



## NEWS RELEASE

### From Shore to Shore: Agata ‘School Boat’ Ferries Kids to High School Classes

*No more perilous trek for the students of Tinigbasan National High School*



**Safe and convenient.** Kenneth James Dorata, Tinigbasan National High School Grade 12 student and resident of Sitio Sowa in Barangay Lawigan, Municipality of Tubay, boards the Agata school boat – a far cry from their previously dangerous two-hour trek from home to school, and which now only takes 15 minutes.

**Tubay, Agusan del Norte / March 2018** – For most of the teenagers in Barangay Lawigan, Tubay Municipality, going to school during their elementary years was literally a risk on life and limb as they

needed to wade through hightide waters and sometimes climb on top of slippery boulders in order to make it on time. Today, things have changed dramatically thanks to a reliable motorboat that is designated to take them to and from school on a daily basis.

“Now I no longer worry about getting late,” said Tinigbasan National High School Grade 11 student Mary Jane Cabig – a resident of Sitio Sowa in Barangay Lawigan – and whose dream of riding safely in a school boat was finally realized through TVIRD’s Agata Mining Ventures Inc. (AMVI).

AMVI is a nickel laterite joint venture project operating in a 4,995-hectare Mineral Processing Sharing Agreement (MPSA) area across the municipalities of Tubay, Jabonga and Santiago in Agusan del Norte Province. The company donated the school boat last November to Barangay Lawigan as part of its Social Development and Management Program (SDMP).

### **Daily grind**

Previously, the students had to traverse the rocky coastline to reach their school (also in Tubay), which is three (3) kilometers away. The access road is very difficult to pass and the daily trek takes about two (2) hours from point to point. The journey becomes even more dangerous during high tide as students needed to climb on the boulders to get across.

Grade 12 student Kenneth James Dorata said that the one-way trip also required them to bring extra clothes since the ones they were wearing during the journey were likely already wet by the time they arrived in school.

“Some of our families owned boats; however, most of the time, our fathers could not take us to school as they were usually very tired after fishing all night long. Also, most of our boats are not motorized and paddling the boat can be very tiring. Most of the time we had no choice but to walk,” added Kenneth.

### **A safe passage**

Currently, some 34 students from grades 7 to 12 are transported daily by the Agata school boat. The trip takes around 15 minutes from Lawigan to Tinigbasan where the high school is located. Since the boat has limited capacity, the students are transported in two batches. By noon, the boat is docked in Sitio Sowa and returns to fetch the students in the afternoon after their classes.

“The school boat in Lawigan is very helpful to the students as it conveniently transports them to the only high school nearby (Tinigbasan),” said Agata Community Relations Superintendent Jonathan Bañez.

Additionally, the school boat also transports over a dozen elementary students from Sitio Sowa to Lawigan Elementary School in the barangay proper – which is also at a significant distance if travelled on foot. Before this, young grade schoolers had to walk over 30 minutes each way just to get to school due to the lack of a proper road connecting the sitio and the barangay proper.

The school boat can also be utilized by the community to ferry sick people to the nearest road point during emergency situations, according to Bañez. In terms of operating the motorboat, Agata allocates fuel on a monthly basis, an honorarium for the two operators as well as support for maintenance and the general upkeep of the craft.

In terms of safety, each student is given a life jacket that they need to wear before they board the motorboat. The Agata school boat is also not allowed to operate during rough weather.

### **The journey ahead**

Lawigan’s Barangay Secretary Miriam Coñado said that students are always eager to ride the school boat. “Some students already wait at the school boat’s assembly area as early as 6 AM – which somehow shows how they are now more enthusiastic in going to school,” she added.

Marilou Capon, who has been teaching in the school for the past 13 years, said that since the school boat became operational, she saw a significant improvement in attendance and participation among Barangay Lawigan students.

“Before the school boat came, the students had to wake up as early as 3 AM so they can start their journey and catch-up with their morning classes. However, by the time they arrive, they are already too tired to attend their classes that they simply skip them so they can take a rest. They also had to leave early in the afternoon as they still had to walk home. So the school boat is really a big help to the students,” Capon explained.

With the school boat now making their journey much easier, Kenneth and Mary Jane – and the rest of Lawigan’s youth – have become motivated more than ever to pursue and finish their education so they can help their families.

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**Press photos:**



*Tinigbasan National High School students and teachers together with Agata's Community Relations staff Mario Bantasan, Jr. Prior to the school boat, these students had to take a perilous two-hour journey from Barangay Lawigan to Tinigbasan just to get to school*



*Marilou Capon, teacher in Tinigbasan National High School for over 13 years, observed that students from Barangay Lawigan are much more enthusiastic to attend classes via their daily school boat. Since then, she has noted an improvement in attendance and participation among Barangay Lawigan students.*



*Kenneth James Dorata, Grade 12 student of Tinigbasan National High School and resident of Sitio Sowa in Barangay Lawigan, is very happy that they (students) no longer have to walk two hours daily in order to get to school*



*Mary Jane Cabig, Grade 11 student of Tinigbasan National High School and a resident of Sitio Sowa in Barangay Lawigan, says that she is no longer worried about being late for classes*



*Barangay Lawigan's school boat, an SDMP project of Agata, is docked at Sitio Sowa after transporting students to Tinigbasan National High School. The school boat regularly returns to Tinigbasan every afternoon to fetch the students after their classes.*

### **About TVI in the Philippines**

*TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc. ("TVIRD"), is the local affiliate of TVI Pacific Inc. (TSX: TVI), a publicly-listed Canadian mining company focused on the exploration, development and production of precious and base metals from district-scale, large-system, high-margin projects located in the Philippines. Concurrent ownership of ventures is shared with partner company, Prime Resource Holdings Inc.*

*The commercial operations of Agata Mining Ventures Inc. (AMVI) mark the third successful mining project that TVIRD brought on-stream in a period of 10 years. The company is 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 its host communities.*

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