue the case against their traffickers. These incentives included police protection, a daily subsistence allowance, as well as transportation fund to cover the trip of one victim who went back to the Philippines to take the licensure examination for nurses. This assistance enabled her to return to Hong Kong and stand as witness during the trial of the offenders. Senior Inspector Lam also conducted witness preparation sessions to prime the victims for the trial.

After the trial was concluded, Senior Inspector Lam visited the Philippines and personally met with officials of the Department of Justice and the National Bureau of Investigation in November 2007. He wanted to

***In conferring the Kaanib ng Bayan Award to Senior Inspector Sunny Kai Chor Lam, the President commends his extraordinary sense of professionalism and invaluable assistance as a partner of the Philippine government in securing justice for Filipino victims of trafficking in Hong Kong.***



ensure that the victims would receive continued protection upon their return to their home country.

The two suspects were eventually charged for trafficking in persons and were subsequently convicted and sentenced by a Hong Kong court to three years imprisonment. In December 2007, the six victims were escorted by Senior Inspector Lam and his team to the Hong Kong International Airport for their return trip to the Philippines.

In 2009, the Philippine Consulate General sought the assistance of Senior Inspector Lam and the OCTB again. It involved a similar case affecting two Filipino nationals who were lured to Hong Kong as commercial sex workers. Senior Inspector Lam and his team raided a private club in the Wan Chai area and arrested three suspected human traffickers, two of whom were subsequently charged and sentenced to imprisonment.

Once more, Senior Inspector Lam provided the victims not only with the necessary material support but also with constant reassurance, protection, and encouragement to uplift their morale. One victim who was pregnant when she arrived in Hong Kong was assisted by Senior Inspector Lam when she gave birth days before the court trial in February 2010. He made representations with the city's Hospital Authority to have the baby delivered in Hong Kong free of charge. He also met with visiting Philippine officials so that the victims could be assured of protection after the conclusion of the case.

Senior Inspector Lam's willingness to work with Filipino non-government organizations in Hong Kong is another trait that sets him apart. While the adoption of a multi-sectoral approach to address social problems may be common in the Philippines, this is rare in other jurisdictions especially in Hong Kong. Senior Inspector Lam goes beyond the routine police procedures governing the investigation of cases and reaches out to non-government organizations to build important alliances for the speedy and effective resolution of problems.

# Simha Salpeter

Israel

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“The Generous One” and “The Father Figure of the Filipino Community” — these are just some of the terms of endearment used by grateful Israel-based Filipinos to refer to this gentle Israeli and which attest to the impact that he has had on their lives for the past five decades.

Born in 1935 in Tel Aviv, Mr. Simha “Simi” Salpeter left for the United States after he finished high school and subsequently earned his degree in marketing at the City College of New York (CCNY). Even during his early years at CCNY, he already made his mark in community work and was given an award for outstanding service to the college and the community.

He served in the Israel Defense Forces for twelve years and retired with a rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Upon his return to civilian life, he got involved in diverse engagement as marketing manager for various companies and thereafter as executive director of the B’nai B’rith Association for Charitable and Cultural Institutions, the most widely known Jewish humanitarian and human rights advocacy organization.

In 1976, Mr. Salpeter married Ms. Montserrat “Montie” Sison of Pangasinan, a marriage that also marked the start of his lifelong commitment to look after the welfare of his wife’s *kababayan* in Israel.

The home of the Salpeters became a center of Filipino life in Israel, especially in the 1970s, the 1980s, and into the 1990s when the Filipino community started to expand. It eventually became the second home of several generations of Filipino professionals and scholars who came to Israel for trainings and studies. The Salpeter’s residence served as the first Filipino cultural center where lectures and folk dances were presented for Israelis and members of the diplomatic community. They also played host to countless Filipino delegations, agricultural or commercial missions, well-known Filipino personalities like the former De La Salle University president Brother Rafael Donato, journalist Max Soliven, painter Manuel Baldemor, stage and film director Behn Cervantes, singer Freddie Aguilar, and many others.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the arrival of Filipino workers in Israel surged to a hefty number. At the time when the Philippine Embassy still had no labor and welfare attachés, Mr. Salpeter singly took up the cudgels for the OFWs and became a one-man operation dedicated to their protection. He negotiated problems between the workers and their employers or agencies, fought loan sharks to secure



fair interest rates and easy repayment arrangements for borrowers, and visited sick OFWs in hospitals and even provided support to meet their needs. He also let a number of Filipino workers use his personal bank account in order to facilitate medical insurance and other payments.

On many occasions, Mr. Salpeter made his home a safe house for undocumented Filipinos hiding from immigration police. Alternatively, it also served as a “camp” for Filipino workers and their children during weekends. He also turned a five-room, one-storey building in a prime location in Tel Aviv into low-rental accommodation for Filipino workers.

Because of his involvement with the Filipinos in Israel, Mr. Salpeter was acclaimed as the first adviser of the Federation of Filipino Communities in Israel (FFCI), the umbrella organization of different Filipino regional, cultural, and religious associations in the country. He was instrumental in the creation of the FFCI and always lends his support to their activities.

Even after the death of his wife in 2006, Mr. Salpeter’s concern for the well-being and interests of Filipinos in Israel never wavered. He continued sponsoring many community projects such as the donation of computers to Mindoro beneficiaries, medical missions of the FFCI in Israel, and various sports and social activities for the Filipino community in Israel.

As a member of the Organizing Committee for the Celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Israel-Philippine Diplomatic Relations in June 2009, Mr. Salpeter played a vital role. He was involved in every stage of the construction in Rishon LeZion of the Open Doors Monument—the first Philippine monument erected in Israel which serves as a reminder of the humanitarian gesture of the Philippines under Commonwealth President Manuel L. Quezon when the country welcomed Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany on the eve of World War II.

Mr. Salpeter actively helped in the *Sagip Pilipinas* Project of the FFCI Filipino community in Israel. They raised funds for purposes of aiding the victims of typhoon Ondoy in the provinces of La Union and Pangasinan, and in the city of Baguio. He also donated PhP 17,825 from his personal funds to help the families of three victims who died during the onslaught of typhoon Peping in Sison, Pangasinan.

***In conferring the Kaanib ng Bayan Award to Simha Salpeter, the President commends his continuing paternalistic concern for the overseas Filipino community in Israel, and extraordinary sense of altruism which has opened opportunities that foster good working relationships between and among Israelis and Filipinos and contributed to the well-being of his beneficiaries in both countries.***

# *Banaag*

*The Banaag Award is conferred on Filipino individuals or associations for their contributions which have significantly benefited a sector or community in the Philippines, or advanced the cause of overseas Filipino communities.*

## ***Awardees***

**Dr. Emely D. Abagat**  
*South Korea*

**Computer Society of Filipinos International**  
*Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*

**Congress of Visayan Organizations**  
*United States of America*

**Federation of Filipino Communities in Israel**  
*Israel*

**George G. Gange**  
*United States of America*

**Marilyn Wafa R. Kasimieh**  
*United Arab Emirates*

**Kinding Sindaw**  
*United States of America*

**Sr. Lucia C. Olalia**  
*South Korea*

**Evangelina V. Ybo**  
*Jordan*

## Dr. Emely D. Abagat

South Korea

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Responsible, dynamic and indispensable--these are just a few of the most remarkable attributes of Dr. Emily D. Abagat who is well-known among overseas Filipinos in South Korea.

Dr. Abagat is the current Chairman of the Education Committee of Hyehwadong Filipino Catholic Community (HFCC), the largest and most influential Filipino group in South Korea which is actively involved in addressing issues concerning Filipino migrants. On top of her regular duties at HFCC, Dr. Abagat extends assistance to Filipino workers in their labor and legal concerns through the provision of essential information and referrals to appropriate agencies depending on the nature of the complaint.



Dr. Abagat holds the distinction of being the only Filipina professor at the Catholic University of Korea (CUK). She teaches various subjects in the Departments of Education, Business, and International Studies. She assists in the promotion of the CUK scholarship program and coordinates with the Philippine Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, and various schools, colleges and universities so that Filipino students can avail of free education and opportunities for professional growth. The scholarship program provides free tuition, accommodations, and round-trip airline fare. In addition, the scholars can avail of the opportunity to work as part-time English language assistants and are paid 400,000 won a month.

Dr. Abagat is recognized for her selfless efforts in empowering the officers and members of various Filipino associations overseas through the values and leadership formation seminars she has delivered. She is regularly invited to facilitate and organize trainings, retreats, and recollections for leaders of Filipino organizations on topics such as their adaptation to Korean culture and values, leadership and stewardship, and capacity-building. The recollections help participants deepen their faith and face the challenges and difficulties encountered in the conduct of their daily lives. Trainings have been conducted for Filipino communities in Daejeon, Cheonan, Kwangju, Busan, Kasan, Maseok, Iksan, Cheongju, Ansan, and Bucheon.

With her unwavering commitment to help the Filipino migrants, she volunteers to be an adviser and mentor to various associations where she provides advice and inputs on their plans and activities. Given the difficulties that Filipinos go through, with Dr. Abagat's assistance, they become more organized and are able to reach out to more Filipinos in Korea.

Being a teacher and a strong believer in the value of education as a ticket to a better future for the underprivileged, Dr. Abagat also coordinated and acted as a liaison between the Mt. Carmel High School in Gen. Nakar, Quezon and the HFCC. The beneficiaries received scholarship funds which covered tuition fees and food subsidies for 50 high school students who were also flood victims of typhoon Yoleng. She also monitors the scholars and helps raise funds to sustain the program.

As a pioneer member of the *Pilipino Iskolar sa Korea*, an association of Filipino students in Korea, Dr. Abagat is in-charge of looking after the welfare of Filipino students at the CUK. She assists new students in their acculturation and to secure more scholarship opportunities. Because of her efforts, she was recognized by the CUK for promoting better relationships between the Philippines and South Korea, and was also featured in the *Rated K* program of television host Ms. Korina Sanchez.

To add to her long list of accomplishments, Dr. Abagat is an editor to *SAMBAYANAN*, *Yoboseyo*, *Sulyapinoy*, and *The Advocacy*, which serve as reliable sources of information and news concerning Filipinos in Korea. She was also a research fellow at the Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies, a lecturer at the Korea National University of Education, speaker in the undergraduate and global leadership programs of the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, and guest teacher at the Philippine Korean Culture House.

In recognition of her invaluable services to the Filipino community in South Korea, she was the first recipient of the *Gawad Giovanni Jaron* as the Most Outstanding Filipino Individual in Korea in 2008.

Dr. Abagat was born in Ilocos Norte and has a degree in Education major in Religious Studies. Because of her professional and spiritual endeavors, she was inspired to write her book, *And God Smiled Back*, a collection of her reflections on her life as an OFW, solo parent, and missionary, so that she could share her experiences and inspire Filipinos worldwide.

***In conferring the Banaag Award to Dr. Emely D. Abagat, the President recognizes her untiring efforts in upholding the interests and welfare of her kababayan through her involvement in various Filipino overseas associations, and selfless dedication and deep commitment by acting as liaison to promote better Philippine-South Korea relations.***

# Computer Society of Filipinos International

## Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

As cyber-technology continues to influence today's lifestyle, both for the young and young-once, the Computer Society of Filipinos, International (COMSOFIL) is poised to consistently carry out its goals in developing globally-competitive Filipinos by providing them opportunities for continuing education in the field of Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Organized in November 1995, COMSOFIL has extensively institutionalized its presence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It provides free computer literacy programs and information technology seminars, while maintaining partnerships with Information Technology (IT) solution providers and other community organizations in developing skills training programs for the benefit of OFWs in Riyadh. Since then, COMSOFIL has consistently promoted ICT awareness and simultaneously professionalized the Filipino workforce, thus making them more employable in higher-paying jobs.

Since its creation, COMSOFIL has graduated more than 9,000 OFWs from all walks of life. The students were enrolled in various ICT Cluster Courses which are conducted in two semesters every year. The COMSOFIL's efforts to serve as a forum for sharing new cutting-edge technology in Saudi Arabia made it easier for OFWs to harness and improve their skills and thereby guarantee an improved quality of life upon their return to the Philippines with their respective families. This value-adding intervention is a concrete example of a relevant reintegration program for returning OFWs.

