**MHSPSP Value Indigenous People Health Needs**  
By: Michael Esguerra

Indigenous People of Compostela Valley view ancestral domain as a manifestation of their culture and their identity. And at the moment, they are raising the issue of better access to health services which are more attuned to their cultural heritage and identity.

Datu Danilo Abaniza, Mansaka tribal leader of Compostela Valley, said they have experienced some forms of suppression of their cultural practices and these conflict with their ideas and beliefs. “Most of us feel discriminated against when it comes to access to health services,” he said.

Danilo cited as an example that they were less well-attended to when their people visit hospitals. He said non-IPs see IPs as poor people who do not have the capacity to pay.

The Mansaka tribal leader admitted that it’s often difficult to get referrals from government officials especially during medical crisis. “Most of our people did not have the courage to assert their rights as they were overpowered by their fears”, he said.

Teresita “Bebing” Marcial, a tribal leader of Mansaka tribe in Compostela Valley Province, said there should be considerations in health programmes of the government when it comes to IPs. She added that the problem with the health department’s efforts is that the services provided to IPs are based on non-IP needs.

Bebing cited as example that most of their pregnant IPs can’t attend regular pre-natal check-ups and they are presumed to give birth in far-away places by registered midwives. She added, that it is not easy for the pregnant IPs to go to the city since they are living in far-flung areas.

She suggested that it would be better if there were health workers who were IPs themselves as IPs would exhibit more empathy to their fellow IPs, and would know what they need and what they feel.

Some of the IPs are hesitant to go to non-IP health workers because they are not culturally attuned to our way of living, she said.

In addition, she said that some of the non-IP health workers are always in a hurry to go back home before sunset which can in turn make some IPs feel that they are less...
The Mindanao Health Sector Policy Support Programme (MHSPSP), held the first ever health forum for Indigenous People in the Compostela Valley province during the third quarter of this year.

The forum held in the provincial capital of Compostela, Nabunturan, was attended by around 20 tribal leaders, from the non-Muslim tribes of Mansaka, Mandaya, Dibabawon, Manggungan, Manobo and Kalagan. MHSPSP and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) facilitated the activity.

The forum engaged the indigenous leaders to better understand their health needs and identify future health interventions.

The main objective of MHSPSP is to contribute to the overall improvement of the health status of the population, focusing on the poor and vulnerable groups. The Programme identifies indigenous people as one the most vulnerable groups that are in need assistance.

Datu Danilo Abaniza, Mansaka tribal leader commented that they (tribal leaders) are happy that the European Commission identified indigenous people as potential beneficiaries of this health programme. He added that indigenous people of Compostela have a lot of health-related issues, especially noting that conducting more researches on herbal plants used by IPs will give them better access to immediate relief for some common ailments.

John Rockett, noted that it is important that the health needs of Indigenous People are identified in a structured way. The priorities must be well documented and must reflect the views of IPs given the prevailing health setting. Initiatives driven by FOURmula for Health provide such a structure and that MHSPSP can assist in a number of ways.

He added that the IPs have taken the first step to improving their situation having formulated Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development Plans.

The MHSPSP is planning to support the Province in integrating IP health needs into the Provincial Investment Plan for Health. Once the IP health needs are fully identified, the MHSPSP can better assist the Provinces to better serve these communities, he said.

FOURmula One for Health is a Department of Health initiative to improve the management and delivery of health services by the provincial and municipal governments.

First Health forum... from page 1

prioritised. Nevertheless, Bebing does not blame the workers because she knows that the families of these health workers are waiting for them to return safely.

She said that if the government wants sustainable development among their people, the government should give chances to help educate IPs most especially in the areas of Midwifery and other health-related disciplines.

More research on herbal plants will also be beneficial for IPs. Bebing believed that conducting more researches on herbal plants used by IPs will give them better access to immediate relief for some common ailments.

Ms. Shirley B. Iguianon, NCIP Provincial Officer talking about the identified health issues among Indigenous People in Compostela Valley Province.

FOURmula One for Health provide such a prevailing health setting. Initiatives driven by FOURmula for Health contribute to the development of their people.

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FOURmula One for Health is a Department of Health initiative to improve the management and delivery of health services by the provincial and municipal governments.

What the Delegation of the European Commission joins the Filipino nation in condoling with the Philippines for the loss of a great leader, President Corazon Aquino. In this issue, we feature the condolences message of European Commission President Manuel Barroso as relayed to Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. We also like to extend our sympathies to the family of a dedicated social worker, Mr. Finardo Cabliao, alumnus of the European Union Visitors Programme (2006) who was tragically killed in Malaysia in the course of his work.

In a letter dated 17 August 2009 sent to Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabrera, Mr. Holger Rommen expressed the appreciation that Mr. Cabliao brought to this initiative particularly in his excellent work in the "Access to Justice for the Poor" project.

"He will be remembered not only for his kindness and generous nature but also for his willingness to share his time with us and his determination to reach consensus and best solution on every occasion", Mr. Rommen said.

On a happy note, we like to announce that Cine Europa is opening on 10 September in Shangri-La Plaza and will then travel to Cagayan de Oro and then Cebu until 11 October. Seventeen films of love, hope, faith, strength, courage from films of varying genres – romance, comedy, action, thriller/horror – are featured this year and Cine Europa enthusiasts will certainly enjoy another year of the best of European quality films. Linggo de Lingua Europa 2 also opens this September with yet another week of fun and discovery of European languages in the University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University, St. Paul’s University Manila and Instituto Cervantes.

The EU News’ next issue is focused on migration. We wish to acknowledge all our partners who contributed to this special health issue.
Local health boards in Mindanao are now up for assessment.

Through the Mindanao Health Sector Policy Support Programme, local health boards are currently being examined in terms of their capacities to better provide health delivery services in the country.

The local health boards play a vital role in the health delivery services in the country, as it is a core body of the municipal health organisations. They have the mission to set the overall direction of health delivery in their respective community and provide a platform for civil society to voice their needs in health.

Around 92% of the municipalities under MHSPSP (59 out of 64 municipalities in Mindanao) were covered by the assessment.

According to the United Nations Development Programme, “capacity assessment is an analysis of desired capacities against existing capacities.” This generates an understanding of capacity assets and needs, which informs the formulation of a development response.

