

Sylff Leadership Initiatives Final Report

About Yourself

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About Your Project

Name of project: Our Community, Our Resources: Increasing Food Security.
The First Philippine Food Bank Symposium

Project period: October 28, 2013 to March 20, 2013

Amount of Sylff Leadership Initiatives award: JPY 528,476 (US\$5,200)

Project Highlights

Salu-Salo Food Bank Philippines (FBP) is the first incorporated food bank in the Philippines. Since its incorporation in March of 2012, Salu-Salo FBP has had some modest operations receiving and delivering food donations to recipients in Luzon. In the aftermath of the recent Typhoon Haiyan, Salu-Salo FBP and Second Harvest Asia passed on emergency, food and water supplies worth over \$660,000 to survivors in the Visayas. This first Philippine food bank symposium sought to celebrate the gains but also expand the work of Salu-Salo FBP by focusing on looking at what resources we have in the community that could be recovered and redirected to those in need. It also sought to share current effective models and bring people together to generate ideas and relationships to provide alternatives to the current practice of destroying good food.

In particular, the symposium aimed to:

- Identify the reasons for food loss and food waste in the Philippines
- Ascertain the obstacles to getting excess food to those in need
- Identify the necessary logistics to recover and redistribute these resources
- Bring together individuals and groups for collaboration, and
- Raise awareness about food banking as a positive and viable approach towards food security

Sherilyn participated at the Second Annual Regional Food Bank Meeting in Hong Kong last November 4-6, 2013 organized by Second Harvest Asia in which she represented Salu-Salo FBP and also identified trending issues for the thematic discussions for the Manila symposium. As a result, the following themes were conceptualized

Where is the waste? Food loss in the Philippines

From A to B: Logistical considerations of recovering and redistributing food

Reaching recipients: Increasing accountability, transparency, and traceability
Social marketing for social innovation and entrepreneurship
Responding to disasters: Problems encountered. Lessons learned.
Building a business model for Food Bank Philippines

On March 20, 2014, the symposium “Our Community, Our Resources: Increasing Food Security” was held at Miriam College. About 115 people registered to participate and 103 people joined. They included people from government, food companies, farmers, media, faculty and social action arms of universities, food interest groups, and NGOs, many of which have their own feeding programs. The symposium was also graced by an exhibit entitled “Too Good to Waste” presenting stunning photographs by students of the De La Salle University College of St. Benilde. It was a well-organized and compact event featuring TED-Talk-like presentations by renowned speakers and industry leaders -- the sessions were thought-provoking, insightful, and the participants are left with an inspiring and positive sentiment. Food donors were happy to be able to meet the recipient organizations for the first time through this symposium. A number of participants pledged specific actions to support the work of the food bank. It was without a doubt, a huge success.

Some post-symposium feedback received:

I feel fortunate to have been given the opportunity to learn more about food banking, a subject that I was not very familiar with prior to the symposium. The work that you and your team have done and will do, is both inspiring and necessary in our country. I am happy to have been a part of it and here to provide what support I can in your future endeavours.

Paolo Delgado, Delgado Brothers Group (a logistics company)

It is our pleasure to attend in the first ever Food Bank symposium. Thank you for the experience of meeting and interacting with such distinguished and interesting individuals. We are also touched in meeting our direct beneficiaries. Rest assured that we will propose to our board for the continuous partnership with Food Bank.

Ella Vergara, CDO (a food company)

It impressed upon me how much I didn't know about the topics covered, and that there is much work to be done to inform/educate Filipinos about the important issues, especially those who could be in a position to help. Thank you so much for such an inspiring and enlightening symposium -- I took away a lot from it. I would be looking out for your next one.

Regina Tolentino Newport, Culinary Historians of the Philippines

I found this symposium very informative and inspiring - that the issue of food security in the Philippines is so multifaceted, with different stakeholders involved, politics, economics, environment, logistics all playing a part in this issue. The talks got me to reflect about how each individual contributes to the country, and I hope that the inspiration I found in this food banking symposium helps me to start something in Zamboanga City, be it involvement in environmental issues or food security concerns, by way of my interest in organic gardening.