A number of testimonies and cases underscores the impact of COMSOFIL training on the lives of Filipino workers overseas who are determined to upgrade their qualifications and land a better job overseas: a tea-boy who was a victim of illegal recruitment but was promoted as an IT Technician; a cargo packer who was supposed to be repatriated to the Philippines due to a slipped disc, but was promoted as an Export Administrator; a factory worker turned Computer Operator; and a cashier turned web and graphics designer. There are 9,000 other good stories to be told as a testament to COMSOFIL's significance.

To assure their projects' sustainability, every year, COMSOFIL launches a series of intensive Instructor's Orientation and Leadership Training Seminar Workshops that strengthen the capability of all volunteer instructors, their assistants, and the entire technical staff to impart knowledge, expertise and technical know-how to the participants.

***In conferring the Banaag Award to Computer Society of Filipinos International, the President recognizes its unselfish dedication and commitment to empower Filipinos in Saudi Arabia through skills training and upgrading; and facilitate their productive reintegration into Philippine society.***



COMSOFIL has also strengthened its partnership with the Philippine Overseas Labor Office in Riyadh and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration to further extend services and assistance to OFWs particularly those who are confronted with difficult situations. COMSOFIL implements the Bits and Bytes Project in a *Bahay-Kalinga* in Saudi Arabia to provide training on the use of computer applications for distressed Filipinos as part of their preparation for eventual reintegration into the Philippine workforce. The project was launched in May 2005 and has involved 20 OFW participants. COMSOFIL also assists in the *Libreng Tawag sa Pinas, Handog Para Kay Kabayan* Project of POLO-OWWA which aims to help their *kababayans*, especially the distressed

OFWs, by providing tools and mechanisms to easily get in touch and talk to their families and loved ones in the Philippines.

For the past 14 years, COMSOFIL has been continuously sponsoring *IT Olympics* for all its members which serves as a venue to apply their newly learned skill, work as team with their cluster mates, boost their morale and confidence, and learn the value of sportsmanship. COMSOFIL also sponsors the *CyberClash* inter-school IT Olympics participated in by 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year high school students from various international schools within the Riyadh area. The competition has been running for two consecutive years now and continues to promote computer skills and competency among the youth and camaraderie among students from various schools.

While upgrading OFWs' skills, COMSOFIL also publishes the *INFOBITS* which serves as a reliable source of information about the events and activities in COMSOFIL and the Filipino community in Saudi Arabia, as well as updates on information technology. COMSOFIL also takes pride in the establishment of the *Toast of COMSOFIL*, the Society's exclusive Toastmaster Club which equips the members with essential skills in public speaking and personality development.

Through the years, COMSOFIL has provided professional and technical assistance and manpower support to the various activities of the Philippine Embassy and the Filipino community organizations such as literary and singing competitions, concert-for-a-cause, film showings, beauty pageants, and AutoCAD Training for Engineers, among others.

Fifteen years thereafter, COMSOFIL continues to keep the spirit of volunteerism alive in Saudi Arabia, making its practical skills and education program an imperative component for the empowerment of more OFWs each year.

# Congress of Visayan Organizations

## United States of America

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The Visayans Filipinos' ancestral roots are found in a number of islands across central Philippines. The diversity of the Visayan region is reflected in several dialects that form its linguistic base such as Ilonggo, Waray, and Cebuano. The region takes pride in their forebears' many roles in Philippine history, such as: the Spaniards' "discovery" of the Philippines in Cebu, the longest anti-Spanish rebellion led by Francisco Dagohoy in Bohol, the Filipino-American struggle in Samar, and the landing of U.S. Gen. Douglas MacArthur in Leyte towards the end of World War II, among others.

Visayan local historical accounts include the exodus of the Visayan *sakadas* in Hawaii to work in the sugar plantations in Hawaii in 1909. The steady increase in numbers in over time has resulted in the rise to prominence of several individuals as well as the emergence of several Visayan organizations to address their needs and concerns in the state.

The idea of unifying all the Visayan organizations in Hawaii started in the 1980s and gave birth to the Congress of Visayan Organizations (COVO), a statewide umbrella of 26 organizations of Filipinos with Visayan ancestry. The initial move to band together led to the formation of the Visayan League in 1985. Through the efforts of several individuals from the Philippine Consulate, the Hawaii state government, and the private sector, it was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in 1988. Eventually, the COVO extended its membership to include Filipino organizations with ancestral roots in Mindanao.

After 25 years, the COVO has become a noted Filipino organization whose mission was to unify Hawaii-based Visayan organization, propagate Visayan linguistic heritage and traditions, and assist in the advancement of its members in the state's politico-economic and socio-cultural life. Although the COVO's primary goal was to promote the welfare of Visayans, it has also served the needs of Filipino groups in the Philippines, as well as other Filipino and non-Filipino ethnic groups in Hawaii. Its exemplary contributions were recognized by the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the City and County of Honolulu of the State of Hawaii.

To promote and maintain Visayan unity and visibility, the COVO hosts a weekly radio program, *Ang Bodyong*, at KNDI Radio. It is the only Visayan radio program in the state which combines Visayan music and news tidbits from the local Visayan community. It features the activities of the different member organizations of the COVO including interviews with local Visayan personalities and guests from the Philippines.

To recognize the accomplishments of Hawaii-based Filipinos with Visayan ancestry, the COVO initiated the biennial *Lapu-Lapu Awards* in 2002. Since then, COVO has conferred the award to 102 Filipinos in various categories: lifetime achievement, individual achievement in various fields, and young achievers'



awards. The award has become a source of pride among members of the Visayan community, especially among the younger generation.

COVO figured prominently during the centennial celebration of Filipino migration to

Hawaii. In 2006, it collaborated with the Filipino Centennial Celebration Commission in various activities such as bringing for the first time the *Ati-Atihan*, *Dinagyang*, and *Sinulog* Festivals to Hawaii; the unveiling of a marker commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the solo voyage from Hawaii to the Philippines of Mr. Florentino Das; and the installation of a marker in Hanapepe, Kauai, in commemoration of the death of Filipino workers, who were mostly Visayans, in the 1924 labor uprising. The COVO also spearheaded various events to celebrate the centennial of the Visayan presence in Hawaii. The highlights included: the *Sto. Niño* festival, the Visayan Centennial Tour, the Visayan Century Awards, the COVO Convention, and the production of *Handumanan*, a collection of stories and pictures about the Visayan experience in Hawaii. The Hawaii's *Honolulu Advertiser* referred to the celebrations as "a festival for all Filipinos."

The COVO has led many emergency relief efforts in Hawaii. In 2009, in collaboration with the Filipino Community Center and other Filipino organizations, the COVO and its member organizations raised US\$199,932 for the victims of Typhoon *Ondoy*. In 2008, COVO partnered with Senator Clarence Nishihara, the Filipino Community Center, and the Hawaii International Relief Organization to ship over 8,000 books to the Philippines which were distributed to 113 schools in various provinces. It also donated various medical equipment, supplies, and computers to the City Government of Panabo in Davao del Norte. In 2006, it helped raised funds amounting to US\$28,000 for the survivors of the Southern Leyte landslide. The amount was donated to the Aloha Medical Mission for the purchase of medical supplies and equipment. Aside from providing medical assistance to the victims, the COVO granted scholarships through the Children's Hour to 56 children whose families were victims of a landslide.

The COVO has also been politically active through its Committee on Political Education. It has lobbied to the Legislature and the City Council for support on issues and programs such as minimum wage increases, tax reforms, funding for youth programs, immigration concerns, cultural observances, elderly and caregiver issues, and veterans rights. One of its relevant lobby efforts is the passing of a resolution to explore the possibility of offering courses on Visayan language and culture at the University of Hawaii. The COVO was also instrumental in the establishment of the sister-city agreement between Cebu City and Honolulu, and the state- province agreement between Hawaii and Cebu. The said agreements resulted to several businesses, trade, technical, educational, and cultural exchanges between Cebu and Hawaii.

***In conferring the Banaag Award to the Congress of Visayan Organizations, the President recognizes its achievements in fostering unity and a sense of community among Filipinos, particularly those with Visayan ancestry in Hawaii, and contribution to the concerted humanitarian efforts for the welfare of beneficiaries in Hawaii and the Philippines.***

# Federation of Filipino Communities in Israel

Israel

Phenomenal is the word that can aptly describe the accomplishments of this young Israeli-based federation of several overseas Filipino workers' organizations. In just eight years, the Federation of Filipino Communities in Israel (FFCI) boasts of a host of projects and services that have benefitted families and communities in the Philippines as well as other OFWs in Israel.

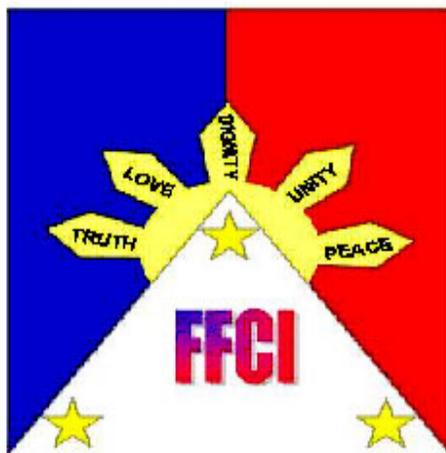
The growing number of Filipinos in Israel, which has now reached approximately 39,000, and the corresponding increase in the number of organized groups prompted the establishment of a federation in order to effectively reach out to more Israel-based Filipinos and extend much-needed assistance where possible. The FFCI was organized on April 28, 2002 during the Philippine Labor Day celebrations at the Philippine Embassy in Tel Aviv. With a membership consisting of 29 Filipino organizations in Israel, it serves as the umbrella organization through which all Filipino community initiatives and activities are undertaken. The member organizations are varied, from hometown associations, professional groups, and fraternal organizations to religious groups of various denominations. It is a non-stock, non-profit, and non-sectarian organization dedicated to advancing the cause of OFWs in Israel.

Protecting the OFWs is the FFCI's top priority. It assisted a large number of Filipinos in distressed situations, visited sick OFWs in hospitals or in their homes to provide material and spiritual comfort, and rescued, housed, and repatriated OFW victims of abuse who ran away from their employers.

The FFCI has also been able to establish a solid network of volunteer Israeli doctors who partner with them in their regular medical and dental missions in Israel. This arrangement has saved a lot of money for OFWs who cannot afford the cost of medical check-ups, medicines, and even hospitalization.

The work of the FFCI does not necessarily entail serious undertakings all the time. Believing that there is a time for work and a time for pleasure, it regularly organizes programs to celebrate Philippine tradition, milestones, and holidays such as the *Flores de Mayo*, Philippine Independence Day, Labor Day, Christmas, and Valentine's Day to foster camaraderie among OFWs and help fight homesickness. Also, it has regular fellowship sessions where other Filipinos, not necessarily FFCI members, come and meet each other, and share stories to further build unity among them.

***In conferring the Banaag Award to the Federation of Filipino Communities in Israel, the President recognizes the successful collective efforts of overseas Filipino workers in promoting the interests and welfare of their kababayan in Israel and in the Philippines, and for its commendable initiatives in fostering solidarity between the peoples of both countries.***



The FFCI's outreach program has served communities from north to south of the Philippines. It funded the construction of eleven classrooms for primary and secondary level public schools.

It established a regular project called *Sagip Kababayan* or "save a compatriot," to assist victims of calamity and demonstrate their solidarity with fellow Filipinos in the midst of disaster. The FFCI had distributed goods in Bicol, Ormoc, Pasig, Pangasinan, La Union, and Baguio when these areas were ravaged by typhoons, floods, and volcanic eruptions.