Mr. John Rockett, the Team Leader of MHSPSP added that strong functioning health boards can be the ‘voice of the community’ and it is through these boards that issues of equity in basic health care for women, indigenous peoples, the poor and other vulnerable groups can be heard at policy level.

The study showed that the limitations of the boards’ capacity included skills in evaluating and monitoring performance of their municipal health services.

Performance monitoring is central to understanding of the problems in any public sector services. However, they have the strong capacity in assessing the current status and establish partnerships with other stakeholders and with other sectors.

The programme recommends strengthening the boards’ core competencies in the following areas: board operations and role, oversight of procurement and financial management, health policy development, interpreting health information, and other skills enhancement.

The programme added that due to the significance of the results, the Department of Health’s Centers for Health Development are planning to adopt the same tools to assess other municipalities and provinces which were not covered by the MHSPSP program.

The first T’boli Birthing Clinic and Basic Emergency Obstetric Care (BEmOC) Facility was inaugurated last June 8, 2009 in a ceremony graced by South Cotabato Governor Daisy Avance Fuentes and T’boli Mayor Ernesto Manuel.

It is the first fully-operational Rural Health Unit-based Birthing Clinic and Basic Emergency Obstetric Care facility in South Cotabato. Two other hospital-based BEmOC facilities in the municipalities of Polomolok and Norala funded by the same grant have been operating in the province since mid-2008. Funding for these came from the • 12 million for the Health Sector Policy Support Programme in Mindanao.

The municipality of T’boli is an agricultural municipality home to the T’boli and Blaan indigenous peoples. Despite its being a first-class municipality mainly due to its sizeable land area and large population, its maternal health indices have remained glum through the years with a maternal mortality ratio averaging at 2 deaths for every 100,000 population for the past three years and an average of 89% of deliveries still being performed at home during the same period.

The alarming proportion of home-based deliveries is mainly attributed to the fact that the majority of the population are indigenous peoples living in geographically inaccessible and disadvantaged areas compounded by the general acceptance of traditional birthing practices.

Recent data have shown that hemorrhage during childbirth has been the major cause of maternal deaths, and the delays in proper treatment contributing to the ultimate death of the mother can only be eliminated by having them deliver in a well-equipped and capably-staffed facility. This logic has been the rationale for having all pregnant women deliver in BEmOC facilities as one of the major thrusts in achieving the fifth Millennium Development Goal of maternal mortality reduction.

One month after its opening, the BEmOC Facility has already seen 10 deliveries from having none at all being delivered at the RHU prior to the establishment of the birthing clinic.

Dr. Josephine Armada, the municipal health officer, is thankful and very happy with the birthing facility despite the additional workload from all the deliveries because the mothers and their families are impressed with the services offered by the new facility.

As for the unresolved problem of access for those living far from the birthing clinic, Dr. Armada is considering to put up a lodging area for mothers expecting to deliver within the next few days to close the gap between the onset of labour and the arrival at the nearest birthing facility.
Drug Management Reforms: Gateway to Quality and Cheaper Medicines

Capiz Province’ Experience, Philippines

By: Joeffry M. Espiritu, Health Education & Promotion Officer
Virginia A. Gaylan, Local Reform Implementation Coordinator

Capiz’ drug management reforms program have been constantly evolving since their inception in 2001.

Dr Jarvis Punsalan, Provincial Health Officer II of Capiz Province recounts that the present pooled procurement system is the latest modification of what was initially a program established to support parallel drug importation (PDI) initiatives of the national government.

Initially, procurements were only medicines coming from India through the PDI program administered by the Philippine International Trading Corporation (PITC). Being a government entity, purchases from PITC did not require bidding, which facilitated procurements. Drugs available with PITC were, however, limited and delayed deliveries were a recurrent problem.

With increasing procurements, local drug companies soon took notice and offered to go lower than the prices offered by PITC. Eventually, when the program had enough funds to implement bulk procurements, even medicines not available with PITC were offered to the program at markedly discounted prices. With all procurements now going through bidding processes, drug companies started to compete against each other to get the program’s orders - further lowering of prices were thus noted.

Currently, almost all medicines are procured from local drug companies, including from multinational companies that manage to win the bidding.

As an offshoot of this program, Capiz has managed to use the Indian drug prices as leverage in negotiations with local pharmaceutical companies, including multinationals. This has compelled pharmaceutical companies to lower the prices of their products in order to remain competitive in the Capiz market. The ensuing competition between these companies has resulted in the further lowering of some drug prices that were even less than those offered under PDI by PITC.

Local procurements have thus been initiated.

With increasing sales the program’s revolving fund continued to grow, which allowed additional medicines to be included for procurement. Selection of these additional medicines was made based on therapeutic committees’ recommendations and on government pharmacists’ reports of frequently prescribed medicines and drugs that were not available in their pharmacies.

The program’s total capitalization has reached PhP 5,916,556.00 (± 87,008) as of 2008. Seed funds came from the Provincial Government amounting to PhP 1 million (+14,705) and the European Commission grant of PhP 4,916 million (+72,302) as part of the Province-wide Investment Plan for Health. The Program has gained a total revenue of PhP 2,469 million (+36,317) from 2001 to the end of June 2009.

A comparison of private sector and project medicine procurement prices revealed government savings exceeding PhP29 million pesos • 426,470 for the year 2008 alone. All these while providing the government hospitals with some revenue, patient savings have also been significant. By buying medicines from the nearest government hospitals, patients were able to access affordable quality medicines.

With the program’s success, it is apparent that LGU involvement is critical since indigent patients need access to cheaper and quality drugs. The use of PDI as a leveraging tool in negotiations with pharmaceutical companies has proven very useful. Having a source of drugs that are affordable and of good quality has provided Capiz with an alternative if and when the local companies refused to lower their prices. Likewise, pooled procurement allowed the program to access bigger discounts from drug companies. The bulk purchase made the program’s medicine procurements attractive to them and the competitive bidding that ensued allowed the province to access even bigger discounts.

With this initiative, the Capiz Drug Management Reforms was awarded on August 3, 2006 as Best Sector Project for 2005-2006 by the Regional Development Council VI and German Technical Cooperation Decentralization Project. It is currently a nominee for Good Governance for Medicines (GGM) Awards sponsored by the Department of Health Organization, Medicines Transparency Alliance (MeTA) Philippines, and the World Health Organization.