Tiffany Hope Lim

I also enjoyed your symposium and am happy I was able to make a contribution to its success. My congratulations to you for a very orderly and well organized symposium.

Dr. Ned Roberto, Social Weather Station

Short Article (1,000 words)

Food loss has become a hot topic in the last several years as more and more NGOs and other aid workers look for resources in their own community that could be used to serve those in need. In 1967 food banking was developed in the US to address the reality of surplus existing alongside need. Food banks act as middle-persons collecting and distributing food donations. They have become one response to the growing concern over food loss.

In March 2012 Salu-Salo FBP became the first incorporated food bank in the Philippines. Through the development of food banking in the Philippines we have become aware that there are many resources available, resources that could be recovered and redirected to those in need. There is a wide range of stakeholders in the community who, if brought together, could provide alternatives to the current practice of destroying good food.

We originally planned for the symposium to take place early February this year -- that was before Typhoon Yolanda - the deadliest Philippine typhoon on record - struck last November 8, 2013. Typhoon Yolanda and the staggering destruction it caused drew attention once again to the vulnerability of the Philippines to natural disasters. It also highlighted the pressing need to have a food safety net -- something that food banks are expected to provide -- not only in times of disasters or emergencies but for many of the country's poor, on a day to day basis as well.

Inadvertently, this symposium couldn't have happened at a more opportune time. This March, 2014, we celebrate the 2nd anniversary of the incorporation of Salu-Salo FBP. Since our incorporation two years ago, we have had some modest operations receiving and delivering food donations to recipients in Luzon. Salu-Salo FBP has also sent thousands of dollars worth of emergency food and water supplies to survivors in the Visayas, post-Yolanda. With this symposium, we celebrated our gains but we also look forward to expanding our work. This first Philippine food bank symposium focused on sharing current effective models and bringing people together in order to generate ideas and relationships necessary to push food banking forward.

The first session *Where is the waste? Food loss in the Philippines*, was led by Charles McJilton, founder and chair of Second Harvest Japan, the first and the largest food bank in Japan. He pioneered the concept of food banking in Japan and has worked to establish a national food banking network. He is also the founder and chair of Second Harvest Asia, an NGO that promotes food banking in Asia, including the Philippines, and works with other food banks and aid agencies to increase food security in the region. Charles gave an introduction on the food supply chain and the points where food loss can be recovered. He emphasized the need to look at opportunities that are scalable.

Some farmers from Luzon participated in the symposium. Luisita Esmao, an advocate and practitioner of organic farming, represented the farmers who attended and reported on their experiences of food loss in their respective farms. Some farmers have to abandon hectares of their crops and don't even bother harvesting them whenever the market prices drop. The sale of the produce at such a low market price won't even be enough to cover the cost of bringing them to

the market. The farmers identified several problems that lead to food loss: the lack of farm to market access roads, the lack of market links (clear offers on who will buy and at what price), and lack of harvest facilities.

In the second session *From A to B: Logistical considerations of recovering and redistributing food*, Jose Paolo Delgado, shared his thoughts on the current state of and the prospective changes in the logistics of transporting food in the Philippines. Paolo is the Director of the Delgado Brothers Group, a 63 year old international corporation which consists of 15 subsidiaries and member companies with interests in logistics, leasing, trading, real estate and investments. At any given time, his logistics company has an impressive 25,000 tires on the ground. Despite the deficiencies in the infrastructure and transport system in the Philippines, Paolo remains positive. He is an enthusiastic proponent of the road train which maximizes the existing paved and nautical highways through the use of modern, standardized equipment that can easily connect and disconnect. He also advocates increased visibility and interconnectedness in the food supply chain in order to plan food production more efficiently.

