

# ENHANCING LITERACY IN THE COMMUNITY THROUGH READ ALOUD SESSIONS

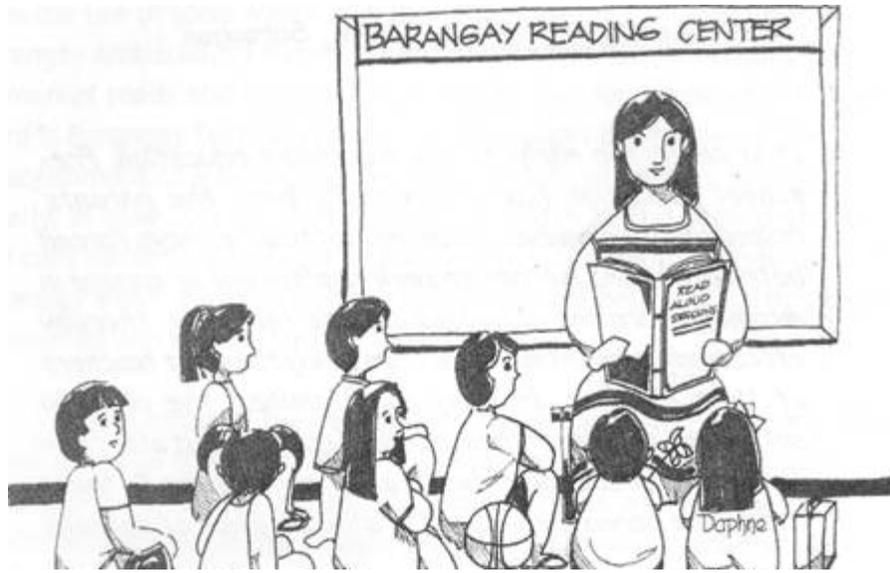
Barangay Monbon, Irosin, Sorsogon

*It is never too early to start a child's education. Preschool education has traditionally been the parents' responsibility. However, economic difficulties have forced both father and mother to seek employment or engage in income generating activities outside the home, thereby effectively preventing them from being the first teachers of their children. In many poor families, the children suffer not only from their parents' absence but also from the limited education of both father and mother. In these cases, the barangay is asked to stand in place of parents.*

## **Context**

Barangay Monbon is one of the twenty-eight (28) barangays of the Municipality of Irosin in the province of Sorsogon-the southernmost province of Luzon Island. It is 643 kilometers south of Manila.

Barangay Monbon is located north of the poblacion and has the third largest population among all the barangays in the town with 3,390 people distributed among 692 households. The barangay has been a multiple winner in the Irosin Inter-Barangay Environmental Development Program (IIEDP). In 1994, the barangay won in the municipality's Clean and Green contest. It ran away with the first prize again in 1997 for building a barangay hall and detachments for the tanods (civilian peacekeeping volunteers). The tanods manned vehicular traffic along the national highway during school days.



The barangay captain at that time was famous for mobilizing so-called drunkards and idlers to guard the trashcans that the barangay placed in choice locations. Every other Sunday of the month, the barangay held a *komun* or cooperative work to clean up public places.

## **The Project**

The need for a literacy development program originated from the installation of a Community Based Information System (CBIS) that determined what Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) the residents had difficulty meeting. Regular monitoring and subsequent literacy mapping showed that Monbon was one of the barangays in Irosin that had low levels of literacy. From these was born the Barangay Literacy Enhancement Program (BLEP) in 2001. Barangay Monbon was one of the pilot barangays for both government and non-government's community-based formal and non-formal education and literacy programs.

The BLEP had an initial 515 pre-school and 626 school children as targets. Of the 1,141 children, one hundred seventynine (179) preschoolers and one hundred sixty-two (162) school-age children suffered from varying degrees of malnutrition. One hundred twenty children (120) enrolled initially in the five (5) day care centers in the barangay.

*Targeting of Recipients* The project conducted a survey to target the recipients of the project.

*Community Assemblies* To ensure ownership by the community, assemblies were held.

*Feeding Sessions* The project had a feeding component to reduce malnutrition, enhance brain development and facilitate learning.

*Care Givers Classes* Care givers, volunteer teachers, and facilitators were trained on how to take care of the children.

*Read Aloud Sessions* The project introduced a new process of developing the pre-school literacy called the Read Aloud Sessions. These were components of the *Bagong Kulturang Pinoy* (New Filipino Culture) curriculum.

*Monitoring and Evaluation Sessions* Project implementation and results were tracked through monitoring and evaluation sessions.

*Establishment of a Barangay Reading Center.* The project also established a Barangay Reading Center that benefited elementary and high school students.

## **Results**

Since it started in 2001, around sixty-eight (68) preschoolers have finished the Read Aloud Sessions.

The feeding sessions have helped ease nutritional deficiencies among selected pre-school and in-school children.

The provision of day care services has given mothers time to engage in income generating activities.

Provision of pre-school education has allowed Monbon's children to begin their education early and have eased the parents' concern on where to send their children for pre-schooling.

