



Resource Development (Phils.) Inc.

## NEWS FEATURE

### TVIRD-GK Partnership Provides Homes for the Next Generation of Subanons



*'The children are our future.'* This, according to GK Executive Director Jose Luis Oquiñena, who along with NCIP Chairman Zenaida Pawid and key officials from TVIRD, officiated the turnover of the first 40 houses to Subanon homeowners in Tanuman, municipality of Baliguian.

**Baliguian, Zamboanga del Norte / May 2013** – His tribe is nomadic and his ancestors are said to have been driven to the hinterlands of Zamboanga Peninsula are known to migrate from one place to another in search for a better life. And so when Celestino Guinagag, a 60-year old member of the Subanon tribe, received the house he and his fellow Subanons helped built - he was in high spirits!

Guinagag's is among the 40 Subanon families that each received a 30-square meter, single detached housing unit from Gawad Kalinga (GK) and mining firm TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc.

(TVIRD). The houses were recently turned-over to the Subanons in ceremonial rites led by Chairman Zenaida Brigida Pawid of the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP) as well as key officers of both organizations in Tanuman, which is adjacent to the Canatuan mine site of TVIRD.

*“Maraming salamat sa GK at TVI. Ngayon may mga bahay na kami (Thank you GK and TVI. Now we finally have homes.)”* Guinagag said, beaming with pride. Guinagag, a tribal leader himself, is currently the president of the homeowners’ association and member of the company’s security detachment.

### **Children are the future**

“Every time we’re looking for solutions to the challenges we’re facing, let us just look at the faces of our children. By doing so, we are reminded of our future. They are the future. They are the reason of our being here,” GK Executive Director Jose Luis Oquiñena told the Subanons

“After all we are family, and family cares for one another. Family never forgets, in family no one is forgotten or left behind,” Oquiñena added. The executive director also challenged the Subanons to take on the GK way and its mantra of *‘Walang iwanan’* (no one left behind).

Ten years ago, GK endeavored to reach out to five (5) million Filipinos who live below the poverty threshold and were homeless. These include both indigenous cultural communities and the urban poor.

“Poverty does not choose. There are poor among the Muslims, Christians and natives. I am urging our leaders here to accept the GK challenge – that is be the first to serve, the last to benefit,” Oquiñena concluded.

The TVIRD-GK Tanuman Village, is the first housing project participated by GK in southern Zamboanga del Norte. Located within the Subanons’ Certificate of Ancestral Domain title (CADT) area, it is now considered the permanent homes of the Subanons.

### **Sweat equity and heroic brotherhood**

Oquiñena explained to the Subanons and those present that while GK means respect for one’s tradition, the process may also be long and oftentimes reveal some challenges along the way. However, cooperation between GK and TVIRD, as well as consultation with the NCIP, helped the parties achieve a harmonious community.

*“Di po bigay ng GK ang mga bahay na ito. Di rin po ito bigay ng TVI. Ito’y ginawa ninyo, nating lahat (These houses are not given by GK or by TVI. You built it. We built it together.)”* said GK Corporate Partnership Head Tito Cajulis.

The Subanons who are now enjoying their new homes had rendered at least 500 hours of working in any of the houses that they built. GK coins the term ‘sweat equity’ for the work contributed by homeowners in building their neighbors’ houses.

The spirit of 'bayanihan' or heroic brotherhood saw homeowners helping build the rest of the houses even though they already completed the required hours. This is the spirit fostered by the GK-TVIRD partnership.

Reports show that not only the tribesmen helped build the houses but TVIRD employees themselves, including the general manager. Besides the company, students of Jose Rizal Memorial State University in Siocon also were part of the team. Many of them formed part of the electricians that lighted the houses following its construction.

"Gawad Kalinga's vision is for this country to be slum-free through a simple strategy of providing land for the landless, homes for the homeless, food for the hungry - and as a result providing dignity and peace for every Filipino," he added.

### ***Kalingang TVI for sustainable development***

Renne Subido, Vice President for Corporate Social Commitment said as responsible miner, TVIRD implemented projects aimed to improve the lives of its hosts in Siocon town.

"GK's vision dovetails with that of TVIRD. Like GK, the company's projects are also geared towards sustaining the gains that our hosts have been enjoying even after TVIRD has concluded its current mining operations," he said.

Subido also shared that TVIRD's development projects take a responsive role in answering the needs of the Subanons and surrounding community, particularly on education, health services, sustainable livelihood and infrastructure support. These components comprise the company's Four Quadrants of Development.

"We now have a Subanon nurse, a forester, teachers, agriculturists, electricians and other professionals through the company's scholarship program. TVIRD employed many of them while some imbibed on careers outside Siocon. We believe education is sustainable," he added. Subido also underscored the plan of the company to shift to agriculture as it concludes its mining operation by the end of 2013.

The TVIRD-GK Village is the first to be implemented by a mining company in Zamboanga Peninsula. According to Subido, the project is an important facet of responsible mining – and that is to provide decent shelter to the most disadvantaged sector of society.

"This is Kalingang TVI," he concluded.

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Press photos:



- 1 **No one left behind.** GK Executive Director Jose Luis Oquiñena shared the GK mantra of 'Walang iwanan' with new Subanon homeowners and other program attendees.



- 2 Director Oquiñena (left) with NCIP Region IX official Enrico Gumibao (center) and GK Partnership Head Tito Cajulis during a mine tour of TVIRD's facilities in Canatuan, Zamboanga del Norte.

### **About TVIRD**

TVI Resource Development (Phils.) Inc., is the Philippine affiliate of TVI Pacific Inc. (TSX: TVI), a publicly-listed Canadian mining company focused on the exploration and production of precious and base metals from district scale large system, high margin projects located in the Philippines.

We are committed to exploration and mining practices that promote transparency, responsible stewardship of the environment, and the inalienable rights to life, dignity, and sustainable development of our host communities.

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