For the third session, *Reaching recipients: Increasing accountability, transparency, and traceability*, symposium participants were treated to a live performance from Juana Change, played by artist Mae Paner. Juana Change is best known for her videos that went viral on the internet --videos that challenge apathy towards political and economic problems with a distinctively Pinoy humor. Juana Change videos have hundreds of thousands of hits. The Juana Change project seeks to continue viral campaigns on the internet, live performances, grassroots tours, and nationwide TV broadcast to advocate freedom, justice and good governance. Juana Change performed on stage with a family who survived Typhoon Yolanda and whom she subsequently adopted. In her entertaining piece, she highlighted the corruption that results in undue delays in providing public service especially in times of disaster. Vincent Lazatin, Executive Director of the Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN), a Philippine-based network of 25 civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, and academic and research institutions focusing on transparency and accountability in governance, responded to Juana Change's performance by outlining the dysfunctions of governance particularly *epal*, in which government officials put their names and faces on projects to take credit for things they should be doing, thus citizen distrust. He advocated for access to information and citizen involvement to increase accountability.

The fourth session, *What we get wrong about the poor and what to do about it?* (title of the session revised after discussions with the speaker) featured Asia's foremost authority on marketing, Dr. Ned Roberto. Dr. Ned currently serves as part of the editorial board of the *International Journal of Research in Marketing*. The author of numerous bestselling books on marketing, market research and social marketing, Dr. Ned is a sought after teacher, mentor, consultant and speaker in universities, countless national and multinational corporations in a wide variety of industries, and in international agencies and organizations. He is the recipient of the AGORA Award for Achievement in Marketing Education, as well as the Lifetime Achievement Award as Marketing Educator. He is currently research fellow and director of the Social Weather Stations. Dr. Ned illustrated how most poverty alleviation programs were reaching the borderline poor and not the extreme poor who need help the most. We also need to be critical of our model or framework of why the poor are poor as oftentimes, our model clouds us from seeing the real needs of the poor.

Mayor Sandy Javier whose hands-on response to his people in Javier Leyte in the wake of Typhoon Yolanda is legendary, making him the most qualified person to speak for the fifth session, *Responding to disasters: Problems encountered. Lessons learned.* A leader and hero to many, Mayor Sandy has put together a solid relief operations team to provide immediate relief to all affected. The Javier Municipality has taken responsibility not just of its immediate local barangays and communities but also for the 20 towns in the surrounding area. Javier is now acting as the main relief goods distribution hub for these coastal and inland towns gravely affected by Typhoon Yolanda. Mayor Sandy shared his experiences saving the people of Javier and proactively providing food for them. Vincent Lazatin in his capacity as member of a Disaster Response Team his group is organizing, supplemented Mayor Sandy's presentation. Vincent warned that such disasters are bound to happen again especially because of climate change and the vulnerable position of the country within the typhoon belt and the ring of fire. Instead of thinking about how to build resilient cities, Vincent raised the need to invest in infrastructure to prepare for disaster as well as to think in terms of building resilient ecosystems and microclimates since natural disasters know no political boundaries.

Charles McJilton brought the symposium to a close with the final session *Building a business model for Food Bank Philippines* in which he shared the principles that have guided Second Harvest Japan from the beginning that might be helpful for Salu-Salo FBP: focus on building relationships with people and companies and getting away from the poverty mentality and just start working with what resources you already have.

It was, without doubt, a very high-powered symposium that exceeded expectations. The highly organized sessions were packed with thought-provoking presentations that left everyone inspired and positive, eager to apply and share what they have learned, and get more involved with food banking efforts.

On a more personal note, someone once told me, "If you want to get something done, ask someone who's already busy." I was baffled by this seemingly counterintuitive thought. I cannot imagine anyone busier than a full time homemaker and mother of two wee ones and yet I am most grateful for The SYLFF Leadership Initiatives for believing in my capability to pull this through. I look back and feel quite overwhelmed by what I had accomplished with my hands full. This experience of successfully organizing the first Philippine food bank symposium has only served to energize me for future endeavors.