One of the FFCI's lasting contributions is in the field of diplomacy, specifically in the relations between the Jews and the Filipinos that started during one of the darkest days of World War II. A quick flash-back to 1939 brings back the unforgettable humanitarian gesture of then Commonwealth President Manuel L. Quezon who allotted 10,000 visas and provided safe haven to Jews fleeing Nazi Europe. Some 1,200 Jews made it to Manila before the city itself fell to Japanese invaders. A quick flash-forward to 2005, then Philippine Ambassador to Israel Antonio Modena launched a campaign to underscore the role played by the country in saving Jews during the Holocaust. The result was the Open Doors Monument which was erected in recognition of the welcome extended by the Philippines to the Jewish refugees in 1939.

In 2006-2007, the FFCI held a series of fund-raising events to stimulate interest and generate resources for community service projects. By tapping the talents of its members such as the Filipino caregivers, the FFCI was able to hold a series of cultural shows entitled *Sayaw* and *Saplot Saysay*. The FFCI did all the backroom work from selling tickets to making the necessary props and costumes and generated almost US\$10,000 which was subsequently donated for the construction of the monument.

Although the FFCI's primary concern are the advancement of the welfare of OFWs in Israel and the conduct of philanthropic activities in the Philippines, it also has its pulse on the existing problems of the local community in Tel-Aviv. To show solidarity with the Israelis, it called upon the spirit of *Bayanihan* among OFWs and painted the walls of the Rogenzon Bialik School in Tel-Aviv which was damaged by three suicide bombings in the past.

## George G. Gange

United States of America

The last five decades saw Filipino-American George G. Gange in various stages of personal development: as a working student and a budding musician, as an air traffic controller in the U.S. Navy (USN), as a musician with a cause, a prolific community advocate, and now, as an airport commissioner in one of the busiest airports in the United States.

In the 1960s, he was a working student and an amateur *rondalla* player. In his younger days, he was already playing a *Rondalla* but not before delivering *Manila Chronicle* newspapers to customers early in the morning. The 1970s saw the start of his naval career which spanned three decades. The declaration of martial law on September 1972 which led to the closure of all media outfits, including the *Manila Chronicle* where he worked part-time, hastened his decision to take the USN enlistment examination at the Subic Naval Base in Olongapo City.

Mr. Gange has chalked up 21 years of dedicated US Naval (USN) service, during which he assumed various positions from Ground Controller, Plane Captain, Journeyman Controller, Facility Watch Supervisor, Facility FAA Examiner, Training and Standardization Supervisor, and Tower/Radar Manager. Eventually, he became the Leading Chief Petty Officer in charge of more than 40 other navy controllers at the Air Traffic Control Division of the Naval Air Station in Moffett Field, California.

His performance as a highly skilled Air Traffic Controller and Facility Watch Supervisor who was instrumental in the prevention of four separate documented aircraft mishaps/accidents (and thereby saving lives and material resources of the U.S. government) led to his selection as the NAS Moffett Field Sailor of the Year in 1983. He represented the Commander Patrol Wings Pacific as its candidate for the worldwide USN Admiral Pirie Air Traffic Controller of the Year and Shore Sailor of the Year competitions. He received numerous awards, medals, and commendations, including a citation and commendation from the U.S. Secretary of the Navy.

Three years before his retirement in 1994, he was chosen by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to take part in an inter-agency technical working group working on the development of the then experimental Vertical Short Take Off and Landing Aircraft. This involvement won him yet another award.

His transition to civilian life took place in the mid-1990s, which saw the birth of his social advocacy and the rebirth of his first love, the *rondalla*. In 1998, Mr. Gange, together with a good friend, organized the Fil-Am Veterans *Rondalla* (FVR). His continuing goal is to promote the unique Filipino cultural music art forms and, at the same time, raise funds for social concern initiatives both in the U.S. and in the Philippines. The group is largely composed of retired Filipino sailors and servicemen who share the same passion for the *Rondalla* and worthy causes.

The FVR raises funds for worthy causes by playing along busy intersections/streets and performing in rallies and festivities in California. It donates to several worthy projects such as the *Gawad Kalinga*, the Philippine *Bayanihan* Fund, the ABS-CBN *Sagip Kapamilya*, and the *Bantay Bata* 163. Other recipients of their donations include Atikha Save a Tree of Life Fund, Heart Bridge International Foundation, and the Boys' and



Girls' Town of Amelia Gordon in Olongapo City. The FVR also sources funds for victims of natural calamities such as the Thailand tsunami tragedy, the Indonesian and Haitian earthquakes, hurricane Katrina, and the St. Bernard, Southern Leyte mudslides.

Mr. Gange routinely visits nursing homes and hospitals where the *Rondalla* entertains aging and sick patients. He is a regular performer at the Art of Aging Gala, an evening show in Santa Clara, California, for seniors of various nationalities.

The veterans, especially those who served in World War II, are very close to Mr. Gange's heart. He coordinates both with the U.S. Veterans Administration and the Philippine Veterans Administration Offices for the timely release of their pensions and benefits. In 2006, he facilitated a seniors' symposium during which he launched a Dual Citizenship Program to allow seniors and veterans to reacquire their Philippine citizenship. As a result, over 400 applicants were

granted dual citizenship. He also arranged for full military honors for three veterans who had passed away. On Veterans Day, when the Fil-Am WWII veterans participate in the parade, he gets sponsors from the local business community who can provide free meals to the aging veterans.

In 2003, he supported the family of WWII veteran Vicente Pascua who was killed in a mugging incident in San Francisco. He donated his US\$500 honoraria from a *Rondalla* workshop he conducted to subsidize the cost of shipping the veteran's body to the Philippines. He also donated the honoraria he received from a group performance to the Philippines *Bayanihan* Fund during the 19th People Power anniversary celebrations.

As a way of keeping the music of *Rondalla* alive, he conceived a lend-to-own-a-*Rondalla* plan for marginalized children in the Philippines who are interested in learning the instrument but do not have the financial capability to own one. Brand new *Rondallas* are offered on loan basis to selected *barangays* where these children reside. He also produced a video tutorial on how to play the *Rondalla* and provides informal tutorial sessions for young people.

Due to the widespread recognition of their talent and humanitarian service to the community, in 2004, Mr. Gange and his group were among the overseas contingents who participated in the First International *Rondalla* Festival in Bicol and in the Asian Cultural Night in Anchorage which was held at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts.

For his dedication and commitment to community service and other worthy causes, this be-medalled sailor has been the recipient of several awards which include the prestigious Jefferson Awards for Public Service (community level), the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the *Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila*, a California Senate Commendation, and the Dr. Jose Rizal Community Hero Award, among others.

Mr. Gange has come a long long way from Manila to California and from his paper route and *Rondalla* days of his youth to the U.S. Navy and back to the *Rondalla* days of his prime. He is not just an expert air traffic controller and sailor but an avid musician with an enduring mission of being of service to others.

**In conferring the Banaag Award to George G. Gange, the President recognizes his passion for the propagation of a unique Filipino music art form -the Rondalla- and his exceptional ability to combine his diverse skills in the arts and in traffic controllership for the benefit of Filipino war veterans and senior citizens in the Philippines and the United States.**

## *Marilyn Wafa R. Kasimieh*

United Arab Emirates

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To serve one's countrymen is a noble deed, especially when the form of service transcends geographic boundaries and the agent is someone who had to hurdle many obstacles to his/her own personal development in order to be of service to others.

Since she entered Dubai, United Arab Emirates, with a visitor's visa in 1984, Ms. Marilyn Wafa Kasimieh experienced hardships not unlike what most temporary visa holders have to go through in the Emirates—the difficulty of finding good employers or sponsors who can help secure a working visa to regularize their stay in the country. She held a string of odd jobs as a saleslady, a cashier, and a secretary with very little security, and in the process, fell prey to unscrupulous employers who did not give commensurate pay for her efforts. But Ms. Kasimieh's luck turned around when a Filipino couple took her under their care. In 1991, she was eventually employed by a film and video outfit which sponsored her working visa and took notice of her initiative and perseverance.

In 1996, she joined the Department of Islamic Affairs and Charitable Activities as an administrative assistant. Since then, she has risen from the ranks to become a Senior Advisor by 2007, following her commendation for excellent service within that Department.

In her early years on the job, she was tasked to assist the inmates of the Central Jail of Dubai. Finding a large number of Filipinos amongst them, she served as their intermediary in securing better treatment from jail authorities, including the possibility of securing a rehabilitative program to assist inmates in facing life after jail. Maintaining close coordination with OWWA, she convinced her superiors to expand the scope and area of her work to include catering to six other jails. She was responsible for ensuring that legal assistance was made available to inmates and that the Philippine Consulate would be kept informed about the progress of their cases. She also made an extra effort to assist inmates purchase airline tickets for their repatriation. As a testament to her work ethic, the Department offered her a scholarship to complete a bachelor of arts in Islamic studies at Preston University.

When her Department decided to go full blast in introducing their services to the public in 2005, Ms. Kasimieh spearheaded its participation in various government activities. This included organizing volunteer groups for hospital visits in Dubai, Sharjah, and Abu Dhabi. Finding that some patients did not have the resources to be



repatriated back home, she made representations with various donors to assist in their repatriation and, in some instances, even for airlifting the remains of deceased workers.

That same year, she proposed partnerships with the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) to respond to the plight of distressed Filipino workers. She helped the POLO conduct workshops to upgrade the skills of runaway Filipino migrants, some of whom went on to work part-time to earn their fare back home. Others were fully reintegrated into the labor force with their new employers settling disputes with former employers on their behalf.

In 2007, it was through her initiative that the Department of Islamic Affairs sponsored a basketball tournament as a healthy alternative for workers who were interested in spending their free time in sports. Over 20 teams participated in the tournament which has since become an annual activity. In the same year, she was chosen as the best staff in her Department and was nominated for the Sheikh Mohammad Excellence Award, a government initiative which seeks to recognize government employees for service excellence. The nomination also earned her promotion to the post she holds today. She was deputized by the Philippine Consulate as a Filipino community leader in October 2007 to provide assistance to Filipino workers whenever the need arises.

In the aftermath of typhoon Frank in 2008, Ms. Kasimieh personally sent relief goods to Iloilo consisting of sacks of rice, canned goods, clothes, and school supplies for the victims and their families. The relief goods were distributed with the assistance of the local government of Lambunao, Iloilo. Realizing that the most urgent need after the floods had subsided was access to water supply, she donated two water pumps per month over a three-year period. A total of 36 water pumps have since been constructed through Ms. Kasimieh's funding support. Beneficiary municipalities were located in Iloilo, Cavite and the cities of Bacolod, General Santos, and Cotabato.

In 2009, Ms. Kasimieh responded to a request for assistance from the Philippine National Police Office in Lambunao, Iloilo. She funded the procurement of office equipment and furniture. In the same year, Ms. Kasimieh again donated funds for the purchase of hospital supplies and equipment to refurbish the Dr. Ricardo Y. Ladrado Memorial Hospital. She has continued to provide financial support to the hospital over the past six years.

***In conferring the Banaag Award to Marilyn Wafa R. Kasimieh, the President recognizes her invaluable initiatives which have benefited distressed Filipino workers in the United Arab Emirates and her commendable extension of financial assistance to improve the living conditions of her kababayan in the province of Iloilo and beyond.***

# *Kinding Sindaw*

## United States of America

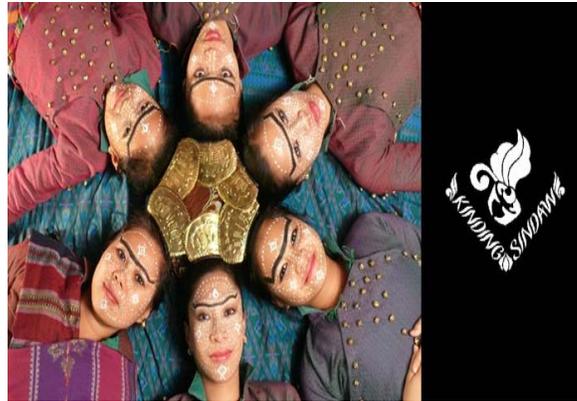
*Kinding Sindaw* is considered by many as a national treasure because it elicits pride in the hearts of Filipino Muslims in the Philippines and the United States. By featuring the dances, music and other art forms of Mindanao tribes who were left untouched by the Spanish and American colonizers, it showcases the country's Muslim heritage. *Kinding Sindaw's* focus on indigenous culture and tradition serves to inspire those who seek their roots in pre-colonial Philippines.