The Health Sector Policy Support Programme (HSPSP) aims to enable the country’s poor to gain and increase their use and access to affordable and financially sustainable, quality essential health services and population programmes.

The programme prioritises pro-poor interventions and targets primary health care services in the poorest municipalities, together with system development and capacity building at local level and at DOH level.

The EC’s support is in the form of funding for local government health sector investment plans, accompanied by expert advice through a Technical Assistance team, plus direct funding to the Department of Budget and Management and DoH for public finance management improvements.

Implementing partners are the Department of Health (DOH), the World Bank (WB), and Local Government Units.

Mindanao Health Sector Policy Support Programme (MHSPSP)
Implementation period: 2007-2012
EC Grant: • 12 M

The Mindanao Health Sector Policy Support Programme extends the support provided under the HSPSP to 14 provinces, all located in Mindanao, where the incidence of poverty is higher than elsewhere in the country. This is also in line with the EC’s policy to support essential development to ensure that conflict does not prevent the poverty reduction and growth.

This programme is an integral part of the government’s ‘F1’ health sector reform programme.

While the original HSPSP covered the initial 16 provinces of the first phase of the reform, the MHSPSP covers 14 Mindanao provinces (including those within the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao) of the 21 provinces in the second phase (‘Roll-out’)
Kartada Karavan Hits Pinabacdao, San Sebastian, Sta. Rita, and Villareal

Effectively increasing awareness on HIV and AIDS via showcasing Kartada Samar’s advocacy activities, Kartada Karavans were conducted in the municipalities of Pinabacdao, San Sebastian, and Villareal and in Brgy. San Juan in Sta. Rita.

The Karavan in Pinabacdao opened with a motorcade around selected barangays followed by a post-motorcade program where Mayor Mario Quijano showed and relayed his utmost appreciation of the youth’s capability to affect positive changes in the society. In San Sebastian, the Karavan started with the unveiling of billboard in Brgy. Inobongan followed by a motorcade. In the program conducted in the municipal covered court, Municipal Mayor Arnold Abalos recognized the Kartada Samar-led SK advocacy which he considers as an immense factor in the protection of the welfare of the youth and their municipality’s population in general. European Commission representatives were amazed to witness the strong tie-up that Kartada Samar has built with San Sebastian’s local government, a connection that presents major advantages in Kartada Samar’s goal of eradicating HIV and AIDS ignorance in the locality. In Villareal, seventeen barangays of the municipality participated in the Karavan which was highlighted with a foot-parade that captured the town’s attention and informed them of the combined effort of Villareal stakeholders in addressing HIV prevention. The Karavan was the highlight event of Brgy. San Juan’s 1st Youth Day. The celebration in the barangay of the municipality of Sta. Rita was carried out under the theme; “Batanon, Dapat Kilal-on, May Panginanunon”, a call for action on the recognition of youth rights and responsibilities.

The youth in the respective areas were provided with accurate information on adolescent sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention through small group discussions. Understanding of the knowledge relayed to the adolescent participants in Pinabacdao, Villareal and San Juan was measured through contests like quiz bee, essay writing, poster making and slogan-making. Prizes were given to provide recognition to contest winners.

By attracting multi-sectoral crowds, the Kartada Karavan has become a functional tool in providing information on HIV and AIDS including its prevention along with the other consequences of unprotected early sexual engagement.

With reports from:

• Beverlyn Teves
  SK Chairperson
  Brgy. Canmucat, Villareal

• Emily Bautista
  SK Chairperson
  Brgy. Pahug, Pinabacdao

• Gleeper Dan Delmoro
  SK Chairperson
  Brgy. San Juan, Sta. Rita

Special thanks to the Population Services Pilipinas, Inc. for permission to reprint this report.

Municipalities Approve ASRH Resolutions

Kartada Samar ensures the provision of necessary and correct information on adolescent sexual and reproductive health to the youth of Marabut and Paranas by influencing policy development in the municipalities.

Achieved through Sangguniang Bayan presentations coupled with persistent negotiations done by Samar Sangguniang Kabataan officials with political patrons, ASRH resolutions have been approved by 22 of the 26 local government councils of the province which provisions and functionalities include a budgetary phrase that further guarantees both the usefulness and sustainability of the program. Apart from these, Kartada Samar is also labouring to present and lobby ASRH resolutions that are appropriate in the barangay level, providing a multi-level action towards achieving the goal of eradicating the distressful ignorance on HIV and AIDS.

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### Title of the Action
Preventing hiv/aids among adolescents in the philippines by building capacity of youth councils to engage in local decision making processes on the rights of adolescents to sexual and reproductive health

### Local Partner(s)
Population Services Pilipinas Incorporated (PSPI)

### Total Cost of the Action
• 851,357.98

### EC Contribution and % of Total Cost
• 638,518.48
  75%
Reproductive Health Forum
Manila, 7 May 2009
Remarks by Ambassador Alistair MacDonald
European Commission

Secretary Cabral, Congressman Lagman, Congresswoman Garmin, Governor Salceda, Md Mukherjee, friends and colleagues – I would like to thank you for inviting me to join you today, and for giving me an opportunity to commend the work which is being done in Congress on reproductive health, both in the House and in the Senate.

I won’t repeat today, in any great detail, the views which I had expressed the last time I spoke on this topic – my views have not changed. In summary, I might just note that on that occasion:

- I acknowledged that this is a sensitive issue, on which Philippine citizens, Philippine voters, have strongly held views – the great majority in favour of an effective framework for reproductive health, a vocal minority against.
- I noted that the absence of an effective framework for reproductive health is antipoor, anti-women, anti-children, and anti-development
- I pointed out that the absence of an effective framework for reproductive health is in itself one of the greatest causes of abortion – of illegal abortion
- and I recalled all the opinion polls, which confirm that Philippine citizens and Philippine voters are massively in favour of a modern framework for reproductive health

I had also referred to the statement made by the EU at last year’s PDF, where we noted inter alia that:

“Continued rapid population growth in the Philippines is draining health and economic resources and slowing down economic growth. It also threatens the sustainability of rural livelihoods and is inexorably destroying the remaining natural forest and marine habitats. The poor are paying the highest price, both individually and collectively. The European Union therefore calls for the effective implementation of a comprehensive national family planning policy, promoting access to family planning methods.”

