



3 June 2009

Media Release

Putting their Lives ONLINE

Filipinos from various parts of the world continue the spirit of helping others help themselves through a new form of *bayanihan* (a Filipino tradition where communities volunteer together to achieve a common goal): United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Online Volunteering service, a platform that puts volunteers into contact with organizations worldwide to work together for peace and development – over the Internet.

Distance, busy schedules and time difference do not hinder these online volunteers to share their skills and make a global change. These Filipino specialists in computer programming, development work, writing and editing have all used their abilities online to help others.



Edna Eufemio, a professional, mother, online volunteer.

Edna Eufemio has a very busy schedule as a full-time professional and mother. But it doesn't hinder her sharing time and knowledge over the web. One of the winners of Online Volunteering Awards 2006, Edna has helped Solidarity Tourism, an African Non-Government Organization (NGO) based in Madrid, Spain. As Project Director for the Africa project, Edna shared her knowledge in tourism by helping them set up a travel network focused on Africa.

“Volunteering online allows one the opportunity to become a fulfilled individual, as I believe that one's real worth is not measured by how much one has in life but by how one shares what one has, and consequently makes others' lives better,” she said, emphasizing

how much she enjoyed the experience.

Dr. Raphael Sadiwa, another Filipino online volunteer also found a sense of fulfillment creating online educational material. “When my students tell me that they find the course very helpful in their day to day activities with children, there is a sense in myself that what I did truly benefited someone else.” he says.



Raphael Sadiwa wishes to encourage more Filipinos to join RESPECT University project.

Like Edna, Raphael is also an Online Volunteering awardee in 2007. He dedicates his time for the RESPECT University project in Canada.

It assists refugees and internally displaced people by providing them with free post-secondary level correspondence courses. Raphael is one of the online volunteers who designed assignments for the students and gave them feedback on their work.

Another remarkable Filipino online volunteer is Wayne Bacale who is currently volunteering as Project Coordinator for the Ghanaian NGO Young People We Care (YPWC). He has been developing the Youth Development Action Guide which will be released this year. This guide shows young people how they can contribute to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at a grassroots and national level.

United Nations Volunteers

29th Floor, RCBC Plaza Yuchengco Tower I, 6819 Ayala Avenue corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati Cit, Philippines

Phone: (02) 889-7550 Fax : (02) 901-0454 Email : unvgroup.ph@undp.org <http://www.unv-ph.org>

UN Volunteers is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).



For Wayne Bacale, online volunteering is development.

“Online volunteering is an interesting and worthwhile learning experience. Aside from helping organizations all over the world, it gave me an opportunity to understand global issues and how we can contribute towards development in our own simple way.” Wayne shares.

Armin Prüssner, an American citizen who is part-German and part-Filipino, has also made a significant contribution through the online volunteering programme. He has been sharing his technical expertise in computer programming and web designing to set up a web-based National UNV application system called “UNV-Apply.” used by UNV Philippines in organising volunteer applications.

“Volunteering is my way of supporting and contributing to the international community. As access to the internet around the world is increasing, online volunteering becomes a convenient vehicle to make a difference in other regions that may have been inaccessible before.”

Edna, Raphael, Wayne and Armin are only four of the 545 Filipinos who have volunteered through the UNV Online Volunteering service. This service is sponsored by the Irish Aid, Ireland’s Department of Foreign Affairs; helping the achievement of the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and assisting development in various parts of the world by knowledge and capacity sharing on the internet.



Online Volunteering is Armin’s contribution to the world.

The benefits of online volunteering are recognized by different development organizations and volunteers worldwide. Due to this recognition, the number of assignments facilitated through the UNV Online Volunteering service increased by 50% between 2007 and 2008. The growth of online volunteering shows that there are tremendous opportunities to engage people in development through the internet.

Other foreign volunteers testify to the importance of Filipino contributions as online volunteers.

“Filipino online volunteers’ contributions have been very helpful in improving the efficiency of the UNV office in delivering services,” says Hiroyuki Takita, UNV Philippines Programme Officer. “What is remarkable is their willingness to share their knowledge and skills.”

Alice Castle, a British online volunteer who has worked with a Filipino online volunteer in UNV Philippines echoes this perception, “I edited some great articles about what people are doing to help others in many different ways. I’ve learned more about what UNV volunteers are doing in the Philippines and am inspired to get other people involved in online volunteering too.”

More and more Filipinos are becoming inspired to join. One of them is Schedar Jocson, a young instructor in the University of the Philippines-Diliman. He has just registered with the UNV Online Volunteering service and has already helped in proofreading and translating a manual about student volunteering to Filipino. He believes that the service holds great promise in the Philippines.

“It is an innate nature among Filipinos to help one another and this innate nature should be tapped by opening more opportunities for volunteer growth,” he said.

United Nations Volunteers

29th Floor, RCBC Plaza Yuchengco Tower I, 6819 Ayala Avenue corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati Cit, Philippines

Phone: (02) 889-7550 Fax : (02) 901-0454 Email : unvgroup.ph@undp.org <http://www.unv-ph.org>

UN Volunteers is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).



Renaud Meyer, Country Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) agreed, "Volunteering is about empowering people from the grassroots. With online volunteering, anyone can now play an active role in global development."

Organizations who would like to involve online volunteers in their activities to strengthen the impact of their development work can register on <http://www.onlinevolunteering.org/> and post their volunteer opportunities.

Thousands of volunteers are ready to provide their support: professionals, students, retirees and expatriates from across the globe volunteer their skills online to help organizations address development challenges.

* Quotes from Wayne Bacale, Edna Eufemio and Raphael Sadiwa are quoted from articles posted in the UNV Online Volunteering website. <http://www.onlinevolunteering.org/>

###

Written by Caren Mercado, UNV Communications Intern
Edited by Alice Castle, Online Volunteer

Edna Eufemio <http://www.undp.org.ph/UNV/onlinevolunteering-release/Edna.jpg>
Dr. Raphael Sadiwa <http://www.undp.org.ph/UNV/onlinevolunteering-release/Raphael.jpg>
Wayne Bacale <http://www.undp.org.ph/UNV/onlinevolunteering-release/Wayne.jpg>
Armin Prüssner <http://www.undp.org.ph/UNV/onlinevolunteering-release/armin.JPG>
Online Volunteering leaflet http://www.undp.org.ph/UNV/onlinevolunteering-release/UNV_OV_Leaflet_E.pdf

For more information, contact:

Hiroyuki Takita (Mr.), UNV Programme Officer
Tel: (02) 889-7550
Email: hiroyuki.takita@undp.org
Website: www.unv-ph.org