In 1992, Ms. Potri Ranka Manis founded the dance troupe and called it *Kinding Sindaw*, the ancient Maranao term for "Dance of Light." Ms. Manis, who comes from a royal Maranao clan, is also the troupe's performer, choreographer, and artistic director. Many of the dances in the troupe's repertoire have been passed down through successor generations, and her own artistic interests led her to do further research on the dances and art forms of the other Mindanao tribes.

The dances of *Kinding Sindaw* originate from the royal court dances of the Maranao Sultanate. A repertoire of the sacred, the classic, and the secular, they reflect the richness of the natural environment through a unique combination of grace and vigor in execution. The musical accompaniment consists of different percussion instruments: the *kulintang*, a tuned bronze kettle drum set, known more commonly in the West as *gamelan*; a variety of hanging gongs which include the bossed *agong* and the unbossed *gandingan* and *bababdir*; and the *dabakan*, a cylindrical drum. Other instruments used by Mindanao cultural groups include the *salunay*, a polychordal bamboo tube zither; the *kudlung*, a two-stringed lute; and the *kubing*, a bamboo jaws harp.

In its desire to propagate indigenous Filipino arts and music, *Kinding Sindaw* has produced cultural presentations drawn from legends, epics, myths; performances featuring tribal dances; and demonstrations of *kulintang* music and martial arts. Among these are the *Pandibulan: Bathing by Moonlight* which honors the Yakan people from the Basilan Island; *Bembaran*, an ancient Philippine tale of love and loyalty in the 20<sup>th</sup> century setting; *Mindanao's Living Traditions on Stage* featuring indigenous Mindanao music and arts, demonstration of native instruments, and lectures by scholars and writers on Maranao life and culture presented in cooperation with the Philippine Consulate General; *Sultan Kudarat* which resurrects the monumental story of Sultan Kudarat and the people of Maguindanao; *Sinta* which featured the Maranao *kasuduratan* dance, Tausug turtle dance, and Tiboli marriage rituals; *Parang Sabil* (Sword of Honor) which depicts the conquest of the Tausug people by the Americans; *Lemlunay* which is based on an epic story of the Tiboli people; *Vignettes of Mindanao* which featured the cultural lives, traditions, dance, music, and martial arts of indigenous people in the Philippines; and *Rajah Mangandiri* which is *Kinding Sindaw's* adaptation of the the 4<sup>th</sup> century Indian epic *Ramayana* as preserved by the Maranao people.

**In conferring the Banaag Award to *Kinding Sindaw*, the President recognizes its sense of pride and dedication to the promotion of indigenous Filipino culture and art forms, particularly from the Southern Mindanao region, through its world-class performances.**



In a little over two years of its existence, *Kinding Sindaw* takes pride of its more than 50 performances at various festivals and cultural gatherings. Because of its excellence in theatrical dance presentations, artistic courage, and the intensity of their commitment to showcasing the Philippines' rich history and folklore, *Kinding Sindaw* became a resident theatre company of La Mama Experimental Theater Club in New York in 2000. The latter is a world theatre which has been in existence for almost 50 years. Its primary thrust is the production of global art forms and the presentation of the most

authentic artistic voices from around the world.

*Kinding Sindaw* participated in a number of fund-raising activities by performing at benefit shows for the Filipino victims of Japanese military sexual slavery during World War II, the famine-stricken communities in Mindanao, the construction of the Save Our Street Children Foundation Center in Baguio City, the support activities for the Philippine Nurses Association in New York, and the typhoon victims in the Philippines as well as the earthquake victims in Indonesia.

As part of its Philippine history and cultural education program, *Kinding Sindaw* conducts lectures, symposia, workshops, and fora on dances for the Filipino Inter-collegiate Network Dialogue in Ramapo College, New Jersey; Lotus Arts Studios in New York; Fulbright Scholars of New School in New York; Filipino-American Artist Foundation; Philippine Consulate General in New York; and humanities students of La Guardia Community College, Queens, New York. The troupe also conducted a series of storytelling activities with performances about Filipino folk tales, music, and dances at the Queens Library in New York.

*Kinding Sindaw* has performed all over the United States and at international socio-civic events such as the Global NGO Forum for Women in Beijing and the United Nations commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The troupe was featured in the Martha Stewart Show Philippine Special and performed at Yale University, Lincoln Center, Wave Hill, Elebash Recital Hall, Puffin Room, Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse, Theatre of the Riverside Church, Kennedy Center, Nunnbetter Dance Theater, Museum of Modern Art, American Museum of Natural History, and the Smithsonian Institution.

As a testament to its works, the *New York Express Week* cited *Kinding Sindaw* for educating audiences through music and other art forms. The *New York Theatre Review* described one of its performances as a magical world of music, dance, and drama coming to life on stage.

## *Sr. Lucia C. Olalia*

South Korea

When she founded the Friends Without Borders Migrants' Center in Gyeonggi-do, South Korea, in 2004, Sr. Lucia Olalia must have been inspired by the Parable of the Lost Sheep. She has devoted her life to a *pastorelle* that provides a place of refuge not for lambs gone astray but for distressed migrants such as maltreated wives and disadvantaged workers. The Center is a concrete response to the increasing need to provide various forms of assistance to South Korea-based migrants regardless of their nationality, ethnic origin, and religious affiliation.

Cognizant of the plight of suffering women who have intermarried and are subjected to physical, sexual, and economic abused by their spouses, Sr. Lucia conceptualized a plan to help them regain self-confidence and facilitate their reintegration into the mainstream.

Sr. Olalia's background in psychology and her professional experience as a counselor in the Philippines proved to be useful in developing a guidance and counseling program for the foreign wives of Korean nationals. She conducted several four-month long programs at the MOYSE Shelter in Cheonan and Taejon, South Korea. The objective was to build a support network among the participants that would enable them to mentor and lend moral support to each other. To-date, dozens of women from different developing countries and based in other South Korean cities, including a good number of Filipinas, have benefited from her intervention.

Aside from being a counselor, Sr. Lucia worked actively for eight years as a coordinator at the Catholic International Parish of Seoul which served as a second home for foreigners working or residing in South Korea. The parish celebrates mass in German, English, Italian, Spanish, French, and Portuguese to accommodate the spiritual needs of various nationality groups.

When the Kasan Migrant Workers' Center requested for a Filipino pastoral worker to accommodate the huge number of OFWs availing of their services, the Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd *Pastorelle* sent Sr. Lucia given her proven capacity to render excellent service. As a pastoral worker, she assisted OFWs with problems involving the violation of their human rights and social welfare. She visited them in hospitals, immigration and detention centers, and labor



offices. Further, as a result of her initiatives, the OFWs in Kasan and the Philippine Embassy in Seoul collaborate to address concerns affecting overseas Filipinos. The latter are now better informed through regular updates on labor issues, seminars and training programs, and other news and information from the Post.

Apart from her regular activities, Sr. Lucia worked tirelessly to seek legal assistance on behalf of Filipinos and foreign workers in difficult situations. She courageously goes to factories to meet and negotiate with Korean employers who abuse and exploit Filipinos. She also regularly visits foreign and Filipino inmates at the Taejon Prison where she provides counseling to the inmates, shells out personal funds to buy stamps and writing pads so the inmates can write their respective families in the Philippines and provide updates on their condition.

Aware that most OFWs, whom she describes as having 3D jobs (Dirty, Difficult, and Dangerous) in South Korea, would eventually return to the Philippines when their contracts expire, she coordinates with a financial institution in Seoul to help her facilitate the processing of the savings account applications of some OFWs. She provides financial counseling and puts emphasis on the need to save hard-earned money before they return to the Philippines.

A religious and a social worker rolled into one, Sr. Lucia responds to OFWs in dire circumstances with exemplary dedication beyond the call of duty. Because of her efforts, the case of a Filipina who died in an amusement park in South Korea was resolved; an OFW had a successful surgery with medical expenses amply covered through her fundraising initiatives; and an abused Filipina obtained a divorce from her foreign spouse and gained custody over her daughter through her intercession.

In 2009, even as she was thousands of miles away from the Philippines, Sr. Lucia felt the desperate situation of families who were devastated by typhoons Ondoy and Pepeng. She coordinated with Filipino associations and religious communities in South Korea, including the Association of Women Religious Superiors of South Korea, to seek donations for the victims. The donations amounting to more than US\$28,000 were used to rehabilitate lives and communities through medical outreach programs, livelihood assistance, and skills enhancement projects.

***In conferring the Banaag Award to Sr. Lucia C. Olalia, the President recognizes her outstanding service and tireless efforts to extend much-needed assistance to distressed migrants in South Korea, and her resourcefulness in providing solutions to cases involving the violation of human rights of Filipinos overseas.***

## Evangelina V. Ybo

Jordan

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If a search for a global Filipino were to be conducted, Evangelina V. Ybo will definitely top the list.

A humble house manager and nanny for sixteen years and in three continents while in the service of a foreign couple involved in international organizations, Ms. Ybo has exemplified the best Filipino qualities and values by extending assistance to her *kababayan* worldwide beyond the limits of her personal capacity.

Ms. Ybo considers fostering a strong sense of unity among different Filipino organizations in Jordan as her greatest accomplishment. Just like Filipino groups in other countries, the various associations in Jordan have different agendas and objectives that often lead to misunderstanding and conflicts among themselves. In 2005, she started her advocacy to unite the various organizations into a federation. Three years after, given her patience and sustained advocacy, various Filipino community organizations finally converged, identified common goals, and eventually gave birth to the Federation of Filipino Organizations in Jordan or FilOrg-Jordan. Aside from fostering unity, the Federation also seeks to secure more rights and better conditions for domestic helpers in cooperation with the Philippine Embassy in Amman.

After the Federation's charter was ratified, Ms. Ybo was elected president for a two-year term. In recognition of her untiring efforts and unquestionable leadership, she was overwhelmingly re-elected by her fellow leaders in early 2010. Today, the Federation has 19 Filipino organizations comprised of 800 members. It has organized countless activities geared to promote camaraderie, enhance skills, recognize talents, and uplift the image of Filipinos in Jordan. It regularly conducts sports festivals, talent shows, seminars and trainings, and actively participates in the Philippine Independence Day Celebration in Amman.

Ms. Ybo also led several campaigns to promote awareness on the situation of Filipino migrant workers in Jordan by organizing charity concerts for victims of illegal recruitment and distressed overseas Filipinos. She also spearheaded campaigns to support the victims of calamities in the Philippines.



To recognize the benevolence of selected Jordanian and other foreign employers to their Filipino employees, Ms. Ybo organized an awarding ceremony for 35 Model Employers of the Year, which included Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya as one of the honorees. The award seeks to encourage better treatment of household service workers and create a conducive working environment built on trust, respect, and recognition of mutual rights.

Noting the financial burden faced by more than 70 Filipino Muslim scholars studying Islamic Law and Jurisprudence at the University of Mu'tah in the Province of Karak, Ms. Ybo exempted them from paying their monthly membership dues in the Federation and oftentimes extends monetary assistance to them. The FilOrg-Jordan has also become a venue for Filipino Muslims and Christians to work together peacefully.

Ms. Ybo is also a volunteer in the various activities of The Jesuit Center, a special English-language Catholic Parish that serves the diverse expatriate community in Amman. She serves as a guitarist and music ministry coordinator at the weekly evening mass celebrated in a hostel run by the Philippine Embassy for distressed Filipinas who need a secure shelter while awaiting the resolution of their cases. She also organizes the First Holy Communion of Filipino children in the Center and trains them to serve in the parish mass on Fridays, and to participate in several parish activities during Christmas as singers and dancers.