## **BARANGAY AND OVERSEAS SCHOLAR**

### **Barangay Palaca, Miag-ao, Iloilo**

*Overseas Filipinos can help in a number of ways. In this case, the barangay tapped the assistance of its native sons and daughters who had migrated and done well in the United States to finance the education of poorer children in their homeland*

## **Context**

Barangay Palaca is one of the 119 barangays of the Municipality of Miag-ao, Province of Iloilo. It is located three (3) kilometers south of the poblacion of Miag-ao and forty-five (45) kilometers from Iloilo City. The national highway going from Iloilo City to the south of Iloilo province and to the towns of the neighboring province of Antique traverses the village. Palaca is one of the thirty-five (35) lowland barangays of Miag-ao. It has a land area of 256,186 hectares. It

is a coastal village. It has a population of 2,001 belonging to 358 households. Many of its inhabitants are engaged in farming. Others are into dressmaking, fish vending, carpentry, fishing, and salt making. Ten percent (10%) of the population are overseas contract workers.

## **The Project**

The Constitution directs the State to provide for universal and free public elementary education to all Filipino children. Even then, large numbers of children who are prepared to enter school delay or forego formal schooling altogether because their families cannot afford to pay for non-tuition expenses, which is often higher than the cost of tuition.

In the Miag-ao West Central Elementary School at Barangay Tabunacan, only sixty percent (60%) of children that were prepared to begin their elementary schooling actually enrolled. The forty percent (40%) who could not were left to stay at home and wait until their family could afford to do so or wandered on the street begging and vending. The parents of these children frequented the Palaca barangay hall seeking help for their out-of-school children.

The barangay decided to seek the help of Mr. Arnold and Rebecca Nite of Cupertino, California. Mr. Nite was a native of Barangay Palaca. Mr. Nite agreed to fund the schooling of all school children in Barangay Palaca entering elementary school in the year 2000.

The Sanggunian Barangay (Barangay Council) then met with the parents of the children to explain to them the details of the scheme and to seek their cooperation to ensure that their children regularly attended school.



Finally, the Sanggunian Barangay met with the principal of the Miag-ao West Central Elementary School to iron out the details. It was agreed that the Sanggunian Barangay as the

trustee of The Arnold & Rebecca Nite Scholarship Grant would handle all the expenses of the children while the parents would shoulder the cost of special projects.

A year later, the Sanggunian Barangay of Palaca decided to extend the scholarship program to elementary graduates. It drew up plans to send fifteen (15) children into high school. However, the cost was too high for the barangay. The barangay council approached another native son living in San Francisco, California, Mr. Ricardo Morada, and his wife, Ms. Lolita Morada for help.

The couple agreed to fund the education of an initial batch of thirty (30) high school freshmen at the Palaca-Damilisan National High School and promised to continue supporting them through high school provided that the scholars maintained an above average grade. The couple also committed to funding the education of thirty (30) new freshmen every year at the same high school.

Mr. and Mrs. Morada also committed to send three (3) graduating high school students from the Palaca-Damilisan National High School to the Southern Iloilo Polytechnic College.

## **Results**

Mr. Arnold and Rebecca Nite funded the education of 286 school children.

Mr. and Mrs. Morada sponsored the education of thirty (30) high school students and three (3) college students.

The barangay funded the education of eleven (11) more bringing the total number of scholars to 330.

# **EDUCATING THE YOUTH AND THE BARANGAY THROUGH THE DRAMATIC ARTS**

## **Barangay Bulac, Sta. Maria, Bulacan**

*There are many ways to inform, educate, awaken, and enlighten than the usual lecture or public announcement. People retain the message better when all their five senses are engaged Even better if they are enjoying themselves Young people have been the target of all kinds of education from adults In this barangay, the roles have been reversed*

## **Context**

Barangay Bulac is one of the 24 barangays of Sta. Maria, Bulacan. It is located about seven (7) kilometers from the Sta. Maria town proper. As of 2000, it had a population of 5,143 distributed into 1,112 households.

## The Project

*The Sanggunian Kabataan (Youth Council) of Bulac called itself the SK Kapatid or the Kabataang Paglilingkod ang Hatid (Youth Rendering Service). Kapatid expressed the ideals that the 5K wanted to the Bulac youth-responsible and oriented to serving their fellow citizens.*

*SK Kapatid is also the name of the youth council's official newspaper, which it started publishing in 1996. The SK Kapatid was not the usual youth newspaper. Like any newspaper, it had its share of news on youth activities and community affairs in Bulac and announcements of events. But it was also a promoter of environmental and social consciousness among the youth and a medium for communicating their unique perspective on issues affecting the barangay and the larger community.*

*The SK Kapatid did not limit itself to the printed media for its advocacy and value formation. It ventured into the dramatic arts to entertain, educate, and inform. SK Kapatid established BULAGA or the Bulac Artists' Guild that produced plays and performances that educate people on the local culture and on the burning issues of the day.*