Today, I would just like to underline one central theme, on which I would very much like to know your thoughts – in my view, it is essential for the Philippine State to be more supportive of the needs of its citizens in relation to reproductive health, and to devote more resources, at the national level, to making effective reproductive health services accessible to all. And the simple reason for this is that this is a crucial responsibility of the Philippines to its people, to its women, and most of all to its children

I believe that the provision of effective and accessible RH services is a responsibility of the State towards the people of the Philippines, because the people of the Philippines, all 90 million of them, hope to have a future outside poverty, a future where 8 million Filipinos do not have to emigrate to seek the employment opportunities that their own country cannot offer them.

And most of all, I believe that the provision of effective and accessible RH services is a responsibility of the State towards the children of the Philippines, the children whose future is blighted by poverty, by inadequate health care, by limited educational facilities, by a lack of employment possibilities.

Of course there are many LGUs that do what they can, within the limited resources available to them. And there are many civil-society groups that can and do help, with great dedication. But reproductive health is not an issue that can be left to a laissez-faire approach, or where the State can abdicate its responsibilities towards its people, its women, its children.

We have heard today of the way in which the House and Senate Bills seek to address these issues, to require that the State assumes its full responsibilities, and to make it possible for this to happen. I would like to end by expressing my personal appreciation for these efforts, and by wishing you every success in the passage of these crucial Bills.

EU Policy Statement on Population Issue
2008 Philippine Development Forum

Continued rapid population growth in the Philippines is draining health and economic resources and slowing down economic growth. It also threatens the sustainability of rural livelihoods and is inexorably destroying the remaining natural forest and marine habitats. The poor are paying the highest price, both individually and collectively. The European Union therefore calls for the effective implementation of a comprehensive national family planning policy, promoting access to family planning methods.
Central Cordillera Agricultural Programme (CECAP) Phase 2 continues its legacy in Poverty Alleviation  

By Emily Mercado

It is time for us to stand with our own two feet and to use the tools that have been granted to us in order to achieve our vision, mission and goals and help our members in the cooperatives as Central Cordillera Agricultural Programme (CECAP) and its partners like the Agricultural Credit and Policy Council (ACPC) and the European Commission have envisioned for us to do", said Ms. Julie Tung-al, the Manager of the Savings and Loans Group Multi-purpose Cooperative (SLGMPC) based in Banaue, Ifugao during the closing ceremonies of the Central Cordillera Institution-Building Program Trust Fund (CCIBPTF), held during the first quarter of 2009 in Banaue, Ifugao.

Ms Tung-al, through the SLGMPC has been benefiting from CCIBPTF since 2006 when her group was transformed from an informal savings and loans group to a multi-purpose cooperative.

During the closing ceremony which was attended by no less than the EC Head of Delegation to the Philippines Ambassador Alistair MacDonald who delivered an inspirational message and his spouse Brigette MacDonald, certificates of appreciation were handed out to the 22 cooperatives and 9 savings and loan associations (SLAs) which have successfully completed the various capacity-building programs.

The training programmes covered areas such as improving governance, better financial management, delinquency control, performance appraisal, credit management, cash management and proper documentation under the CCIBPTF from 2003 to 2009.

Governor Teodoro Baguilat of Ifugao was also present during the formal closing ceremonies, together with Ms. Brenda Saquing, provincial administrator of Ifugao and former national co-director of the Central Cordillera Agricultural Program (CECAP) Phase 2 which was implemented from July 1996 to July 2004.

The Agricultural Credit and Policy Council (ACPC), the fund manager of the trust fund was represented by its Deputy Executive Director Ramon Yedra while the Land Bank of the Philippines, which provided technical support in terms of capacity-building for the cooperatives and SLAs was represented by Ms. Ruth Jugeta, Head of the Land Bank Development Assistance Center for Region 2.

The presence of Ambassador MacDonald during the closing ceremony of CCIBPTF was considered very significant as he also played a key role during the design phase of CECAP 1, implemented from 1989 to 1996. It was the first of its kind as an integrated rural development program which focused on community-based, area-based development planning and empowerment of local communities and local governments with the aim of promoting sustainable long-term improvement in the living conditions and development potentials of the people of Central Cordillera. CECAP Phase 1 was eventually extended to its second phase CECAP 2, which was implemented from 1996 to 2004.

The CCIBPTF was established in 2003, one year prior to the closure of CECAP Phase 2 with the primary objective of providing further capacity-building support to 22 cooperatives and nine SLAs to ensure their sustainability and viability as financial organisations and eventually to be able to access funds from formal financial and lending sources for livelihood and business undertakings of the members of the cooperatives and SLAs. Over the 6 years period of implementation of CCIBPTF, five out of the 22 cooperatives are now accredited and can access funds directly from the Land Bank of the Philippines. Two of the 6 cooperatives that were already bank assisted (BAC) at the start-up of CCIBPTF have increased their maturity level. One has become a key cooperative and has a higher credit line and with less interest.

Ambassador MacDonald, in his message during the closing event, emphasized the EC’s continuing commitment to helping rural communities build their own development and secure their future.
Rizal Na, Europa Pa!

(Above left photo) Europe Day Reception, 10 May 2009, Mandarin Hotel

(Above right photo) Ambassador Jaroslav Ludva, Embassy of the Czech Republic recites a poem during the Bersong EuroPinoy in Instituto Cervantes

(Right Photo) The first European Union Choral Competition in the Far Eastern University, Manila

(Below left photo) Journalists Llanesca Patac, Estrella Torres, Charissa Luci and Veronica Uy-Vitug pose with Ambassador MacDonald during the Europe Day reception

(Photo above) Grand winners of Europe Ko to from Los Banos National High School with their assemblage and trophy during the exhibition in Ayala Museum, Makati.