True to her nature as a "global Filipino," in whatever country her employers are stationed, Ms. Ybo is able to use her leadership skills. Before moving to Jordan, she was actively involved in the causes of the Filipino community in Cairo. She spearheaded community events that enabled Filipinos to get closer and raise funds for legal defense and support services of Filipinos experiencing extreme difficulties. She also accompanied a dying Filipino widow on the latter's trip back to Manila and provided much needed support and assistance. She worked on the required legal papers so she could adopt the child of the dying widow. While in South Africa, Ms. Ybo joined a Neighborhood Crisis Committee to devise strategies to help the local community survive a military *coup d'etat*.

***In conferring the Banaag Award to Evangelina V. Ybo, the President recognizes her exceptional achievement in uniting Filipino organizations in Jordan; advocating for their equal protection, recognition and welfare; and fostering good employer-employee relations to improve the working environment of Filipinos overseas.***

# *Pamana ng Pilipino*

*The Pamana ng Pilipino Award is conferred on Filipinos overseas who, in exemplifying the talent and industry of the Filipino, have brought the country honor and recognition through excellence and distinction in the pursuit of their work or profession.*

## ***Awardees***

**Lilac L. Caña**

*Canada*

**Angelito DL. David**

*United States of America*

**Fred S. De Asis**

*United States of America*

**Bernard Randy G. Gener**

*United States of America*

**Lillibeth E. Navarro**

*United States of America*

**Rafe Totengco**

*United States of America*



## *Lilac L. Caña*

*United States of America*

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A dynamic soprano who touches audiences worldwide with her dazzling performances in operatic, Broadway, jazz or pop music, Ms. Lilac Caña began classical voice training in Austria with the American Institute of Musical Studies. She graduated with honors from the University of Toronto Opera Performance Program and studied at the Glenn Gould Professional School at the Royal Conservatory of Music.

From 1997 to 2000, Ms. Caña performed with the Canadian Opera Company Chorus as a chorus member in several original productions, most notably in Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Polenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, and Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex / Symphony of Psalms*. She played operatic roles with Opera Mississauga, including an appearance as Annina in Puccini's *La Traviata* and as Frasquita in Bizet's *Carmen*. She took on musical theatre roles with CVS Productions playing the part of Valencienne in Lehar's *The Merry Widow* and Tuptim in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I*. She also played the roles of Pamina in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Despina in *Così fan tutte* with the Brampton Lyric Opera. She created the role of Lai-Gwan in the world premiere of *Iron Road* with Tapestry Music Theatre which was first produced at Toronto's Elgin Theatre in 2001.

As a concert soloist, Ms. Caña has appeared in symphonic, chamber, oratorio, and contemporary music works with numerous orchestras and choirs in Canada, the United States, Europe, and the Philippines. She has sung with the Toronto Mendelssohn Youth Choir, the Orchestra da Camera Toronto, the Toronto Synfonietta, the Kammermusik Toronto, the Mississauga Symphony, the Northumberland Orchestra, the Counterpoint Community Orchestra, the Sinfonia Sacra, The Cellar Singers, the Orpheus Choir, the Ensemble TrypTych Chamber Choir, the Silverthorn Symphonic Winds, the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, and the Philippine Ballet Theater at the Danny Kaye Playhouse in New York City.

Some of her most noted concert solo performances include appearing as soprano soloist with bass-baritone Gary Relyea and the Cellar Singers in Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, soprano soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Sacred Music Society, soprano soloist in Stanford's *Stabat Mater* with Ensemble TrypTych Chamber Choir, featured artist at the Tastes of Heaven Gala for the Catholic Missions in Canada, soprano soloist in *A Metro Christmas* with Toronto's Orpheus Choir, and a



performance at Parliament Hill in Ottawa for Asian Heritage Month celebrations.

She has also served as cantor at several churches in the Greater Toronto Area, including the Rosedale Presbyterian Church, St. Peter's Church, Metropolitan United Church, St. Isaac Jogues. She is currently the musical director of St. John's Polish National Catholic Church. Ms. Caña has appeared in televised Masses sponsored by the Archdiocese of Toronto and had the distinct honor of singing for Pope John Paul II on World Youth Day 2002 as a featured soloist with the World Youth Day Choir.

In 1997, Ms. Caña founded the Lilac Sounds Productions that has so far released seven compact disc albums featuring her rendition of selected songs: *Encantada*, released in 1998 featuring songs and arias in Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Filipino, with original jazz-influenced songs in English; *Labing Dalawa*, released in 1999 featuring classical Filipino love songs performed with internationally acclaimed concert pianist Raul Sunico; *Exultate*, released in 2001, featuring spiritual music throughout the ages; *I'll Be With You*, released in 2006, featuring a collection of songs in several languages and styles on the themes of love, loss, redemption, and integration; *A Christmas Celebration*, released in 2007, featuring favorite carols and songs to inspire everyone during the Yuletide season; *Believe*, released in 2009, featuring songs of praise and worship; and *Blossom*, released in 2009, featuring a collection of Ms. Caña's favorite songs.

Ms. Caña has also given concerts and created various multi-media arts events which have benefited several charities in Canada and the Philippines. Through her Cana Caridad Foundation, Ms. Caña has organized charity events such as: Blossom Album Concert and CD Launch held on 19 September 2009, that was able to raise C\$3,000 for the benefit of Free the Children, a Canadian charitable organization that helps children through education; and Blessing Album Concert and CD Launch held on 28 January 2010, that was able to raise C\$40,000 for the rebuilding of the Rehabilitation and Livelihood Training Center of the Immaculate Mary Queen of Heaven Missionaries in Talisay, Cebu.

In recognition of her contributions to the arts and her service to the community as a musician in Canada, Ms. Caña received the Performing Arts-Humanities Award given by the National Ethnic Press & Media Council of Canada (NEPMCC) in October 2009.

***In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Lilac L. Caña, the President recognizes her remarkable achievements as a virtuoso performer in music and as a generous benefactor of many causes that contribute to the well-being of underprivileged sectors in the Philippines and Canada.***

## *Angelito DL. David* United States of America

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An artist once said that watercolor is poetry in motion and must be painted with an intolerable ease. That is why for most painters, watercolor is the hardest medium to work with because it leaves no room for mistakes, not in the drawing nor in the layering of the paint. But award winning watercolorist Angelito DL. David has mastered the art adeptly, through his vivid and colorful creations that have stirred viewers' different emotions.



An illustrious creative artist and an exemplary advocate of Philippine visual arts heritage, Mr. David hailed from Balanga, Bataan. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in fine arts from the University of Sto. Tomas in 1957. He continued to seek the beautiful in Italy, the reputed artists' haven, where he studied painting, fresco, and restoration of the arts, historical monuments, and documents. As an artist, he participated actively in various competitions in Rome and surrounding cities and garnered major prizes. Working with highly skilled restorers, he saved some of the world's priceless antiquities in Florence.

He moved to New York in 1967 and worked briefly for two years restoring rare books and documents so that future generations can also appreciate the writings of their forebears. He returned to the Philippines in 1969, where he started to take the spotlight for his mastery of watercolor. He taught fine arts in different colleges and universities for over 22 years while exhibiting his works in galleries and other venues. He co-organized and headed the Watercolor Society of the Philippines, and became one of the prime movers of the Art Association of the Philippines. He also became an art conservator, consultant, authenticator, and appraiser of art works in various public and private institutions which include the National Museum, *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*, the National Historical Institute, the Malacañang Palace Museum, and the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Mr. David migrated to the United States in 1992, where he continued to shine and earn recognition for

his artworks. He won awards in juried shows as member of the Hudson Artists, Inc., Garden State, New Jersey, and the American Watercolor Societies.

Today, he is a leading figure in the contemporary international art scene. Mr. David has held successful solo and group exhibits in the Philippines, Italy, and the United

States. Among the exhibits where his artworks were featured include: the Philippine Cultural Exhibition to Tokyo, the International Art Exhibition (Asia), the Philippine Independence Centennial Celebration Exhibits in New York and Washington, the Hudson Artists Annual Juried Show, the Society of the Philippine-American Artists Annual Exhibit, the Garden State Watercolor Society Annual Exhibit, and the National Arts Program Annual Exhibit in New Jersey

Mr. David also shares his expertise with a larger audience. He currently teaches watercolor at the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey in Summit, the Arts Guild of Rahway, and the Jersey Central Arts Studio in Cranford. He conducts workshops for art groups on watercolor glazing or "pouring." His talent and skills have inspired many young art students and up-and-coming artists.

Believing in the creativity and talent of Filipino-American artists, he co-founded the Society of Philippine-American Artists in 1995. The organization aims to promote Philippine arts, assist aspiring artists in the New York area to upgrade their skills and techniques.

In 2005, he was recognized as the Artist of the Year by the Hudson Artists for his extraordinary skill in watercolor painting. His works have been published in books and featured in various publications.

Aside from painting, Mr. David has been actively promoting Philippine music and culture as the lead bandurria player of the UP Alumni and Friends *Rondalla*. He is also a pastoral leader and a founding member of a Filipino religious group based in St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church in Linden, Newark.

***In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Angelito DL. David, the President recognizes his international stature as watercolorist and art conservator, and his invaluable contribution as an exemplar of Filipino talent in the arts and a staunch promoter of Philippine culture in the United States.***

## *Fred S. De Asis* United States of America

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With the dawn of the modern art, one of the most intricate yet beautiful ancient Filipino art techniques was almost lost. But one Filipino artist made it his mission to revive and preserve the lost art.

International artist and curator, Fred De Asis is the man behind the highly publicized Philippine cultural traveling art exhibit entitled "*Kut-kut: the Lost Art of the Philippines*", which debuted in the US in 2006. An ancient Philippine art style and technique based on early century art forms, *Kut-kut* is a combination of ancient art processes which utilizes the processes of sgraffito, encaustic and layering. The merging of these ancient styles produces a unique artwork characterized by delicate swirling interwoven lines, multi-layered texture and an illusion of three-dimensional space. As a master practitioner of *Kut-kut* technique in North America, he conducts demos, lectures and art classes for public to revive the lost art form.

Much to his desire of promoting Filipino arts and culture to Filipino-Americans, Mr. De Asis also conducts free *Parol* Making Workshop since 2006. Held annually, the workshop gives opportunity to Filipino-American children to learn how to make *parols*, and presents Filipino artistry and culture during the Christmas season. Moreover, he conducts *Saranggolahan Pilipino*, a workshop which aims to strengthen parent and child relationship by working together in making kites. He also teaches Filipino art classes at the *Paaralang Pilipino* for Filipino-American youth in Chicago area.

Coming from a family of artists and classical musicians, being an artist is innate for Mr. De Asis. His talent, especially in ancient and classical art, was also enhanced as a result of years of study throughout the Philippines, Thailand, Spain and the US. He has participated in many solo and group art exhibits in Europe and Asia. Among the galleries which showcased his works were the Redfern Gallery of London, Galleria Alfama of Madrid, and Ginza Meiji Gallery of Tokyo. His paintings are found in public and



private collections in the Philippines, England, Canada, Japan, Spain, Mexico and the US. Some were featured in the US national television and several publications.

Mr. De Asis is the only Filipino artist whose artworks were chosen for display by Sak's Fifth Avenue, an international high-end department store, during the annual Highland Park Art Work Festival. His works have also been displayed during the Skokie Festival of Cultures and the

Asian American Festival of Chicago. Because of his eye for the arts, he became a sought-after judge in many prestigious art fairs across the US. Remarkably, he also supports charity groups and other organizations in their fundraising projects by donating his art works either for auctions or as raffle prizes.

Aside from being a prolific artist, Mr. De Asis also proves to be a good community leader. He was the first Asian-American to be appointed as Arts Commissioner of the Village of Arlington Heights, Illinois in December 2006. The Art Commission plays a primary role in enhancing and encouraging cultural advancement within the village. He also serves as director of the Southeast Asian Artist Coalition of North America. In 1980, he co-founded a Filipino artists group in Chicago called *Larawan* where he was elected as its first president. The group showcases Filipino talents by providing fine art exhibits in Chicago area.

