

TVIRD, Advocacy Group Unveil Functional Literacy Program



School is cool. (In photo): Students in upland Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte receive primary education in Sitio Canatuan Public School, which is supported by TVIRD among its 10 beneficiary schools with a combined population of 4,000 students. Education is a vital quadrant of TVIRD's sustainable development model, which is vertically aligned to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The company endeavors to implement the same successful model in Bayog, Zamboanga del Sur once it fully operates.

Bayog, Zamboanga del Sur / March 2014 – The importance of addressing functional literacy in hinterland communities may run parallel with more basic necessities such as food, clothing and adequate shelter as a means to survive. But given the logistical challenge of establishing a considerable education program in far-flung Sitio Maglatin, one of the sub-villages in the town of Bayog, Zamboanga del Sur, a dedicated partnership between mining company TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc. (TVIRD) and Pagadian-based non-government organization, Business Opportunities Against Starvation Inc. (BOAST)

may well be the potential combination to ensure that the program makes a significant impact on the community.

To differentiate functional literacy from “literacy” in the strictest sense, a program on the former imbibes to develop the necessary skills and aptitude in order for students to reach an adequate level of comprehension for the written word. Simply put, BOAST’s functional literacy framework aims to help Maglatin youth to achieve a mastery level above basic reading and writing - and beyond simply learning their ABCs.

Literal benefits for Maglatin

BOAST’s focus on the areas of formal literacy for out-of-school youth, livelihood opportunities, and medical and dental outreach complements with TVIRD’s community programs in and around its 4,779-hectare Mineral Processing Sharing Agreement (MPSA) area in Sitio Balabag of the same town.

When the NGO first approached TVIRD in December 2013, the company assisted its personnel in coordinating with the municipal government and other local offices. It sought permission to conduct house-to-house social investigation and class analysis among indigent families in order to qualify legitimate beneficiaries in Sitio Maglatin, which is hardly reached by various social services. Soon after, the NGO generated an initial report on the community profile, which served as the basis for its literacy program.

BOAST Inc. finally inaugurated its program in the sub-village of Maglatin last 15 March 2014. Barangay officials, TVIRD key officers and personnel, teachers, students and constituents of Barangay Pulangbato, in which Maglatin is located, attended the launch.

“We would want to uplift the living conditions of the people of Maglatin and Pulangbato. We partnered with TVIRD in encouraging the people to get involved in education and forms of livelihood that will be beneficial to them as well as cultivating spiritual values,” said BOAST Director MSgt. Romeo Jimeno, iterating the organization’s focus areas.

“Maglatin will receive these benefits in the next two to three years. And before BOAST adopts another area, the people of Barangay Pulangbato will have undergone different livelihood trainings along with those from Ipil in Zamboanga Sibugay, Sindangan in Zamboanga del Norte and Tukuran, Labangan and Sominot in Zamboanga del Sur,” he added.

Beyond semantics

“TVIRD welcomes the participation of BOAST in its wide-reaching effort to provide the community with enhanced literacy through guided education, which is one of the company’s pillars of development,” said Balabag Project Officer-in-Charge Col. Valentino Edang.

Edang recalls that the sub-village was once deprived of roads, electricity and transportation. Peace and order was also an issue, which the company addressed through the support of the Provincial Government of Zamboanga del Sur and concerned agencies.

“Today, Maglatin and Pulangbato have an all-weather road accessible to land transportation, power, a thriving population, an organized women’s group and a venue serving as a day care center. More importantly, it now has access to the market for its home-grown rubber, woven baskets and rattan products,” Edang said.

“Let’s help Sitio Maglatin become the showcase of a new-born community that TVIRD dreams about,” he concluded.

Earlier in 2013, Pulangbato joined 25 other barangays in the town of Bayog in granting TVIRD the ‘social license’ to operate its gold and silver project in Balabag. The province’s social license or acceptance of TVIRD operations was documented in a resolution unanimously approved by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (Provincial Board).

In the spirit of brotherhood

“I express my gratitude to BOAST, especially to TVIRD which paved the way for (this) development,” said Pulangbato Barangay Captain Felisa Antonio. Prior to launching the program, both organizations conducted the repair of Maglatin’s Purok Centre, which was established to promote dialogue among the people.

The repair effort and beautification engaged community members from both Sitio Maglatin and nearby Lantawan who contributed in the spirit of “*pintakasi*” – a local initiative of the people done out of *bayanihan* or brotherhood.

TVIRD is the Philippine affiliate of Canada’s TVI Pacific Inc. It has earned various environmental and safety recognitions since it started its mining operations in Canatuan, the homeland of the Subanon tribe.

Like Canatuan, Balabag was also once inhabited by illegal miners. Through the political will of the Zamboanga del Sur Provincial Government and the establishment of a dedicated multi-agency task force,

illegal small-scale mining operations were dismantled upon the enforcement of a cease-and-desist order in 2012. The company is set to implement the development of its Balabag gold-silver project in 2014.

Press photos:



- 1 *TVIRD Balabag OIC Col. Valentino Edang presents an offering during a Muslim dance ritual at the literacy program launch in Sitio Maglatin, Barangay Pulangbato.*



- 2 *People from other communities joined in Maglatin's efforts to prepare the Literacy Program venue.*

About TVI

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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