(Left photo) A kid tries her hand in solving the puzzle during the first ever European children’s festival “Lakbayin Natin ang Europa” in Museo Pambata.
EU Envoys Laud Winners of EU Whiz and Essay Contest;
UP Mindanao team emerges as grand winner
and will travel to Europe in September

European Union diplomats led by Ambassadors Jaroslav Ludva of the Embassy of the Czech Republic and Alistair MacDonald of the Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines, congratulated the students from the University of the Philippines in Mindanao that won the EU Whiz 2009 inter-collegiate quiz held on 18 June in SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City.

Marlon John Danlay, Aaron James Jalalon and Kelly Marie Conlon Prof John Bengan (coach) from the University of the Phils. Mindanao (Davao) emerged as grand champions beating contenders Justin Herrera, James Ryan Artiaga, Dawn Ore Ilagan with Prof. Elmer Soriano (coach) from the Polytechnic University of the Phils. (Manila); and Frecy Cadtman, Rochelle Ann Sow and Jennierose Serad with Prof Gary Lapiz (coach) from the University of the Visayas (Cebu).

The PUP team from Manila placed second while the University of the Visayas from Cebu was third.

As the grand winners, the UP Mindanao team will fly to Czech Republic, France and Spain in September, courtesy of the KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, the Knights of Rizal and the European Community in Manila. All the participating teams received trophies, certificates and other gift items from the organisers and supporters of the EU Whiz.

Ambassador MacDonald commended the winners and participants of the EU Whiz and expressed his admiration for the students who have exhibited tremendous knowledge about the European Union and its institutions and policies and about Jose Rizal and his connections to the EU.

"I hope that you enjoyed the experience, and that in researching on Europe and on Rizal, you had a lot of fun as well as reflecting on the values that helped shape the Philippines, and can help to build it into what it can become", Ambassador MacDonald said.

The UP Mindanao team will be joined by the essay writing contest grand prize winner, Joaquin Carlos de Jesus from Ateneo de Manila University.

Other winners in the essay contest were: Second place - Dave Arjie Manandeg - Pangasinan State University; Third Place - Emmeline Carrillo - Rizal Technological University Mandaluyong City; Fourth Place - Manuel Buen SUCCESSO, Jr. - San Beda Colleges, Manila Fifth Place - Joseph Mirro Macatangay - University of Batangas, Batangas City. Other finalists were: Ms. Charmy June Almoqu er - West Visayas State University, Main University, Mr. Ron Richard Ramirez - Balinag UniversityMs. Corene Joi Geroso - Centro Escolar University, Mr. Lester Hao - Chang Kai Shek CollegeMs. Agui a Barbara Luneta - University of the Philippines, Diliman.

The EU Whiz and the essay contest were organised by the European Union in Manila, led by the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines, with support from the Order of the Knights of Rizal, the KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Air France, SM Mall of Asia, Manila Bulletin and Channel 7, the EU Member States' embassies and EU cultural institutes. The events were also supported by JobsDB.com, Jam 88.3, Magic 89.9, Hershey's and Max and was coordinated by 3Vents.

The EU Whiz is an inter-collegiate quiz about the European Union and its policies and institutions. It started in 2006 in Manila, was brought to Cebu in 2007 and was held last year in Davao. Previous winners from Manila, Cebu and Davao vied for this year's ultimate EU Whiz championship, wherein the winners together with the grand prize winner of the essay contest will travel to some European Union countries (Czech Republic, France, and Spain) like Jose Rizal did.

This year's special focus on Jose Rizal is in line with Europe Month's "Rizal Na, Europa Pa" theme. Jose Rizal, the country's national hero, was the unanimous choice of the European community in Manila when it has decided to adapt "Rizal Na, Europa Pa" as a special theme for the Europe Month's celebrations this year in line with the 2009 European Year of Creativity and Innovation.

Overall, Rizal is documented to have travelled extensively in nine European countries Austria, Belgium, Italy, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and United Kingdom.
EU Whiz Experience

Teamwork, trust, and faith, these things come into my mind when I think about my EU Whiz experiences and I cannot imagine our team winning the Mindanao elimination and the grand finals without them. Last year, when our team was reviewing for the EU Whiz Mindanao elimination, my mother gave me a word of advice before I left for school. She said to me, “Kuya, you must always remember that in a quiz bee, it is not enough that you know the answer.” At first, I did not believe her because I always had it on my mind that in a quiz bee, the most intelligent participant always wins. I was wrong.

During our training, I realized that what she said to me was true. In the “mock quizzes” conducted by our coach, my team mates always beat me because I am slow in buzzing. Sometimes, even though I knew the answer and I pressed the buzzer first, I got “mental blocked” because of too much nervousness that is why my team mates get the chance to steal. Having experienced these things, I have proven that it is not enough that I know the answer. As our review went on, we all realized that our God-given gift on intellect and sharp memory were not enough to make us winners that is why we developed strategies to avoid giving wrong answers and to always become the first one to buzz. Also, during the process of our training, I have seen the great importance of trust and faith. As EU quizzers, we have different areas to study, I was assigned with history especially with dates, Kelly was in-charge with names and popular figures, and Aaron took care of the current events. This type of strategy worked well since it helped us to focus. I can say that the areas of study on European Union is so wide that it will take an individual some time before he can master them and since we do not have enough time to master all, our coach assigned us to our respective areas. It helped a lot. During the span of the competition, questions coming from different fields on EU were asked and even if I did not know the answer, I knew either one of my team mates knows it. Through this, I developed trust. Lastly, when participating in a competition, it is advantageous if one has faith in God because for me, it gives unlimited strength and courage in every battle.

I can say that our experiences in the Mindanao elimination contributed a lot to our victory in the grand finals. Unlike our performance in the competition held last year in Davao, this time, we are more matured quizzers. We are more confident in answering the questions and less reckless when it comes to pressing the buzzer. I can also say that we are less nervous and pressured because we do not have a home court advantage. These “plus factors” were very helpful and I will always treasure them.

Having participated in the EU Whiz and having won two titles, I will always be thankful to those people who have prayed for our team’s victory and also to our coach, Sir John Bengan, for helping us develop our talents as quizzers.

Reminiscing these experiences, I will always remember the buzzers, the lights, the cheering crowd, the ticking of the clock, and the go signal of the quiz master.

Director of Goethe Institut in Manila, Richard Kunzel and Director of Instituto Cervantes, Jose Rodriguez, take a close look at the original Noli Me Tangere in National Library during the visit of EU cultural officers in the library and in connection with the restoration work provided for by the Federal Government of Germany.