In 1982, Mr. De Asis opened the Fdeasis Fine Art studio in Chicago, providing private commission of portraits and artworks, furniture and interior design, and commercial advertisements. He now manages studios and galleries in Chicago, New York and Arlington Heights.

His artistic talent and skilled leadership made him the recipient of 2006 Fil-Am and 2007 Asian-American Hall of Fame awards for outstanding achievement of an individual in promoting arts and culture in North America.

***In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Fred S. De Asis, the President recognizes his artistry for preserving ancient Philippine art techniques, and promoting Filipino arts and culture in the United States.***

## *Bernard Randy G. Gener* United States of America

Writer, director, playwright, critic, dramaturgist, lecturer, and editor—titles that reflect the innate talents of Mr. Bernard Randy Gener.

A Manileño until his migration to the United States in 1986 to join his mother in Nevada, Mr. Gener eventually became a New Yorker after his graduation from college and his acceptance of an internship with *Village Voice*. Two years later, he joined the regular staff as a theater critic and culture writer. At this juncture, Mr. Gener decided that he was ready to evolve from critic to creator.

He has since written and directed numerous plays such as: "Love Seats for Virginia Wolf," "What Remains of a Rembrandt Torn Into Four Pieces," "Sick With Lust: Fire, Island Tales," "In September, The Light Changes," and "Wait for Me at the Bottom of the Pool." He has adapted works by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Harold Pinter, Samuel Beckett, Sam Shepard, and Andrew Holleran, among others. His works have also appeared in numerous publications such as *The New York Times*, *The International Herald Tribune*, *The Daily News*, *The Paris Review*, *The Star Ledger*, *Gannett Newspapers*, and *The Korean Theatre Journal*. His writings have also been translated and published in French, Spanish, Romanian, Korean, Japanese, Czech, Hindi, Swedish, Russian, and Bulgarian languages.

Mr. Gener made his mark in digital media as a pioneer drama critic in the *New York Wire*, an online magazine that started in 1995. He later became a senior journalist of *Theater.com* and *BroadwayOnline.com*. In June 2000, he became the first anchor of the live web cast of the annual Tony Awards ceremonies.

Currently a senior editor of the *American Theater Magazine*, Mr. Gener affirmed his position as a leading drama critic of national and international stature by being the first Asian-American to win the prestigious George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism for theatrical year 2007 to 2008. Conferred annually by the Heads of the English Departments of Yale, Princeton, and Cornell universities, the Nathan Awards is the highest accolade given in the United States for dramatic criticism.

As an editor and critic, Mr. Gener has staunchly advocated for free expression and free speech in the arts. A concrete example is his article, "Fomenting a Denim Revolution," that chronicles the plight of the guerilla artists of Belarus Free Theatre who performed underground in Minsk while arguing openly for regime change. Said article earned Mr. Gener the 2010 Deadline Club Award for Best Arts Reporting, one of New York City's most prestigious journalism awards.

Using his articles in the *American Theater Magazine*, Mr. Gener has also exposed numerous incidents of censorship and repression of theater artists worldwide. He has covered reports on Indian Gujarati Theater artists facing death threats, house arrests, and violence; Chinese writers confronting Communist Party guardians; allegations of censorship of theater in the government of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela; the controversy over the call for the cultural boycott of Israel; and the emergence of



Middle-Eastern American Drama in the United States. Mr. Gener was also a major contributor to the *Cambridge Guide to the American Theater*, a U.S. theater encyclopedia published by the Cambridge University Press in 2007. His essay on the history of Filipino-American theatre is the first time that the artistic contributions of Filipino-American theatre artists have been documented in any encyclopedia. In the past, contributions of Filipino-Americans were only included as part of the Asian-American movement and not treated separately or given special focus.

He forged international cultural exchanges through the arts by serving as lead producer and cultural exchange consultant for the first ever Filipino-American production to premiere in an Eastern European country following the fall of communism. He arranged for the Romanian tour of the Ma-Yi Theater Company's award-winning Filipino-American production of "The Romance of Magno Rubio" in 2008. For the first time, Eastern Europe was introduced and exposed to the artistry and creativity of a U.S.-based professional non-profit Filipino-American theater company. He also gave two public lectures and headed a panel discussion in Romania that provided historical contexts. As a result, the Romanians came to understand that their vexed situation in the European Union had some important parallels to the immigrant experiences of Filipinos in American history.

Mr. Gener demonstrated his innovativeness in creating visual art exhibitions that promote a better understanding and appreciation by the general public of the lives of Filipino immigrants in the United States. He organized, produced, and curated two exhibitions on the history and culture of Filipinos and Filipino-Americans. The photo exhibit "To Be a Filipino in America: Carlos Bulosan and His World" was held at the Long Wharf Theater Company in New Haven, Connecticut from April to May 2005. It explored the life and career of the poet/novelist Carlos Bulosan, the first important literary voice for Filipinos in the United States. The second exhibit entitled "Positively No Filipinos Allowed: To Be A Filipino in America" was presented at the Culture Project in New York City from May to June 2007. It documented the lives of Filipino-American immigrants and Filipino migrant farm workers in California, Alaska, and Seattle in the 1930s and 1940s.

The seemingly indefatigable Mr. Gener has volunteered and shared his time, expertise, and efforts at a number of prestigious national and international festivals, funding programs, play-subsidies, and arts philanthropy. He has also given lectures and participated in panel discussions celebrating and critically exploring the artistic talents and achievements of Filipinos and Filipino-Americans. These include the following: moderating a panel discussion on "Beyond 3,000 Pairs of Shoes: Who is Imelda Marcos to Us Today?" featuring Filipino-American theater artists, filmmakers, fashion designers, and food luminaries; serving as plenary speaker during the two *Dreaming the Americas* theatre conferences which focused on the lack of recognition of Filipino-American theatre artists in U.S. mainstream theatre and on the future of Asian-American culture to an audience of theatre artists and practitioners from around the country; and giving a series of international lectures on the "Secret History the American Theater" which documents the struggles of Filipino-American theater artists in the United States.

*In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Bernard Randy G. Gener, the President recognizes his excellence in the field of theater arts and creativity, and diligence in promoting Filipino-American cultural interests and accomplishments to mainstream audiences in the United States.*

## *Lilibeth E. Navarro*

*United States of America*

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Because of her conviction that no one is free when others are oppressed, Lilibeth E. Navarro devoted her life to fight for real social change and bring about equality for all, especially the disabled.

Ms. Navarro has been physically disabled since she was five years old after contracting polio during her infancy. However, she did not let her disability get in the way of leading a normal life. At age 15, she came to know the Focolare Movement, an international organization that promotes the ideals of unity and universal brotherhood. This encounter totally revolutionized her view of the world and her role in shaping it. Inspired by these ideals, she embarked on a lifetime adventure to prove that "wheelchairs can fly!"

She reached out to other disabled people in her hometown in Tarlac and soon established a community for the disabled. She wrote about people with disabilities. Her work eventually merited a scholarship at the University of Southern California, where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in print journalism and a master's degree in public relations.

She joined the Disability Rights Movement in the mid-80s and got involved in the fight for the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and other disability rights legislation. She led the Southern California chapter of ADAPT, an advocate-activist disability organization that initiated the national campaign to put wheelchair lifts and ramps in public transportation systems. This led to her recognition as one of the national pioneers of the disability rights movement in the United States. She was also recruited as one of the first planners to implement a para-transit service for Los Angeles County. She ensured that the service was going to be fully accessible and disabled-friendly. While she was arrested several times for her advocacies, she takes pride in having been responsible for buses with lifts, sidewalks with curb cuts, and the fact that the disabled now have access to jobs in the American mainstream.

With the end-in-view of further empowering the disability community, in 2001, she founded the independent living



center serving central Los Angeles, the Communities Actively Living Independent & Free or CALIF. It provides independent living advocacy services like housing, counseling, teaching assistive technology, giving referrals, and organizing independent living skills trainings, among others. In 2010, CALIF successfully led the fight to save the City of Los Angeles' Department on Disability from abolition. As Director of CALIF, she vows to achieve nothing short of turning her vision into reality: the full inclusion, equality, and the promise of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness for all people with disabilities, especially in the underserved ethnic communities of Los Angeles.

Prior to the establishment of CALIF, in 1994, she founded the In-Home Supportive Services or IHSS Recipients and Providers Sharing whose goal is the establishment of a consumer-controlled Public Authority for Los Angeles County. These efforts led to the successful establishment of the biggest consumer-controlled IHSS Public Authority in the United States, now called the Personal Assistance Services Council.

With high hopes to bring about greater collaboration between the public and private sectors for the creation of more accessible services for the physically-challenged, in 2009, she was appointed to head the Accessibility Enhancement Committee of the California Commission on Disability Access. Since her appointment, she has been representing the interests of the disabled community in its work to ensure the business community's compliance with the American Disabilities Act.

Ms. Navarro has also been an active spokesperson in the fight against euthanasia for the disabled. Every year, she leads her community in the fight against state budget cuts that diminish programs and services for her minority group. She also assisted the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) 1877 in their campaign to get airport wheelchair workers to get higher wages and benefits due to the complexity of their jobs from operating electronic wheelchairs to transferring disabled passengers.

***In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Lilibeth E. Navarro, the President recognizes the strength of her passion and steadfastness in advocating for the rights and welfare of people with disabilities, and her many successful advocacies such as the establishment of the CALIF, an independent living center in the United States.***

## *Rafe Totengco* United States of America

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*If a dog is a man's best friend, for most women... bags are it!*

RAFE is one of the few designer bag labels with the most vibrant, innovative, and exquisite designs. Hollywood stars and fashion icons like Julia Roberts, Sandra Bullock, Kate Moss, Cameron Diaz, Paris Hilton, Jessica Alba, Eva Longoria, Sandra Oh, Lindsay Lohan, and Helena Christensen have been spotted wearing RAFE.

Rafe Totengco is the man behind RAFE New York, a line of accessories which include women's handbags, shoes, and small leather goods. These are available at upscale department stores and specialty boutiques worldwide including on-line shopping sites. He works with a vast assortment of materials: wicker, rattan, sea grass, bamboo, cotton crochet, wool knit, snakeskin, leather fur, beaded fabrics, linen, canvas, and resin – to create accessories that his loyal fans claim never go out of style. Every season, the RAFE collection is fresh and exciting, always crafted using only the finest materials and techniques.

Born in Bacolod, Negros Occidental, at 18, Mr. Totengco moved to Manila and started a fashion label *Schizo* for *Sari-Sari*. Without formal fashion training, he turned *Schizo* into a successful clothing and accessories métier. At the height of his success in the Philippine fashion scene, in 1989, he closed his business and left Manila to take up fashion design at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. By 1994, he produced his first accessories—belts and watchbands for a SoHo boutique. After working his way in and around a number of other companies, in 1995, he started RAFE New York. Since then, bags and accessories under the label RAFE New York have earned international acclaim.

In 2008, he was tapped by Target, a leading retail store in the United States, as the first accessories designer to create a capsule collection for the mass retailer, setting a precedent that was soon picked up by others.

***In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Rafe Totengco, the President recognizes his entrepreneurial spirit and innate creativity and resourcefulness with the establishment of RAFE New York, which has become one of the leading and most popular brands of handbags in the international fashion industry.***



Repeatedly featured in magazines such as *In Style*, *Allure*, *Teen Vogue*, *Redbook*, *People*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Glamour*, Mr. Totengco has enjoyed worldwide brand recognition in the international fashion scene. He received the Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) Award in 2002, the Asian Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2007, and the 50 Outstanding Asian Americans Award in 2008. Drawing on his unique talents, multi-cultural background, and eclectic inspirations, he has become one of the most acclaimed of a new generation of Filipino-American international fashion designers. His success and sense of fulfillment

springs from his desire to help people, and bring joy and satisfaction to each of his customers as a valued friend.

Despite his fame and success, Mr. Totengco never fails to help his *kababayan*. He has partnered with Invisible, a Philippine-based organization that teaches poor and marginalized women to crochet and knit accessories from waste materials. His Spring 2010 line launched Craftwork, a capsule collection of handbags featuring the crocheted works of women from Invisible.

In 2009, he designed shirts as part of the Marie Claire Philippines' Gifts with a Conscience campaign. The sales proceeds went to the Tapulanga Foundation, Inc., a non-profit charitable organization that provides educational scholarships, healthcare, and micro-credit assistance to communities in Negros Occidental. The project also led to the establishment of the Rafe Totengco College Scholarship. He also helped the Foundation to raise money for the typhoon Ondoy victims in the Philippines in 2010 by sponsoring the RAFE Bags and Shoes Sale.

*The Year 2010 Presidential Awards for  
Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas*

*Awarding Ceremony*

*Tuesday, 14 December 2010, 06:00 p.m., Rizal Hall, Malacañan Palace*

*Programme*

*The Philippine National Anthem*

*Invocation*

*Welcome Remarks*

*Secretary Imelda M. Nicolas  
Commission on Filipinos Overseas*

*Presentation of Awards by His Excellency Benigno S. Aquino III  
President of the Republic of the Philippines*

*Response on Behalf of the Awardees  
Rafe Totengco*

*Musical Number*

*Introduction of the Keynote Speaker  
Secretary Imelda M. Nicolas*

*Speech of His Excellency Benigno S. Aquino III  
President of the Republic of the Philippines*

*Dinner*

*Ms. Ces Oreña-Drilon  
Master of Ceremonies*

## *The Presidential Awards System*

The Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas is a biennial awards system intended to give recognition to Filipinos and other individuals or organizations that contribute to Philippine development and progress, or promote the interests of overseas Filipino communities. The awards are also given to Filipinos overseas who have distinguished themselves in their profession, and have brought honor to the Filipino people.

The awards system was institutionalized in 1991, with the signing of Executive Order No. 498. The awards have so far been extended to 314 Filipinos and private organizations overseas since its establishment. President Fidel V. Ramos conferred the first and second sets of Presidential Awards to 22 and 45 awardees in 1993 and 1996, respectively. President Joseph E. Estrada conferred the third and fourth sets of Presidential Awards to 30 and 59 awardees in 1998 and 2000, respectively. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo conferred the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth sets of awards to 34 (with one special citation), 45, 48, and 31 awardees, in 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008 respectively.

The Presidential Awards consist of four categories. The *Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino* Award is conferred on Filipino associations or individuals for their exceptional or significant contribution to reconstruction, progress and development in the Philippines. The *Kaanib ng Bayan* Award is accorded to foreign individuals or organizations for their exceptional or significant contribution to Philippine reconstruction, progress and development, or have significantly benefited a sector or community in the Philippines, or advanced the cause of overseas Filipino communities. The *Banaag* Award is given to Filipino individuals or associations for their contributions which have significantly benefited a sector or community in the Philippines, or advanced the cause of overseas Filipino communities. The *Pamana ng Pilipino* Award is conferred on Filipinos overseas who, in exemplifying the talent and industry of the Filipino, have brought the country honor and recognition through excellence and distinction in the pursuit of their work or profession.

On 14 December 2010, President Benigno S. Aquino III will honor 24 distinguished Filipino individuals and organizations based in 11 countries, who because of their exceptional achievements or humanitarian efforts, have given form and substance to Filipino excellence and the time-honored values of *pakikipag-kapwa*, *pagtutulungan*, and *pagkakaisa*.

The awardees include exemplars of Filipino excellence, individuals who have dedicated their work in the service of the Filipino people, stewards of community initiatives that promote cooperation for the common good, and advocates for the promotion and protection of the rights of others. Civil society organizations based overseas, whose programs for intervention have helped improve the lives of others, particularly the marginalized, will also be honored in observance of the timeless tradition of *utang na loob* and *bayanihan*.

This year's awardees were selected from a total of 110 nominations from 23 countries through 35 Philippine Embassies and Consulates. Of the 24 awardees, 16 are individuals while 8 are organizations. The awardees came from Australia, Canada, Germany, Hongkong, Israel, Jordan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, South Korea, United Arab Emirates and United States of America.

*The Year 2010 Presidential Awards for  
Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas*

*Executive Committee*

CHAIRMAN

**Mr. Jose Maria J. Palabrica**  
Former Executive Director  
Commission on Filipinos Overseas

MEMBERS

**Ms. Esperanza H. Quillopo**  
Director, Office of the Presidential Protocol  
Office of the President

**Mr. Ramon M. Lopez**  
Executive Director  
Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship

**Bishop Efraim M. Tendaro**  
National Director  
Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches

**Mr. Rene Q. Bas**  
Editor-in-Chief  
The Manila Times

*The Year 2010 Presidential Awards for  
Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas*

*Technical Committee*

CHAIRPERSON

**Ms. Minda I. Cabilao-Valencia**  
Chief Emigrant Services Officer  
Commission on Filipinos Overseas

MEMBERS

**Atty. Golda Myra R. Roma**  
Chief Emigrant Services Officer  
Commission on Filipinos Overseas

**Atty. Noemi Tan Diaz**  
Special Assistant  
Office of the Undersecretary for Administration  
Department of Foreign Affairs

**Ms. Patricia Oliver-Macam**  
Legal Officer  
Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs  
Department of Foreign Affairs

**Ms. Marlene Ruth S. Sanchez**  
Chief, Administrative Division  
National Commission for Culture and the Arts

**Ms. Luningning E. Samarita**  
Director, National Academy of Science and Technology  
Department of Science and Technology

**Ms. Mary Lou L. Alcid**  
Professor  
University of the Philippines

# *Gallery of Presidential Awardees*

## ***Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award***

Ablaza, Sariel G.G., M.D.  
Adams, Gloria Y.  
ALA EH gem e.V.  
Association of Philippine Physicians of America  
Cagas, Cosme R., M.D.  
Caoile, Gloria T.  
De Venecia, Guillermo B., M.D.  
Enverga, Tobias Jr.  
Evangelista, Stella S., M.D.  
Feed the Hungry, Inc.  
FEU-Dr. Nicanor Reyes School of Medicine  
Alumni Foundation  
Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii, Inc.  
Filipino Women's Association United Kingdom  
H.O.P.E. Foundation  
Ho, Jesus T., M.D.  
Ileto, Benjamin A., M.D.  
International Network of Filipinos Overseas  
Martin, Arsenio R., M.D.  
Montero, Juan II M., M.D.  
Nacario, Emanuel N.  
Navarra, Victoria C., M.D.  
Nihei, Mari Bernabe  
Philippine American Foundation  
Philippine Children's Charity Fund  
Philippine Cultural Organization in Saarland, E.V.  
Philippine Economic and Cultural Endowment  
Science and Technology Advisory Council  
San Francisco  
Society of Philippine Surgeons in America  
Stichting Kapatiran  
Tan, Elton See  
Tria, Honesto R.  
Tesalona, Alfredo T.  
Torio, Isabelo S., M.D.  
University of the Philippines Medical Alumni  
Society in America  
Vijungco, Jose G., M.D.  
Visayas-Mindanao Cultural Association e.V.  
World Bank / IFC-IMF Filipino Association

## ***Kaakabay ng Bayan Award***

Aloha Medical Mission  
Balikatan sa Kaunlaran – Hong Kong Council  
Confederation of Filipinos Overseas Organization  
Filipino-American Community of Colorado  
Filipino Community in Thailand

Filipino Community in the Commonwealth of  
Northern Mariana Islands  
Filipino Community of Guam  
Foundation for Aid to the Philippines, Inc.  
Volunteer Business Counselors of Doha

## ***Kaanib ng Bayan Award***

Anesvad Foundation  
Association Alouette  
Association Philippines International of  
Geneva  
Books for the Barrios  
California Technological Care, Inc.  
Catholic Medical Mission Board  
Children's Chance CT  
Consuelo Zobel Alger Foundation  
CORA Filipino American Task Force  
Advisory Board  
Hanazaki, Misao  
Heetens Helpgood Center Philippines  
International Medical Help for Children  
Jules and Paul- Émile Léger Foundation  
Ligier, Laurence C.  
Ma' Ma Children's Center of Norway  
Martens, Robert S., Ph.D.  
Operation Rainbow Australia Limited  
Operation Smile International  
PAG-ASA Group – Japan  
Philippine Development Assistance  
Programme  
"Salamat Po Kai"  
Social Welfare Corporation Raphael Clinic  
Tsakos Shipping and Trading, S.A.

## ***Banaag Award***

Acebucho, Nestor A.  
Acosta, Rodrigo C.  
Al Zedjali, Essa Mohamed  
Andes, Phoebe Cabotaje  
Angelical, Lilia  
Aranilla, Leticia R.  
Astillero, Moh'd Ali Carlito, M.D.  
Asuncion, Alexander E.  
Babaylan – Switzerland  
Bagong Kulturang Pinoy, Inc.  
Balik Bohol Medical Mission  
Bautista, Antonio C.

# *Gallery of Presidential Awardees*

## ***Banaag Award***

Bayoumi, Mohammad Ahmad  
Beatty, Estrella C.  
Benzon, Norma R.  
Berberabe, Patricia A.  
Berdos, Imelda Vollenweider  
Buchholdt, Thelma G.  
Buhain, Wilfrido J., M.D.  
Bulos, Alice P.  
Carandang, Angeles R.  
Casambre, Sr. Mary Aida C.  
Casamina, Roland C.  
Centre for Filipinos  
Centre for Philippine Concerns – Australia  
Cheng, Sian Chun  
Compas, Lolita B.  
Concepcion, Zenaida S., M.D.  
Covarrubias, Grace F.N.  
Cueto, Alex M., M.D.  
Cuizon, Virgilio G.  
Cunanan, Aguedo Q.  
Cunina Organization  
Dasodas, Catherine D.  
De Guzman – Formoso, Ruby L., M.D.  
Dechaves, William D.  
Del Rosario, Sonia S.  
Dela Paz, James Allan  
Derpo, Esperanza R.  
Docoy, Fr. Eugene  
Evangelista, Jose L., M.D.  
Farmer, Lolita L., Atty.  
Fiesta Filipina Dance Troupe of Canada  
Filipino American Human Services, Inc.  
Filipino American Medical, Inc.  
Filipino Association in Brunei  
Filipino Association of Singapore  
Filipino Coalition for Solidarity, Inc.  
Filipino Communities Council of Australia, Inc.  
Filipino Community Center, Inc.  
Filipino Cultural Club  
Filipino Korean Spouses Association  
Filipino Ladies Association of Guam  
Florentino, Sr. Magdalena S., FMM  
Fojas, Marcos R., M.D.  
Garcia, Lamberto S.  
Ginete, Alex Jose R.  
Go, Mildred Aires  
Go, Roman Ting, Engr.  
Goedicke, Charlotte  
Halasz, Fr. Luis, SVD

## ***Banaag Award***

Helbig, Aurea  
Hernandez, Carmencita  
Ho, Eleanor B.  
Home-Reach Foundation, Inc.  
Hong Kong Bayanihan Trust  
Hyehwadong Filipino Catholic Community  
Ick, Claire R.  
Iskwelahang Pilipino, Inc.  
Juele, Lilia R.  
Kalayaan  
Kanagawa Women's Space Ms. La  
Kawayan Philippine Language and Cultural  
School  
Kinderhilfe Philippinen  
Kinderhilfe Philippinen, E.V.  
Lahing Kayumanggi  
Lammawin, Francis L.  
Lew, Bridget  
Lubang-Looc International  
Magdalena, Joseph I.  
Maharlika – Switzerland  
Manglona, Benjamin T.  
Manuel, Vladimir James M.  
March, Marina Roma, M.D.  
Markham Federation of Filipino Canadians  
Mataac, Celso Jr. T.  
McGuinnes, Amor I.  
Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate  
Concepcion  
Miyake, Chiyo  
Muzones, Santiago Jr., L.  
National Organization of Professional  
Teachers - Hong Kong  
Natividad, Alicia, Atty.  
Natividad, Cornelio R.  
Natividad, Evelyn D.A., Ph.D.  
Navarra, Eduardo J.  
Nemivant, Emma Balquiedra  
Noblejas, Dr. Antonio N.  
Overs, Lillian Y.  
Panday Tinig Chorale Ensemble  
Paragas, Rodolfo D.  
Paterno, Ramon A.P.  
Penang Support Group for Migrant Filipinos  
Philippine American Group of Educators  
and Surgeons  
Philippine Association of Metropolitan  
Washington Engineers  
Philippine Community Council of New  
South Wales