Mrs Ricarda Kunzel, photographer and one of the officials of the Museum Volunteers of the Philippines, shares some of the photographs of the Blumentritt station which she took recently. Blumentritt was one of Jose Rizal’s friends and an icon in the friendship between the Filipinos and Europeans. Incidentally, Jose Rizal and his connections with Europe took centrestage in the Europe Month celebrations “Rizal Na, Europa Pa”. (Photo Credit: With special thanks to Richard and Ricarda Kunzel for these photographs).

From April 27 to April 30, two experts from the Deutsches Literatur Archiv Marbach (German Literature Archive in Marbach, Germany) have carried out a scientific analysis of three manuscripts of Jose Rizal’s masterworks in the National Library of the Philippines. During the process, the state of preservation of the “Noli Me Tangere”, of the “El Filibusteroismo” as well as of the translation into Tagalog of the “William Tell” by Friedrich Schiller was examined in detail and documented.

The objective of the examination is to work out a plan for the future restoration, preservation and storage of Rizal’s masterworks in order to ensure their long-term availability for posterity.

The project was funded by the Federal Government of Germany as part of its Cultural Preservation Program and by the National Library of the Philippines. It highlights the longstanding cultural relationship between the two countries and the legacy of Jose Rizal in this relationship, whose “Noli me tangere” was published and partly written in Gennany.
Twenty-six new Erasmus Mundus students from the Philippines will soon start their MA and Ph D programmes in August/September 2009, having received scholarships under the European Commission’s Erasmus Mundus Programme.

Erasmus Mundus is a co-operation and mobility programme in the field of higher education that aims to encourage students from outside Europe to take advanced degrees in the EU, and thus to promote dialogue and understanding among young people around the world, and at the same time to strengthen the global links of European higher education.

Ambassador Alistair MacDonald, Head of the European Commission Delegation in Manila, recently met with the outgoing Erasmus students to congratulate them prior to their departure for their studies in the European Union. Also taking part were a number of Erasmus alumni, who were able to share their experiences of studying in Europe, and help prepare the outgoing scholars to take the best advantage of their time in the EU.

Ambassador MacDonald commended the students and urged them to become ambassadors of goodwill to promote the interests of the Philippines as well as the friendship and partnership between the European Union and the Philippines.

The Erasmus Mundus programme is among the leading international academic mobility programmes in the world, and students from the Philippines have benefited considerably from the programme, just as the EU universities have benefited from the participation of these visiting students.

Since 2004, a total of 89 students have benefited from the Erasmus Mundus programme.

Erasmus Mundus offers masters courses and scholarships

In 2009, a new group of students and academics from all over the world will receive scholarships to study or teach in one of the 103 Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses in the EU. These courses are provided by consortia of Europe’s top higher education institutions, and lead to the award of a recognised double or joint Masters degree.

The courses and the scholarships together meet the overall objectives of Erasmus Mundus to enhance the quality of European higher education and promote it around the world.

In the academic year 2009-2010, about 1,800 students world-wide will receive scholarships to study for one or two years on the Masters course of their choice, alongside students from Europe. Students follow these Erasmus Mundus courses at two or more universities within the Masters consortium. Almost 500 academic staff with outstanding track records will also come to Europe for shorter periods of teaching, research or tutoring activities within one of the Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses.

Also for the academic year 2009-2010, some 7,600 individual mobility grants will be awarded to fund study, research and teaching visits in the EU, of between three months and three years, at undergraduate, graduate, doctorate, and post-doctorate levels, and for academic staff. This includes the opportunity for some 1,600 Europeans to visit partner institutions in countries outside Europe and for 6,000 students and academics from outside the EU to visit European partner institutions.
The Philippines is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Natural disasters and changes in climate patterns will seriously affect the natural resource base on which majority of the poor depend upon for sustenance and livelihood.

Several studies have proven that in the Philippines deforestation is currently the main source of carbon emissions (which caused the climate change). The country’s natural forests continue to shrink due to land conversion to agricultural activities, expansion of human settlements, and extractive industries such as logging and mining. Ineffective enforcement of forestry laws and policies has worsened the problem. In the Philippines millions of hectares of forest lands lie within protected areas, community-based forest management areas and ancestral domain territories. Yet these areas lack financing mechanisms for the sustainable development of forest peoples, for the protection of ecosystem services and for biodiversity conservation.

Most other tropical countries face similar problems of deforestation: Worldwide forests are disappearing at a rate of around 13 million hectares per year. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has indicated that land-use change and forestry, including deforestation, is responsible for some 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

An emerging concept gaining ground in the climate change international discussions is that of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and degradation or REDD.

In simple terms, REDD refers to any conservation or sustainable land-use initiative that effectively mitigates a real deforestation/degradation threat in a given area. REDD is being proposed as a measure to provide positive incentives to developing countries to slow down their rates of deforestation and forest degradation to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

At present, REDD is more of a theoretical concept than established practice. Nevertheless, recent experience of conservation projects targeting the voluntary market for carbon offsets provides an initial appreciation of the potential scope and limitations of REDD.

The European Commission (EC) is at the front line in the international negotiation processes towards integrating the REDD concept in the global climate change agreement that will replace the Kyoto Protocol.

The Commission’s REDD strategy proposes that the future agreement should aim to reduce the total forested area lost in the tropics by at least half of current levels by 2020, and then to halt global forest cover loss completely by 2030 at the latest.

To reward developing countries in the light of the REDD strategy, the EC has suggested the creation of an international financing mechanism, the Global Forest Carbon Mechanism.

There are many factors at play that support the argument that the Philippines would be promising REDD pilot site.

First, the Philippines has a relatively higher good forest governance rating compared with other countries which make it a good site for the REDD approach.

The Philippines is also a biodiversity conservation hotspot, which is another reason for forest conservation.

Another unique factor in the country is the institutionalization of land tenure agreements for communities.

So let us keep our fingers crossed and hope that the REDD model will push through in the international climate change negotiations so that the Philippines can benefit from it in the process.