# *Gallery of Presidential Awardees*

## ***Banaag Award***

Philippine Australian Sports and Culture, Inc.  
Philippine Cultural Foundation, Inc.  
Philippine Cultural Foundation of Hawaii  
Philippine Heritage Band  
Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants  
Philippine Nurses Association of America  
Philippine School Bahrain  
Philipsen, Adelina R.  
Pilapil, Virgilio D.R., M.D.  
Quiblado, Conrada P.  
Quinto, Edgardo R.  
Racinez, Sr. Olivia, WCW  
Ramos, Angel T.  
Ravindranathan, N., M.D.  
Reed, Loline L.  
Rizal-Blumentritt Society Austria  
Sabio, Fr. Raymond T.  
Salazar, Lourdes A.  
Sales, Justina L.  
Search to Involve Pilipino Americans  
Seguritan, Reuben  
Sirmata (Vision) 2004  
Steiner, Mona Lisa L.  
Tahanan (Diocesan Center for Filipino Migrants)  
Talangbayan, Francis V., M.D.  
Tendencia, Benita B.  
Tenorio, Pedro P.  
Theresa, Ladeli  
Tigno, Rosario B., M.D.  
Tomelden, Benjamin Jr. S.  
Tordjman, Paul Semo  
Tuluyang Pinoy (Philippine Centre Zurich)  
United Filipino Council of Hawaii  
Uy, Emilio Y.  
Vargas, Orlando R.  
Verstraeten, Jean Paul  
Veterans Equity Center  
Victorian Community in Belgium  
Zamora, Prospero C.

## ***Pamana ng Pilipino Award***

Abad, Pacita  
Abella, Manolo I.  
Abinsay, Felipe Jr. P.  
Acosta, Adolovni P.  
Aguirre, Bayani S.

## ***Pamana ng Pilipino Award***

Alcantra, Anacleto R.  
Antonio, Camilo C.  
Aquino, Belinda A., Ph.D.  
Aranda, Jacob V., M.D.  
Ardiente, Editha M., Engr.  
Armit, Amelita Aranas  
Asera, Larry L., Engr.  
Asmundson, Ruth U., Mayor, Ph.D.  
Baisas, Armando V.  
Balcos, Ophelia G.  
Banatao, Diosdado P.  
Bebars, Evelyn Panganiban, M.D.  
Bernardo, Rodolfo S., Ed.S.  
Besa-Dorotan, Amelita C. and Dorotan, Romeo G.  
Bobis, Merlinda  
Buhay, Wilfredo R.  
Burns, Emme Tomimbang  
Cadawas, Eliodoro C.  
Camara, Jorge G., M.D.  
Cantos, Olegario VIII, D., Atty.  
Carlota, Lupo T., M.D.  
Castrence, Pura Santillan  
Castro, Salvador P.  
Cayetano, Benjamin J.  
Chai, Arlene Joan  
Chen, Anita B.  
Ciani, Lina L.  
Cielo, Angel B., M.D.  
Clemente, Lilia Calderon  
Cordero, Paciente Jr. A.  
Cordova, Frederic and Dorothy  
Cunanan, Zenaida F.  
Dadap, Michael A.  
De Asis – Benitez, Joanne  
De Guzman, Rodolfo A., M.D.  
De Leon, Bayani M.  
Del Rosario, Remedios K.  
Dela Cruz, Cesar  
Diaz, Jose Duddley  
Esclamado, Alejandro A.  
Esguerra, Carlos D.  
Fernandez, Jovelle Laoag, M.D., Ph.D.  
Fitzsimmons, Edith Dizon  
Flores, Eddie Jr.  
Fuentes, Dante C.  
Garcia, Jorge M., M.D.  
Garcia, Manuel M.  
Garcia, Renato B., MBE  
Goh, Ma. Cynthia J.

# *Gallery of Presidential Awardees*

## ***Pamana ng Pilipino Award***

Guingona, Michael Patrick L.  
Hagedorn, Jessica  
Haley, Ma. Luisa Mabilangan  
Hall, Vellie D.  
Hizon, Rico M.  
Ho, Anita Magsaysay  
Igartá, Venancio C.  
Kelly, Angelita Castro  
Lamagna, Carmen Z., Ph.D  
Layosa, Erlinda R.  
Lewis, Loida Nicolas, Atty.  
Lim, Lenore R.S.  
Llamas, Antonio Garcia  
Macabenta, Gregorio B.  
Magsino, Romulo F., Ph.D  
Mandac, Evelyn L.  
Manuel, Consorcio D.  
Maulana, Nasser B.  
Medalla, David C.  
Menez, Ernani G.  
Moguel, Milagros K.  
Natividad, Irene  
Natori, Josie C.  
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# *The Commission on Filipinos Overseas*

The **COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS** (CFO) is an agency under the Office of the President which was established on 16 June 1980 through *Batas Pambansa* (Republic Act) 79, to strengthen ties with Filipinos overseas and promote their interests in the Philippines and abroad.

## **FUNCTIONS OF CFO**

B.P. 79 mandates CFO to:

- Provide advice and assistance to the President and the Congress of the Philippines in the formulation of policies concerning or affecting Filipinos overseas;
- Develop and implement programs to promote the interests and well-being of Filipinos overseas;
- Serve as forum for preserving and enhancing the social, economic, and cultural ties of Filipinos overseas with the Philippine motherland; and
- Provide liaison services to Filipinos overseas with appropriate government and private agencies in the transaction of business and similar ventures in the Philippines.

## **CLIENTELE**

The primary clientele of CFO includes the following:

- Filipino emigrants and permanent residents abroad;
- Filipinos overseas who have become citizens of other countries;
- Filipino spouses and other partners of foreign nationals leaving the country;
- Descendants of Filipinos overseas as defined in B.P. 79;
- Filipino youth overseas; and
- Exchange Visitor Program participants.

## **VISION, MISSION, GOALS**

### **VISION**

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas envisions a community of well-respected and proudly competitive Filipinos overseas who contribute significantly to the productivity and well-being of their countries of residence while maintaining strong political, economic, and cultural ties with the Philippines.

### **MISSION**

To be the Philippines' premier institution in promoting policies, programs, and projects with Migration and Development as a framework for the strengthening and empowerment of the community of Filipinos overseas.

## **10-POINT GOALS OF THE COMMISSION ON FILIPINOS OVERSEAS 2010 – 2016**

### **A. Policy Advocacy**

- 1) To advocate for coherent, coordinated and clear development policies to be mainstreamed in the policy-making process of government: on international migration, its cost-benefit implications and the need for both national and local governments to maximize migration's gains while minimizing its socio-economic costs, that while international migration is a reality, government must create an environment that would make migration an option rather than a matter of necessity and that the government's primary responsibility remains focused on sustainable, integrated, equitable, nationwide development taking into consideration the country's economic, political and social structural problems and issues especially in relation to employment, poverty alleviation, equitable distribution of wealth and the benefit of development and improvement of all its citizens' quality of life.

## *The Commission on Filipinos Overseas*

- 2) To support and strengthen a favorable rights-based policy environment for the promotion and protection of rights, welfare and status of overseas Filipinos; to assist in the formulation and implementation of policies and programs relevant to their rights, welfare and status.

### **B. Socio-economic Development**

- 3) To develop and implement, in coordination with and with the support of other government agencies, a streamlined and facilitative entry and directional process for “development assistance” in the form of resources, knowledge, skills and technology from Filipinos overseas, that will be strategic and responsive to existing development issues and needs of the country and will optimize the assistance’s development potentials.
- 4) To provide mechanisms for various stakeholders to coordinate, forge partnerships, upscale and leverage diaspora funds (e.g. remittances and savings) and investments, broaden donors’ and investors’ base and replicate best practices especially in financial literacy, microfinance and social enterprises, in order to make these funds more effective tools for the country’s development and economic growth.

### **C. Integration and Reintegration**

- 5) To assist in the integration of migrating Filipinos in their host countries by educating them on the realities of international migration, preparing them to meet the practical, cultural and psychological challenges attendant to migration and providing them other services as may be developed and needed, mindful of the social costs of migration to the overseas Filipinos themselves (especially for the women who are most vulnerable to abuse, discrimination and exploitation), to the families (especially the children) they have left behind and to their local communities.
- 6) To assist in the productive and seamless re-integration of returning overseas Filipinos and their families in the country, recommending policies, programs and measures to transform brain drain to brain gain, to enhance the returnees’ earning capabilities and for better incentives’ package for overseas Filipinos to return, retire and invest.

### **D. Culture and Education**

- 7) To ensure that Filipinos overseas remain rooted in their Filipino culture by developing, implementing, promoting and coordinating with other institutions, global awareness and appreciation of Filipino language, culture and heritage.

### **E. Institutional development and organizational strengthening**

- 8) To promote the leading role of CFO on the formulation of policies and in addressing key issues on migration and development
- 9) To improve and enhance CFO’s institutional capabilities for lobbying and advocacy for policy-setting, formulation and reform; in coordinating and building consensus with all migration-related government agencies on issues/policies/programs of major concern and critical to overseas Filipinos; and mobilizing stakeholders in the migration and development sector, especially for regular multi-stakeholder consultations and collaboration.
- 10) To provide accurate, timely and comprehensive data on international migration of Filipinos through linkages with government agencies and other stakeholders essential for policy formulation and protection of overseas Filipinos.

# *The Commission on Filipinos Overseas*

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The CFO Board of Commissioners is headed by a Chairperson with cabinet rank, and representatives of the following departments:

- Department of Foreign Affairs (as Vice-Chair)
- Department of Trade and Industry
- Department of Labor and Employment
- Department of Education
- Department of Justice
- Department of Tourism
- Presidential Communications Operations Office
- National Commission for Culture and the Arts
- CFO Executive Director

The CFO is supported by a Secretariat headed by an Executive Director. It consists of five (5) offices:

- Migrant Integration and Education Division (MIED)
- Project Management Division (PMD)
- Policy, Planning and Research Division (PPRD)
- Management Information System Division (MISD)
- Administrative and Finance Division (AFD)



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**Engr. Romeo R. Rosas**  
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## ***A Partnership for Remittances and Development***

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) has partnered with Western Union (WU), the global leader in money transfer services, for *the Project: OFW/Diaspora Remittances for Development: Building a Future Back Home (RED)*. Western Union supports similar projects in other developing countries.

### ***OFW/Diaspora Remittances for Development (RED): Building a Future Back Home***

In 2009 overseas remittances to the Philippines reached a record high of US\$ 17.3 billion. This project will harness the potential of overseas remittances for poverty reduction and consequently, local economic development. In the long-run, collective remittances of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and diaspora communities could become a powerful source of investment for development.

### ***Objectives***

1. Develop mechanisms to engage OFW/diaspora communities effectively as transnational actors of local development and services delivery by:
  - Designing and piloting a model to create forward and backward linkages for product development, value chains and improved market access for service delivery
  - Identifying capacity diagnostics and policy and institutional options for leveraging remittances to promote entrepreneurship
2. Support policies to tap the potential of overseas remittances for savings and investments, entrepreneurship and employment creation that will contribute to development; government policies will be analyzed and gaps and incentives that support collective remittances for development will be identified

### ***Working Framework***

1. Incentivization through policy institutionalization
2. Awareness building to communicate individual and collective benefits
3. Collaborative capacity building to achieve optimal project stewardship
4. Fund matching to encourage multiplier effect
5. Project leadership encompassing inception, implementation and evaluation



*Office of the President of the Philippines*  
*Commission on Filipinos Overseas*

*2010*