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With contributions from the Non Timber Forest Products Network (NTFP-N), the Poverty and Environment Partnership (PEP) and the Haribon Foundation.
Participants from China, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Georgia, Ghana, India, Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Syria, Thailand, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe Together with 17 other developing countries, the Philippines, upon invitation of the EC Delegation to the Philippines, participated in a five-day phytosanitary seminar organized by the Netherlands Plant Protection Services (NPPS) sponsored by the European Commission's Directorate General for Trade (DG Trade). Advance Consulting (AC) in the Netherlands provided support for organisational matters.

The seminar was held from May 11 to 15 to The seminar was held during the second quarter of this year in Brussels and in the Netherlands and involved lectures, discussion, workshops and field trips. Its main objective was to increase the participants’ understanding of the EU phytosanitary regulations and procedures, both in terms of the legal and policy framework and in the actual implementation prevailing in the European Union.

The seminar also aimed to contribute to facilitating and enhancing international market access.

The lectures were held in the conference centre Albert Borschette within the “European Quarter” in Brussels where major EU buildings are located.

Presentations were focused on the main principles and criteria determining the European phytosanitary standards and regulations and the main European Council Directives that cover the relevant phytosanitary standards, import and export regulations and inspection proce-
What is interesting in this sub-project was the remarkable involvement of the women's group in the actual implementation. In fact, it was the women's group who did the canvassing and purchasing of the bill of materials. They also kept the logbook of construction materials delivered in the site. We found this unusual because more often, we see men doing the job for construction. In many occasions barangay folks like women are meek, shy and aloof. In this particular instance, it appeared that the empowerment among women members of SUKOR became so evident such that all sectors, particularly the women were involved. There was also an instance where due to the abrupt increase in the prices of construction materials in 2008, the completion of the center became problematic. Obviously, the sudden increase in sub-project cost adversely affected the prospect of completion and there was a need to do something to augment the budget.

The members sought the assistance of the MLGU and BLGU. My role at that time was so crucial not only because I am a member of the MSC but as the MPDC of the LGU as well. Again, it was the SUKOR President (MR. ALIMUDDIN HADJINOR) and women members who did the explanations why budget fell short. Knowing fully well the intricacies of the problem, I found it proper to accompany them to the Municipal Mayor and did the explanations. After being convinced by our explanations the Mayor decided that the LGU will shoulder the additional expense and incorporate the same in the supplemental budget No.2 Series of 2008. The barangay council also provided their share by providing light construction materials.

Prior to its completion, a team from the MTF-RDP and BDA conducted an internal review involving all the sectors in the community. Members of the inspectorate team conducted an interview among the LGU officials, barangay officials, the members of the Peoples Organization and the MSC members, to check if the sub-project goals and objectives have been met along the way.

Finally, on August 28, 2008, the Community and Livelihood Center of Purok 3-A, Koronadal Proper, Polomolok, South Cotabato was inaugurated by the representatives of the MTF-RDP, BDA Officials and witnessed by the Municipal and Barangay Officials.

The MTF-RDP sub-project implementation was one experience to help remind us of the importance of involving all sectors of the community in addressing issues and concerns of public interest. On the part of the local government unit what was paramount was the framework of good governance. As service provider, it needed to do a lot of consultations to draw out the participation of the concerned constituents. In our experience, we saw the closer relationship among the Ilonggos, Cebuanos and Muslims in the pursuit of the realization of putting up a Community and Livelihood Center. This was the barangay people's common vision, it being a community driven initiative and regardless of how big or small a project is, the common denominator and desired outcome is a visible and operational Community and Livelihood Center. To be candid with you, we are inspired every time we pass by and see the Center elegantly standing along the roadside. The people who shared directly or indirectly in the project would always happily whisper, "I have done my best."

The imperative dictates that LGUs have to: firstly, ensure the installation and institutionalization of the four pillars of good governance and that the values permeate not only in its organization but to each and every constituent as well. Secondly, LGUs have to strive to shed and leave behind its traditional role and image of a “political administrative unit only.” As quickly but surely, in smarter ways and more risk-taking attitudes, LGUs are challenged to do and imbibe the values and practices of corporate governance where its core competencies, core values and its client focused qualities will be its competitive advantage. Thirdly, the greater demand for sustainable development will require that LGUs have to lay-down a solid foundation for its valued human resources.

Our humble beginning with MTF-RDP may not be the best but to some extent, good enough to guide you in the years ahead as you proceed with that dream of effective collaboration and partnership.

The LGU was involved in the program in the sense that it facilitated government machinery no matter how limited it is. It was not there to dictate what people should choose.

Everytime we see the structure, we see our people’s culture of freedom to choose; we see the culture of knowing to respect the rights of others; we see the culture of satisfaction no matter how big or small the project is; we see the culture of people’s involvement regardless of race and tribal affiliation and we actually CULTIVATE the culture of PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT.
European Commission grant of •6.4 million to strengthen food security in the Philippines

The European Commission has approved a grant of •6.4 million (approx. PhP 430 million, at current exchange rates) to support food security in Mindanao. This grant will be implemented by the United Nations World Food Programme, and is part of the •1.0 billion EU Food Facility, which was established in 2008 to respond to the dramatic increase in food prices in developing countries around the world. Food prices have stabilised somewhat since then but remain high, and vulnerable communities continue to face the threat of poverty, malnourishment and asset depletion.

In implementing the programme, WFP will work closely with its main counterpart in Government, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), as well as the Department of Agriculture and the local government units in the areas concerned (Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur).

This is the second of three EC grants for the Philippines under the Food Facility, with a total allocation of more than •30 million.

Ambassador Alistair MacDonald, Head of Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines said “this latest grant reaffirms the EU’s commitment to helping the Philippines address the challenges of food security and poverty. We hope that this will help the Philippines to increase domestic food production and strengthen social safety nets, and in particular to lighten the impact of the food crisis on poor farming communities in Mindanao.” Ambassador MacDonald noted also that this new programme builds on the EC’s longstanding partnership with the World Food Programme in the Philippines.

Mr. Stephen Anderson, WFP Country Director and Representative in the Philippines said that this grant from the European Commission will enable the WFP to address the impact of high food prices on the poorest of the poor in Mindanao, by expanding food-for-assets activities as a complement to government safety net initiatives such as cash transfers.

“Improving food production will mean both better nutrition and a better standard of living for the poor in Mindanao, who remain chronically food-insecure. Our focus will be on increasing crop production through the rehabilitation of irrigation schemes, storage facilities and feeder roads”, he said.

The project will be implemented over 24 months starting in September 2009. It aims to restore small scale agricultural infrastructure in poor and food-insecure areas in the highly vulnerable areas of Mindanao and to assist the Philippine Government at the national level on better targeting through vulnerability analysis mapping. The WFP will also help the government establish early warning systems, and train key stakeholders in food security data collection and analysis. This will help improve targeting for government social safety-net programmes, including large-scale rice subsidies in areas of urgent need.

The main beneficiaries will be poor farming communities in five Mindanao provinces (Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur) by way of provision of 9,700 tonnes of rice and 970 tonnes of beans to some 1.1 million people from smallholder farming communities through food-for-assets initiatives. Food-for-assets projects will build important local infrastructure and develop skills through the provision of food in return for work or attendance at training courses.

Women from these provinces will also benefit from literacy training, support in using improved seed varieties and training on post-harvesting techniques, storage and irrigation management. Fisher-folks are also expected to benefit from some training programmes.

Background:

- On 18 December 2008, the European Parliament and Council adopted a Regulation establishing a •1.0 billion ‘Food Facility’, which constitutes the main EU response to the worsening global food security situation in 2007/08.
- Addressing the period between emergency aid and medium to long-term development cooperation, the Food Facility will operate for a period of 3 years (2008-2010).
- Within this Food Facility, the European Commission has earmarked a total of •31.9 million (approx. PhP 2.1 billion) for actions to be implemented in the Philippines. The first grant of •10.0 million for the Philippines was approved in April 2009, providing support for an irrigated rice production-enhancement programme and is implemented by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in coordination with the Department of Agriculture and other concerned agencies. The programme aims to secure the supply of certified inbred paddy seed for Communal Irrigation Schemes in order to improve rice production. About 40,000 metric tons of certified seeds will be provided during the 2009 planting season. More than 50 Communal Irrigation Schemes will be rehabilitated and more than 250 irrigators’ associations will be given support in post-harvesting activities, marketing, and extension and education services.
- A third project (with FAO) is currently being finalised, and support will in addition be given to actions to be proposed by civil society.
- The overall plan for the Food Facility contains a list of 50 target countries which will receive assistance during a three year period. Support will be provided through International Organisations, Regional Organisations and national governments as well as a Call for Proposals for activities by Non-State Actors, Member-States bodies and other eligible implementing actors.
- WFP food assistance activities will be closely linked to other EU Food Facility funded programmes, implemented by IFAD and FAO, focusing on increasing the productivity of small-scale irrigated and rain-fed rice production.
Linggo de Lingua Europa II held in September

Following the success of last year’s Linggo de Lingua Europa I, the European Union Member States’ Embassies together with the Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines and academic institutions will hold the ‘Week of European Languages’ for the second time from 7 to 12 September 2009. Academic institutions joining this year included: Ateneo de Manila University, St Paul University Manila and University of the Philippines - Diliman as host partners.

The Linggo de Lingua Europa II kicked off with a simple opening ceremony followed by an EU Quiz at the University of the Philippines in Quezon City. Ambassadors and representatives from the different EU Member States’ embassies and UP President Emerlinda Roman have been invited to open the festivities.

The new Linggo de Lingua Europa II logo was also presented during the opening and will be used by the organizing committee as the official logo of Linggo de Lingua Europa celebrations.

The new logo was created by Brian Bantugan who was adjudged as the grand winner in the logo design contest conducted for this Week of European Languages.

On 8 September, language classes were conducted in the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City and were followed by a conference on “Philippine Perceptions of Europe and the EU” in Ateneo de Manila University. On 9 September, St. Paul University Manila held the EU Quiz and the Go Navigate Contest while the food festival showcasing the best of European cuisine was held on 10 September. A choral poetry was conducted on 11 September at the University of the Philippines and another conference “Class of Cultures in the Business Environment” was held on the same date. The celebrations concluded on 12 September in Instituto Cervantes.

During the week, students had the opportunity to get acquainted with EU languages including Finnish, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish and to know more about the richness of the culture of the EU and its member states.

The European Day for languages is celebrated on September 26 each year. The EU’s policy of multilingualism has been an important tool to pave the way towards achieving economic competitiveness, growth and better jobs, promoting lifelong learning and intercultural dialogue and nurturing a space for European political dialogue through multilingual communication with its almost 500 million citizens.

Cine Europa 12 opens on 10 September in Manila

Cine Europa, the tradition of bringing excellent European films to the Philippines, has now turned 12 years old and promises to provide Filipino movie enthusiasts with a range of powerful films which will surely touch everyone’s hearts and minds.

Cine Europa opened on 10 September with public screenings from 11 to 20 September 2009 at the Shang Cineplex of Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City.

The film festival then goes to Liceo de Cagayan de Oro for the second time from 2 to 4 October and hits Ayala Center Cebu from 9 to 11 October.

In Manila, Cine Europa 12 was opened by Ambassador Alistair MacDonald, Head of Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines, Mr Alvaro Trejo, Deputy Head of Mission of Spain representing Presidency of the European Union, Atty. Andy Bautista, Chairman and CEO of Shangri-La Plaza Corporation and Ms. Lala Fojas, Executive Vice-President and General Manager of Shangri-La Plaza Corporation.

Ciné Europa 12 continues its tradition of further enhancing dialogue between European and Filipino cultures through the silver screen. Seventeen European films from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom will further endear Europe to Cine Europa enthusiasts in Manila, Cagayan de Oro and Cebu.

This year’s selection of movies, carefully handpicked to cater to the Filipino audiences, showcases the range and breadth of emotions from the different stories of love, laughter, hope, despair, survival, courage and steadfastness. While approaches may vary from country to country, Filipino audiences will be able to empathise with the different characters in each of the films.

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European Union events and activities are now posted in Facebook via "Ating Europa" account. You may also provide us with your ideas, suggestions and comments. In addition to the website of the Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines (http://www.delphl.ec.europa.eu), EU events and activities may now be viewed in this account.

"Ating Europa" is administered by Michiko Quinto.

Photo credit: European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines