



CMGP



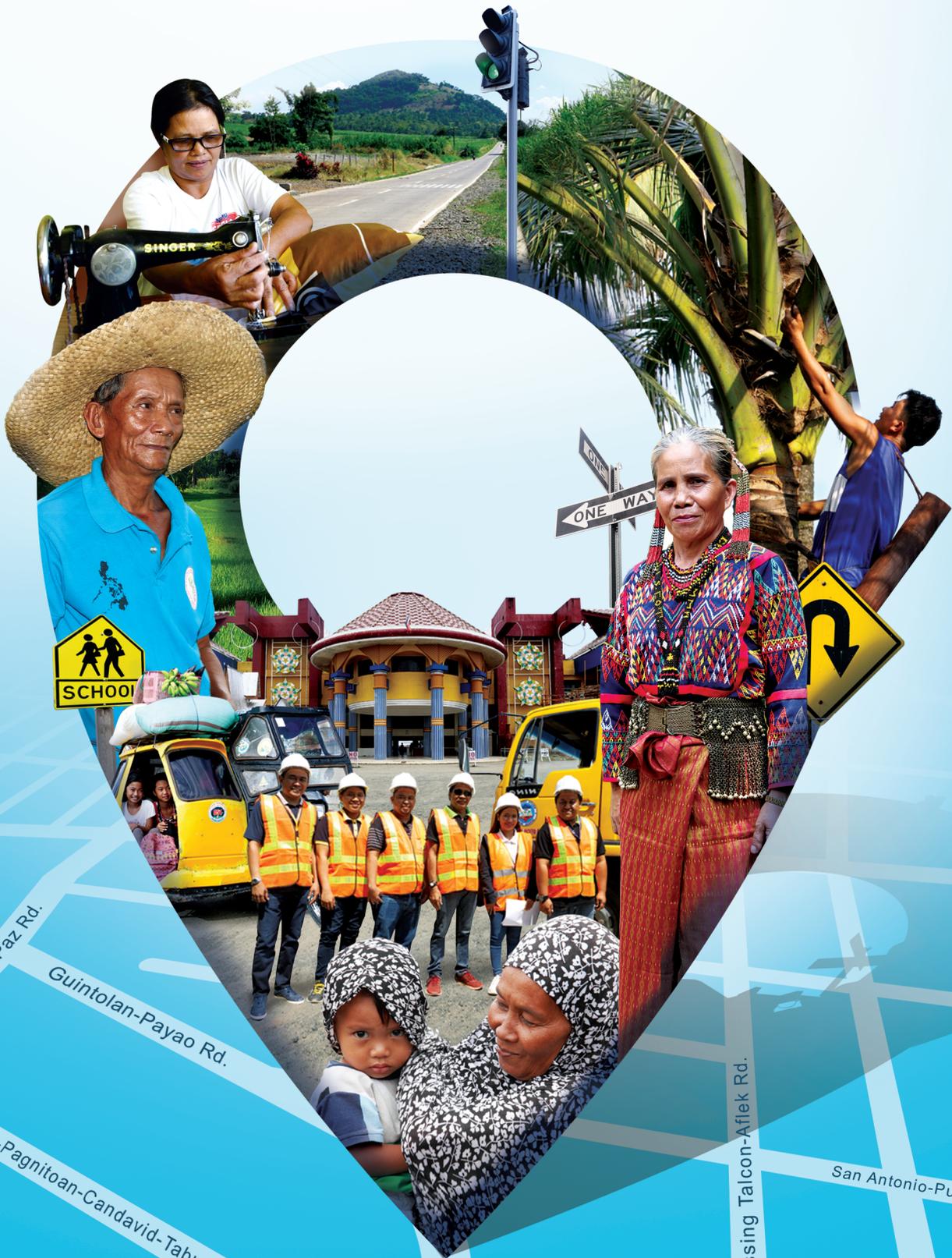
ROADS 2SDGs

Paving the Way to Good Governance

Vol.1

Issue No.2

Official Publication of the DILG-UNDP Partnership for CMGP



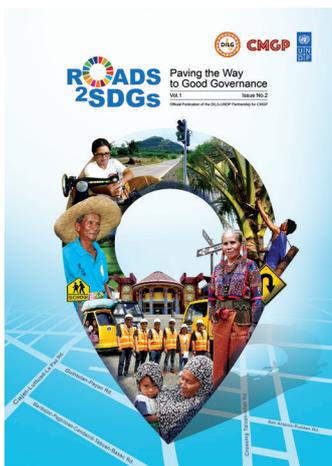
Cajel-Luttuad-La Paz Rd.

Guintolan-Payao Rd.

Maribojoc-Pagnitoan-Candavid-Tabuan-Basac Rd.

Crossing Talcon-Afiek Rd.

San Antonio-Pulidan Rd.



About the Cover

On the cover of the second issue of the Roads2SDGs magazine is a giant Geo Pin formed by a photo montage of people whose lives were influenced by the implementation of the government's Conditional Matching Grant to Provinces (CMGP) program.

It represents how the editorial team found itself right in the middle of remote communities—hearing local stories of hope, resilience, and success brought about by the enhancement of provincial roads.

In the background is an image of a roadmap, some pathways of which bear names of CMGP-intervened roads that were visited in the provinces of Quirino, Leyte, Bukidnon, Zamboanga Sibugay, and South Cotabato.

This issue provides a deeper perspective on how improved local roads provided better market access for farmers, created convenient pathways to eco-tourism destinations, linked municipalities together, and empowered vulnerable sectors of the society from women's organizations to indigenous peoples' groups.

In a retelling of these stories, it is hoped that more stakeholders will participate in local government-initiated projects that put the spotlight on road infrastructure development vis-a-vis governance reform, quality assurance, and community participation to fundamentally achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) is the primary catalyst for excellence in local governance that nurtures self-reliant, progressive, orderly, safe, and globally competitive communities sustained by an empowered citizenry. Learn more at dilg.gov.ph or follow DILG Philippines.

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The Roads2SDGs Magazine is the official publication of the partnership between DILG and UNDP in the implementation of the Conditional Matching Grant to the Provinces (CMGP).

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Hope and contentment are captured in the smiles of these locals whose lives improved with the enhancement of provincial roads.



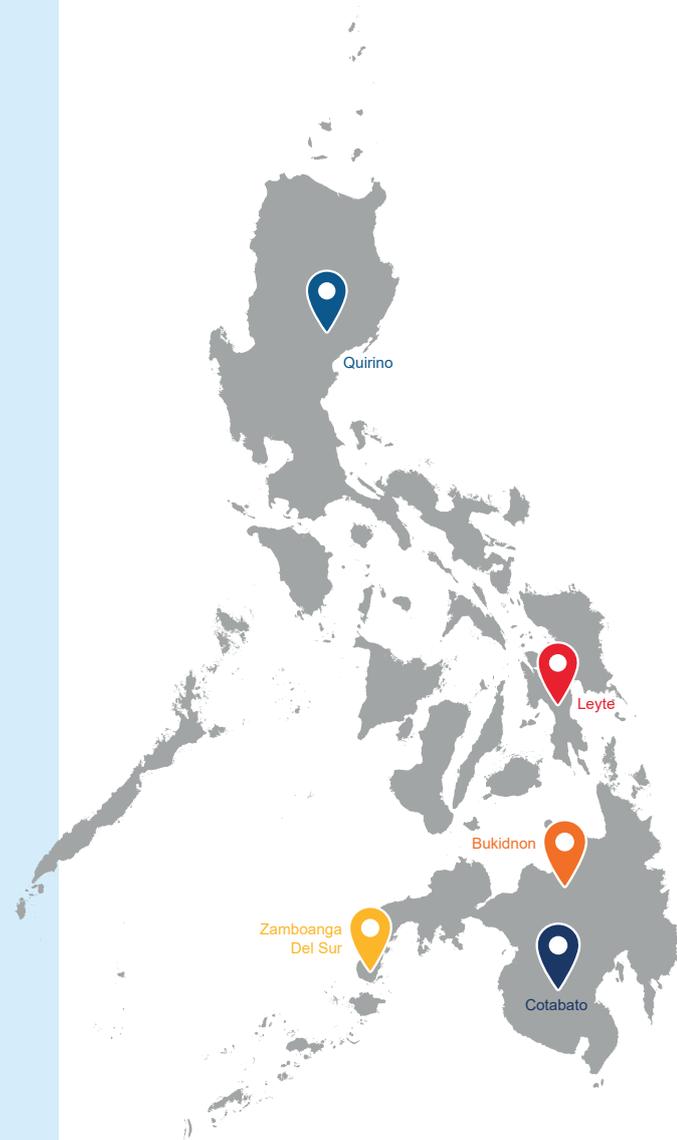
The Project

The Conditional Matching Grant to Provinces (CMGP) program is spearheaded by the Department of the Interior and Local Government with the Department of Budget and Management.

Formerly known in 2016 as the Konkreto at Ayos na Lansangan at Daan Tungo sa Pangkalahatang Kaunlaran (KALSADA) program, the CMGP aims to address the need to construct, rehabilitate, upgrade, and maintain provincial roads to uplift the lives of those living in far-flung communities by connecting them with the rest of the province.

The CMGP equally highlights the importance of good governance and capacity development to enhance the proficiency of provincial governments in managing the road beyond construction and development. It aims to empower local government functionaries, engineers, administrators, and other personnel equipped with technical capabilities as well as carried out in a systematic, responsive, and transparent manner.

Furthermore, the DILG works hand-in-hand with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to carry out the initiative called Paving the Roads to the SDGs Through Good Local Governance (Roads2SDGs) which sees to it that the development and maintenance of road infrastructures are aligned with the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Collaborative actions among all stakeholders thus ensure that no one is left behind on the path to progress.



Roads2SDGs





Of Roads, Resilience, and Rubber: The Gentle Flexibility of the Province of Zamboanga Sibugay



L-R: A load of harvested rubberwood latex is ready for pick-up on the side of the CMGP-improved San Antonio-Pulidan Road; With a few ascents, the long and winding stretch of the Guintolan-Payao Road leads to a thriving coastal community.



The native phrase “Sibug ari Bagay!” which means “Come nearer, my friend!” is where the peninsular province of Zamboanga Sibugay gets its name from. Clear blue skies, long stretches of lush green rice fields, gently rolling hills, and the smiles of its warm people welcome their visitors. The picturesque tranquility of this peninsular province may seem far from the preconceived notions of armed conflict in the area, but rather, it is an invitation to look beyond – and toward the possibilities of growth through its rich ecosystems and flourishing industries of farming, fishing, and forestry.

Zamboanga Sibugay is covered by more than 10,000 ha of mangrove forests that improves the province’s marine ecosystems.



Lupe Benarao, a rubber farmer for over 20 years now, has seen how roads stand crucial in the quick delivery of her products. *"Dati, hindi talaga ito madaanan ng sasakyan kasi grabe ang lubak. Kapag magdedeliver kami ng produkto sa bayan, gagamit kami ng kalabaw at maglalakad ng tatlong oras."*

Today, with the emergence of concrete roads, Lupe and other Dalisay farmers can now cruise on a smooth 15 to 30-minute drive to the town proper. There were also times when buyers, aboard their delivery vehicles, would simply pick up the farmers' products placed along the cemented road.

Rubber farming has long been one of the prosperous industries in Zamboanga Sibugay. Its product—latex is an important material used in manufacturing tires and other household items. It is oftentimes called "white gold" that helps generate adequate income for many smallholder farmers in the province.



Stories by the Slopes:

About a 30-minute drive north of the provincial capital of Ipil is the tranquil town of Titay where majestic waterfalls cascade from the slopes of its surrounding hills and mountains. This town is also host to the San Antonio-Pulidan Road, which stretches for 5.3 kilometers. A project constructed through the Conditional Matching Grant to Province's (CMGP) Program of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) in 2017, this road gives opportunities to the people of Titay – specifically the residents of Barangay Dalisay. Most residents of this Barangay are farmers of rubber trees and crops like rice, corn, coconut, and cacao.

Top: Rubberwood latex, dubbed as "white gold" collected by a local farmer, is a prominent cash crop in Zamboanga Sibugay.
Middle: Rubber farm owners in Dalisay are happily discussing the impact brought by the San Antonio-Pulidan Road.
Bottom: Barangay local executives engage in discussions with the rest of the community to address relevant issues that affect them.



Stories by the Shore:

Three hours south of the capital town is the coastal municipality of Payao. While this long journey from Ipil may, at times, require visitors to pass through rough terrain, a different case presents itself when talking about the province's longest CMGP project to date: The Guintolan-Payao Road.

At 15.22-kilometers, the Guintolan-Payao road traverses seven barangays in the municipality, as well as its *poblacion* – the center of commerce. It makes transport easier for both travelers and residents living within these areas. This is especially important since fishing and seaweed farming are flourishing industries here.

Ultimately, construction of the Guintolan-Payao road allows its fishermen to trade their best catch such as *bangus*,

shrimps, seaweeds, shellfish, abalone, sea cucumber, and many more to nearby towns. In jest, some fishermen even say that their town is now left with second-rate catch.

For seaweed farmer Asya Ladja, the road's concreting connected their municipality to the rest of the province. *"Hindi na kami isolated ngayon. Dahil maayos na yung kalsada, nakapasok na dito sa amin yung mga buyer ng agar-agar (seaweeds). Tapos, naabutan na rin kami dito ng tulong (ng mga organisasyon) para magkaroon ng gamit sa pagtatanim at pangingsda."*

The people of Payao, though, feel honored that fresh fish from their waters, as well as other marine products, can reach other municipalities—thanks to the long stretch of CMGP road.

Top L-R: Payao's coastal waters are abundant with a variety of first-rate fresh fish, mainly sold to markets of nearby towns; What used to be an isolated area, Payao's poblacion is now accessible to traders, motorists, and other locals through the paved Guintolan-Payao Road. Bottom: As farmers can now buy the latest farming tools downtown through good roads, preparing seaweeds for farming has now become a family affair done at home.





“The development of a province begins with good roads. It helps address various issues such as improving peace and order, boosting the economy, and providing better transportation services to the people.”

- Zamboanga Sibugay Gov. Wilter Yap Palma



Inspiring Peace, Progress & More

Zamboanga Sibugay Governor Wilter Yap Palma asserted that *“the development of a province begins with good roads. It helps address various issues such as improving peace and order, boosting the economy, and providing better transportation services to the people.”*

Palma added that *“through regular coordination with various departments of the local government allows it to create and maintain projects that will benefit our citizenry.”*

Zamboanga Sibugay’s Provincial Planning and Development Office echoed the importance of improving roads. According to PPDO Coordinator Vernancio Ferrer III, *“Pag pinatag mo ang kalsada, makapasok na ang patubig, madali na ang pagdeliver ng produkto, nakapasok ang mga bata sa eskwelahan, accessible na ang mga barangay health center, at hospital.”*

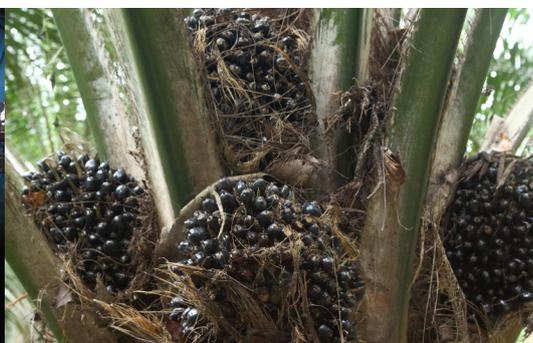
Talking about peace and order, Provincial Engineer Christopher Lazo also explained, *“Creating good roads is a way of reaching out to people. When they begin to feel that the government is doing something good for them, they become less inclined to revolt or join insurgencies.”*

A Welcome with Open Arms

Like the rubber that this province is widely known for, the people of Zamboanga Sibugay remain to be resilient and adaptive; always learning and ready to be flexible in the face of the change. These people know how to make and sustain their livelihoods no matter what terrain they find themselves in; from the steep slopes of its mountains and cascading waterfalls, to the abundance of marine life and opportunities by the sea. This inherent flexibility present in the spirit of the people of Zamboanga Sibugay emanates with the origins of the name of their province; *“Sibug ari Bagay!”*, a perfect expression for their willingness to welcome people from different places and walks of life. Despite what others may think about this province prior to experiencing its true beauty, Zamboanga Sibugay will continue to open its arms as it remains to embrace peace and progress. ■



Top: Situated on a hill, Zamboanga Sibugay’s capitol complex possesses a distinctive architecture that merges the iconic designs of its tri-people settlers: the Subanens, Bangsamoro Muslims, and Christians. Inset: With the public’s welfare as a top priority, Zamboanga Sibugay’s Governor Wilter Yap Palma together with PPDO Coordinator Vernancio Ferrer III and Provincial Eng. Christopher Lazo regularly meet to devise and maintain projects that will benefit the citizenry. Bottom L-R: Export-quality rubber is manufactured at the DOST-funded rubber processing facility of the Philippine Pioneer Rubber Products Corporation; Zamboanga Sibugay looks to expand its palm oil industry by converting idle lands into palm oil plantations; Seaweeds are one of the high-value crops of the province.





Accessing the Keys to Sustainability: Improving the Central Road of Matalom in Leyte



L-R: To date, jagged pavements make up portions of the JNR-Templanza Road; While CMGP-funded sections of it are now wide & concrete.

On the southwestern tip of Leyte province lies the quaint municipality of Matalom. Much like its name that translates to “beautiful”, this small-town exudes charm with locals going about their daily lives peacefully. A farming and fishing community, Matalom residents can be found living simple lives; along its quiet streets—casually walking, cleaning front yards, running their little shops, peddling their goods, or going to work to other establishments in the area. They all can do these in comfort, thanks to paved roads that conveniently lead them to places where they need to be.

A great majority of Matalom’s farms, such as those in Barangay Templanza, are situated in the uplands. People here are known to plant and harvest much local produce

such as rice, corn, bananas, and coconuts. And in order to quickly deliver these goods to the town proper, access to the JNR-Templanza road was key to sustainable livelihoods.

Blocked Central Artery

The JNR-Templanza road used to be a long, winding stretch of harsh and uneven dirt road. But through the efforts of various organizations, some sections of the road are now paved. What stands out among these, though, are road portions constructed under the Conditional Matching



Grant to Provinces (CMGP) program spearheaded by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

Covering a total of 4.4 kilometers, these parts of the road rehabilitated through CMGP are widened and concreted, complete with pavement markings, shoulders and grid railings on the sides, as well as road signage that help vehicles ply the road safely and with ease.

According to Project Engineer Ferdinand Catudio, the JNR-Templanza Road mainly serves as a farm-to-market road. If paved further from Barangay Templanza onwards, it can serve as an alternative road to the next province of Southern Leyte through the Municipality of Bontoc.

Opening the Way of Agriculture, Weaving, and Transportation

Aside from tilling the land for high-value crops, the men of Barangay Templanza oftentimes climb coconut trees to collect its sap--locally known as tuba which they sell downtown to makers of *bahalina* or coconut wine.

These days, Jessy Odon who is a long-time farmer and tuba harvester is able to trade his goods to businesses in the town center regularly through a motorcycle. *“Pag naka-kolekta na kami ng tuba sa loob ng isang linggo, nadadala na namin siya sa bayan tuwing Sabado. Madalas na yun. Dati kasi, minsanan lang. Mahirap umarkila ng habal-habal dahil umaayaw sila sa dadaanang lubak sa kalsada!”* Odon shared.

L-R: Brgy. Templanza resident Jessy Odon is a *tuba*-gatherer who sells the sap downtown; On the other hand, collected *tuba* is delivered to the lone maker of *bahalina* or fermented coconut wine.





“Pag tulog yung mga anak ko, dun ako nagwi-weaving. Malaking bagay din siya kasi dagdag kita para sa pamilya, habang yung asawa ko naman namamasada ng motor,”

- Angelita Junasa, homemaker

“Pero ngayon na mayroon nang mga kongkretong daan. Hindi na ganoon kahirap. Sa loob ng isang oras, nasa baba ka na,” he added.

On the other hand, housewives from Barangay Templanza can augment their husband’s income by weaving abaca to produce *sinamay* fabric which they deliver to downtown retailers.

Angelita Junasa, a mother of two, can be seen on the pedal loom whenever she has time. *“Pag tulog yung mga anak ko, dun ako nagwi-weaving. Malaking bagay din siya kasi dagdag kita para sa pamilya, habang yung asawa ko naman namamasada ng motor,”* Junasa explained.

Because of the paved roads that make it easier for the Junasa patriarch to drive passengers in and around town,

he can now be at home in time for lunch and dinner, as well as spend more time with their kids.

The education sector also benefits from the well-constructed roads. According to Dina Saga, a teacher of Templanza Elementary School, her co-teachers living in nearby towns can now report to class easily.

“Yung ibang teachers dito dati, tumitira pa sa boarding house para lang makapagturo sa school. Nahihirapan kasi silang umakyat araw-araw dahil sa malayo at lubak lubak na daanan. Tapos, bihira pang dumadaan ang mga sasakyan. Pero ngayon, dahil sementado na ang karamihan ng daan, mabilis na silang nakakauwi sa mga bahay nila kasi sasakay na lang sila ng motor,” Saga shared.



Top: Most housewives from Brgy. Templanza juggle their time taking care of their children and weaving *sinamay* or abaca fabric. Bottom L-R: With products that can be easily transported uptown, a number of sari-sari stores increased in Brgy. Templanza; A *tuba*-seller easily delivers his good to Matalom’s poblacion; Students and teachers can now reach the Templanza Elementary School with ease due to the concrete road.



Students are equally spared from the inconveniences brought about by the muddy dirt road, then. *“Kapag maulan noon, sobrang kapal ng putik! Kaya yung mga bata, hirap na hirap sa pagpasok. Pagdating sa school, madumi na ang kanilang mga uniporme. Makikita mo yung hirap sa mukha nila. Pero ngayon, pagpasok sa klase, maaliwalas na ang mga itsura nila. Halata mong hindi sila pagod sa byahe o sa paglalakad,”* Saga further observed.

Unlocking Progress Together

Working together efficiently and carrying out best practices are processes that the CMGP inculcates among local government agencies. *“These methods, along with the regular workshops conducted by the DILG and UNDP, the latter being one of the Department’s partners in the governance reform component of the Program, help instill the value of collaboration among public servants. At the same time, it aids in effecting high-quality standards in any of our projects,”* said Cora Alvero, Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO) Coordinator of Leyte.

“These traits are crucial aspects of good governance. It shows how local governments effectively deliver basic services to the community,” Alvero added.

Empowering best practices in local governance encapsulates the kind of public service that Leyte hopes to exercise even more. It’s an endeavor that can be observed through programs such as the CMGP with its mission of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and

therefore uplifting people’s lives and building progressive communities.

The Keys to Witness the Beauty of Matalom

The vibrancy of the town of Matalom can now be witnessed easier through the joint efforts of various sectors – from the local government, the community, and the efforts of the DILG and the UNDP. The coming together of all these initiatives now allow the multiple beneficiaries of this project to live a more sustainable life. What was once a difficult challenge to overcome on a daily basis is transformed into an opportunity that unlocked the true capacity of Matalom, its resources, and most importantly, its hardworking people.

From the uplands where its farms reside to the bustling town center where commerce comes alive, the keys that were able to open this eclectic town toward enlivening and sustaining its potential can only mean great days ahead. And it is truly exciting to see how the genuine beauty of Matalom will unfold through new chances provided by this road. ■



Top L-R: A retailer supplies raw materials such as abaca fibers to *sinamay* weavers of Brgy. Templanza; Motor repair shops are one of the booming businesses in Matalom since the concreting of the JNR-Templanza Road; The day’s fresh catch can be bought at a wet market in downtown Matalom. Bottom L-R: Templanza’s Barangay Captain Agripino Timkang discusses to its community members the importance of having concrete roads; Cora Alvero, PPDO Coordinator of Leyte, shares how the best practices inculcated by CMGP helped instill the value of collaboration among public servants.





Harvesting of Opportunities: Seeds of Genuine Progress in Maramag, Bukidnon



“Puro kami lupa dito. Landlocked kami... we have to depend on good quality roads for people to gain access to government services, and for locals to bring their products to the market.”

- Atty. Nestor E. Cajés, Jr., Bukidnon’s Provincial Administrator



Top: Vast expanses of farmlands and plantations make up Bukidnon, which is tagged as the “Food Basket of Mindanao.”
Bottom: Vast farmlands and tourist destinations have become accessible through the CMGP road.

A true farmers’ paradise where fertile soil allows a bountiful harvest of various fruits and vegetables is found in the heart of Northern Mindanao. The high altitudes and cool climates of the mountain ranges of Bukidnon enables this province to be such a haven that is dubbed as the ‘Food Basket of Mindanao’.

Being one of the largest provinces in the Philippines, Bukidnon is a major producer of rice, corn, sugar, banana, coffee, rubber, cassava as well as pineapple, tomato, and many more. Being surrounded by forested mountains, an extensive river system, and vast expanses of farmlands, Bukidnon’s geography is one of nature’s most generous gifts to its people. And one of its municipalities, Maramag, is living up to the agricultural identity of the province from its name alone. Maramag comes from the



contracted Manobo term *Ag Ramag* which means “Let’s eat our breakfast here,” and plays host to several sizable multinational plantations of bananas, pineapples, and other fruit-bearing trees; as well as wide stretches of rice fields.

Planting the Seeds of Progress

Barangay Dagumbaan is a rural community that’s made up of smallholder farmers, and those who work as laborers in nearby plantations. To go in and out of the village to and from work, or to make transactions downtown, its people heavily rely on roads. One of their important provincial thoroughfares is the 5.84 kilometer Junction Sayre Highway-Dagumbaan Road that has been entered for improvement into the Conditional Matching Grant to

Provinces (CMGP) program of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

One of its long-time residents, Dagumbaan’s Barangay Councilor Dindo Diabordo recounted the times when they were left with little choice but to deal with the difficulties



Top: The 5.84-km. Junction Sayre Highway-Dagumbaan Road leads to a large banana plantation.
Bottom: Farmers rake palay, one of Bukidnon’s main crops, inside a rice milling facility.





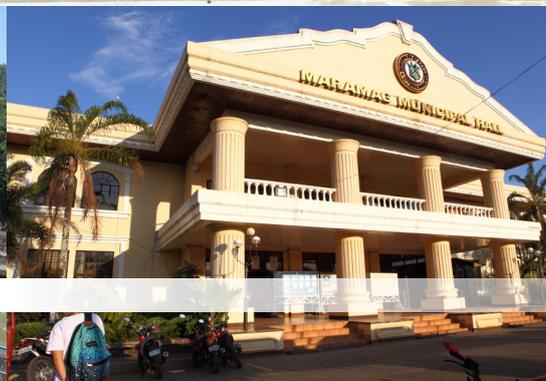
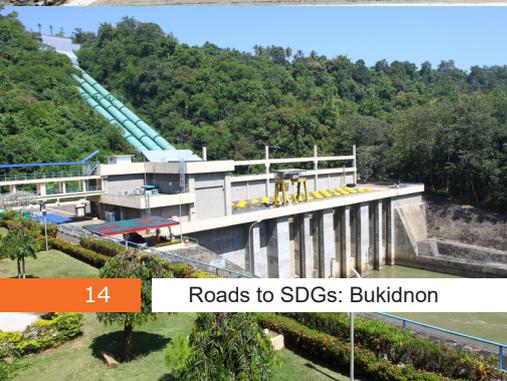
L-R: Accessibility of public utility jeepneys to Barangay Dagumbaan overjoys its residents, including children; Students of a nearby elementary school feel motivated to go to school regularly, thanks to the concretization of the Junction Sayre Highway-Dagumbaan Rd.

of using the road. *“Napakapangit ng kalsada na yan dati. Maalikabok na, puro lubak pa. Kapag pupunta kami sa bayan, aabutin noon ng mahigit sa isang oras.”*

With the road’s concreting, though, residents and motorists will only take a half an hour ride going to the town center or other villages. *“Ngayon, iba’t ibang klase ng sasakyan nakakadaan na dito, gaya ng mga truck na may dalang produkto, mga jeep at tricycle. Yung karamihan ng tao din dito, bumili na ng motor para may sarili silang transportation,”* Diabordo further shared.

These insights are crucial to the development of public infrastructure across the province, roads in particular as they are crucial to the development of the province. Atty. Nestor Cajés, Bukidnon’s Provincial Administrator narrates how: *“Puro kami lupa dito. Landlocked kami. Wala kaming dagat o ibang means of transport na pwedeng ipagawa para paunlarin yung mga communities. We have to depend on good quality roads for people to gain access to government services, and for locals to bring their products to the market.”*

Upper bottom: The Junction Sayre Highway-Dagumbaan Road provides easy access to a variety of farmlands, as well as tourism destinations of the province. Lower bottom from L-R: The Pulangi IV Hydroelectric Power Plant in Maramag, Bukidnon helps supply electricity to the whole of Mindanao; The municipality of Maramag is host to a number of CMGP roads, including the Junction Sayre Highway-Dagumbaan Rd.; With its vibrant natural wonders, Bukidnon is dubbed as the eco-tourism and cultural heritage capital of Northern Mindanao.



The Intersections of Opportunity

There is more to Bukidnon than agriculture. The improvement of Junction Sayre Highway-Dagumba Road also inspired its women to organize themselves and create their sources of livelihood. *“Importante rin naman sa mga kababaihan dito na maging maayos ang kalagayan nila, yung makapag-socialize sila at lumago yung knowledge nila sa iba’t ibang gawain, hindi lang sa bahay,”* said Luzminda Balaba, an entrepreneur who spearheaded the creation of the Dagumba Women’s Livelihood Multipurpose Association.

These days, the women of Dagumba sew pillows and sell them to their neighborhood to earn and augment the income of their farming husbands.

“Yung pagkakaroon ng magandang kalsada, makakatulong sa aming mga kababaihan para mas lumaki yung aming market, sa pagbebenta ng produkto at paglakad ng papeles para maregister itong organisasyon namin.” Balaba explained.

Aside from its main agricultural industry, women-led entrepreneurial endeavors are strengthened primarily through access and infrastructure as initiatives such as the roads of the CMGP provide opportunities for provinces to become business-friendly and competitive. As Rowena Bade, DILG-Bukidnon’s Program Manager explained, *“we are strengthening the investments and business sectors of the province through road project management.”*

Breaking Barriers

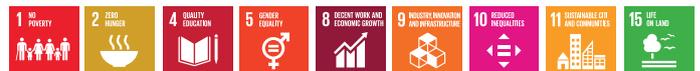
As one of the main sources of food not only in the region but in the entire island of Mindanao – and the country as a whole, Bukidnon stands tall with its responsibility of providing its share toward sustainable development. This region take pride in contributing a great part in fueling a nation, and with that great duty comes with abundant challenges that need to be surpassed.

As one of the major food baskets in the country, there are so many opportunities in Bukidnon that are waiting to be harvested. And just like its acres upon acres of crops – the



The women of Barangay Dagumba empower one another to become more productive members of the community.

harvest of opportunity in this province continues to prove to be bountiful. This is why the projects of the CMGP are important endeavors that sparks hope for communities to live better lives. It uplifts people to find and maintain jobs that will satisfy their social and economic conditions, and help them explore more opportunities for growth. ■



L-R: Fruits and vegetables from Maramag and other villages are brought to the Maramag Public Market, which locals and tourists alike call as the “cleanest wet market in the Philippines”; Members of the Dagumba Women’s Livelihood Association make effective use of their time by participating in entrepreneurial activities.





The Gateway to Possibilities: Improving Livelihoods through Unity in Diffun, Quirino



Top: The Cajel-Luttuad-La Paz Road serves as an important pathway leading to the Nagbukel Mountain & Cave, one of the famous eco-tourism destinations in Quirino.
Bottom: Tricycle drivers now earn more from their livelihood as they can transport both passengers & goods to and from the market.

As a quaint, landlocked province lying on the southeastern portion of the Cagayan Valley, the Quirino province may often go unnoticed. How modest this province may seem in the eyes of some, Quirino takes pride in its incredible spirit to unify and work in solidarity with one another.

A prime example of Quirino's spirit of unity is the Panagdadapun Festival. *Panagdadapun* is an Ilocano word for 'assembly'. And as a festival, it gathers together citizens as well as tourists from all six of its municipalities for a grand celebration of a bountiful harvest and of the colorful traditions of various ethnic groups that call the province their home.

More than a way of merrymaking, the Panagdadapun Festival reflects the Quirinian spirit of gratitude and unity.

The municipality of Diffun, north of the provincial capital, is dubbed as the gateway to the province as it connects to multiple other provinces such as Nueva Vizcaya and Isabela. And here lies a 5.6 kilometer stretch of road that traverses three barangays: Cajel and Luttuad, as well as La Paz in the municipality of Saguday.

The road also links the parallel national highways of Cordon-Diffun-Madela; and Saguday-Santiago City, thus cutting travel



time between the provinces of Quirino and Isabela by less than an hour.

More than half of the Cajel-Luttuad-La Paz Road underwent rehabilitation through the Conditional Matching Grant to Provinces (CMGP) program of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). Thanks to this initiative, locals and tourists alike are now able to ply the road with ease to visit the poblacions or use it as a diversion road going to Santiago City in Isabela.

Aside from accessibility, the Cajel-Luttuad-La Paz Road improved the lives of those in the community by opening up diverse livelihood opportunities.

Through the Golden Gates of Possibilities

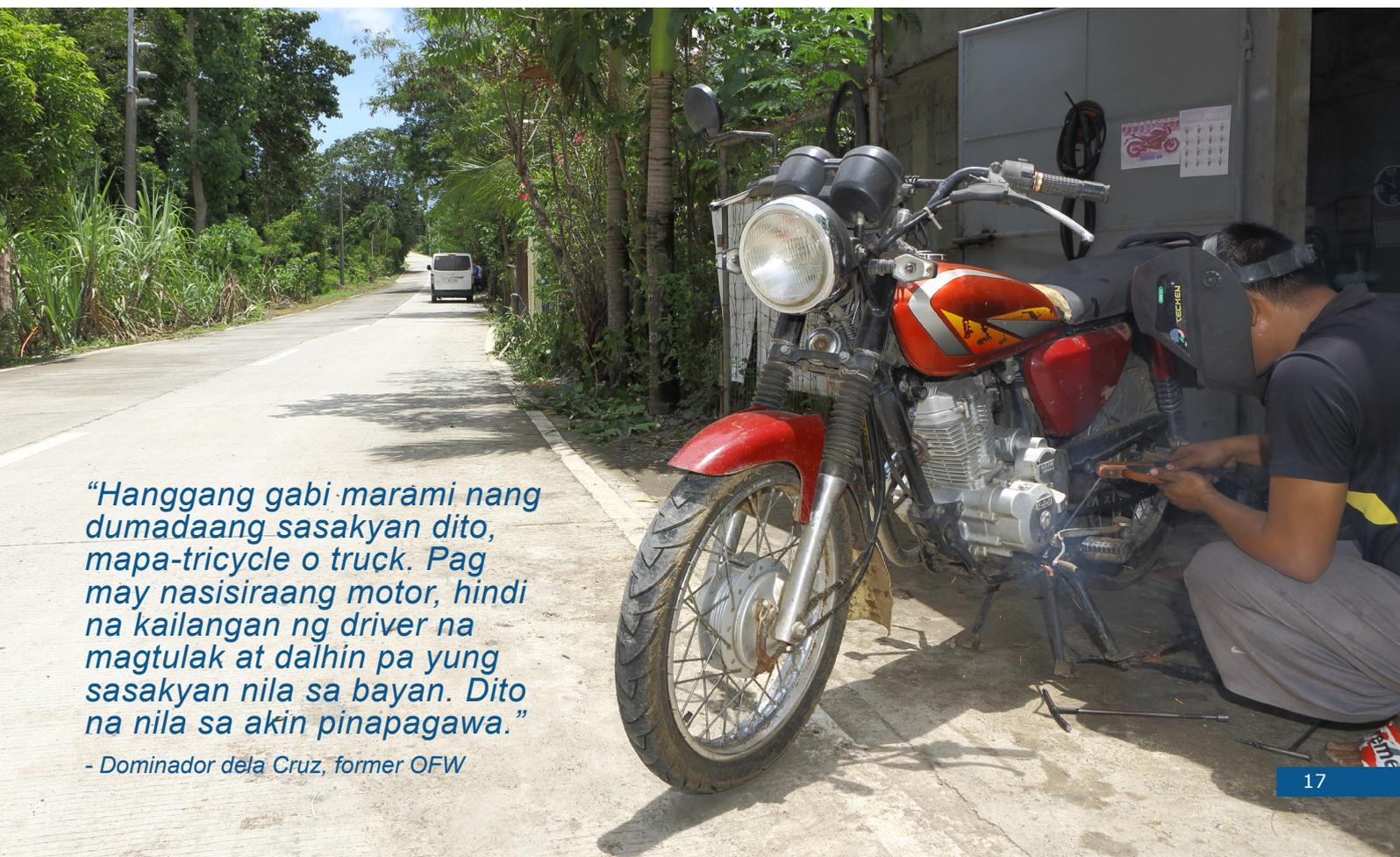
Seeing the economic potential of the newly constructed road, Overseas Filipino Worker Dominador dela Cruz decided to open a motor repair shop along the road.

According to him, *“Hanggang gabi marami nang dumadaang sasakyan dito, mapa-tricycle o truck. Pag may nasisiraang motor, hindi na kailangan ng driver na magtulak at dalhin pa yung sasakyan nila sa bayan, dito na nila sa akin pinapagawa.”* And with a thriving business, the young entrepreneur can support the financial needs of his family.

Moreover, tricycle driver Raynaldo Agrosolos recounted his prior struggles of driving down the Cajel-Luttuad-La Paz road. *“Napakapangit dati ng kalsada, kaya yung mga tricycle ayaw na dumadaan dito. Kaunti lang din yung sumasakay kasi natatakot yung mga pasahero, na kapag hindi magaling magmaneho yung driver, baka bumaligtad na lang yung tricycle,”* Agrosolos told.

When the road was upgraded, over time, the number of tricycle units has increased. And more than transporting passengers these days, tricycles can now carry loads of farmers' produce to the plaza.

Seeing the road's economic potential, former OFW Dominador dela Cruz set up a motor repair shop along the road.



“Hanggang gabi marami nang dumadaang sasakyan dito, mapa-tricycle o truck. Pag may nasisiraang motor, hindi na kailangan ng driver na magtulak at dalhin pa yung sasakyan nila sa bayan. Dito na nila sa akin pinapagawa.”

- Dominador dela Cruz, former OFW

Virgilio Tabita, a farmer and member of an irrigators' group also attests to the convenience of the improved road. According to him, the group tries its best to support farmers by providing water resource to their farmlands. The problem lies, however, when there are limited vehicles that transport their products like sacks of palay and corn downtown.

“Dati, nasisiraan kami ng produkto kasi ang tagal pa bago ito makarating sa bayan. Kalabaw lang kasi ang kayang dumaan dito. Pero ngayon, salamat sa kalsada, gumagamit na kami ng tricycle. May mga panahon din na sinusundo na lang yung mga ani namin dito kaya wala nang nasasayang na produkto,” Tabita explained.

Engineer Dencio Pagbilao, an environmental planner and Quirino’s Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator attests to this as he emphasized that *“with the introduction of good roads, nam-maximize ang production ng farmers. Nadadala na yung kanilang mga produkto from the very rural areas to the market.”*

In line with this, the province’s 50-hectare model farm makes sure to cultivate fruit-bearing trees such as lanzones, rambutan, pomelo, coconut, and many more so they can continuously supply seedlings to farmers. By doing so, the local government is encouraging locals to farm and veer away from illegal logging activities. Pagbilao further explained that *“through this, we can now achieve the goals of improving the agricultural landscape of the*



province and enriching the livelihood of farmers who now have more crops to sell to the market.”

The gateway toward these opportunities are made possible through a strong sense of unity, and a decent amount of preparation. Not to mention, a lot of hard work for various sectors that would ultimately benefit from the project. Now that the road is done, Quirino’s Provincial Engineer Ireneo Benavidez shared, the secret to the successful completion of road projects lies in early preparation. Through this effort, they bested other provinces in implementing CMGP projects and disbursing funds for it.

Top: The number of tricycles that carry passengers in and out of Diffun and Saguday significantly increased when the road was concreted. Bottom: A farmer for over 20 years, Virgilio Tabitha feels relieved that his healthy crops reach the marketplace easily through paved roads.

“Dati, nasisiraan kami ng produkto kasi ang tagal pa bago ito makarating sa bayan. Kalabaw lang kasi ang kayang dumaan dito. Pero ngayon, salamat sa kalsada, gumagamit na kami ng tricycle. May mga panahon din na sinusundo na lang yung mga ani namin dito kaya wala nang nasasayang na produkto.”

- Virgilio Tabita, farmer





L-R: In Cabarroguis, the Quirino Watersports Complex is fast becoming a favorite venue to hold national watersports competitions; Quirino Capitol is strategically located at the top of the hill and in the center of other province's government offices.

The Spirit of Unity at Work

Good roads help the province achieve its vision of becoming an agro-industrial hub. These infrastructure improvements aid farmers in transporting crops to the market, and for the local government in providing services to the public.

A consistent awardee of the DILG's Seal of Good Local Governance from 2015 to 2018, Quirino takes pride in its 'dream team' of local government offices that work together to provide adequate service for its people. *"The key to progress lies in the teamwork that each office forge between each other. Kung mapapansin mo kasi dito sa Quirino, we are just a small province. But what we lack in size, we make up for our unity,"* said Quirino Governor Dakila Cua.

The Quirino Province may not be on top of everyone's radar, but what it boasts is a community with an unparalleled sense of getting things done efficiently – and that's by working together. The spirit of unity among the Quirinians is so awe-inspiring that it has enabled their quaint and peaceful province to open many gateways toward progress and possibilities for growth. ■

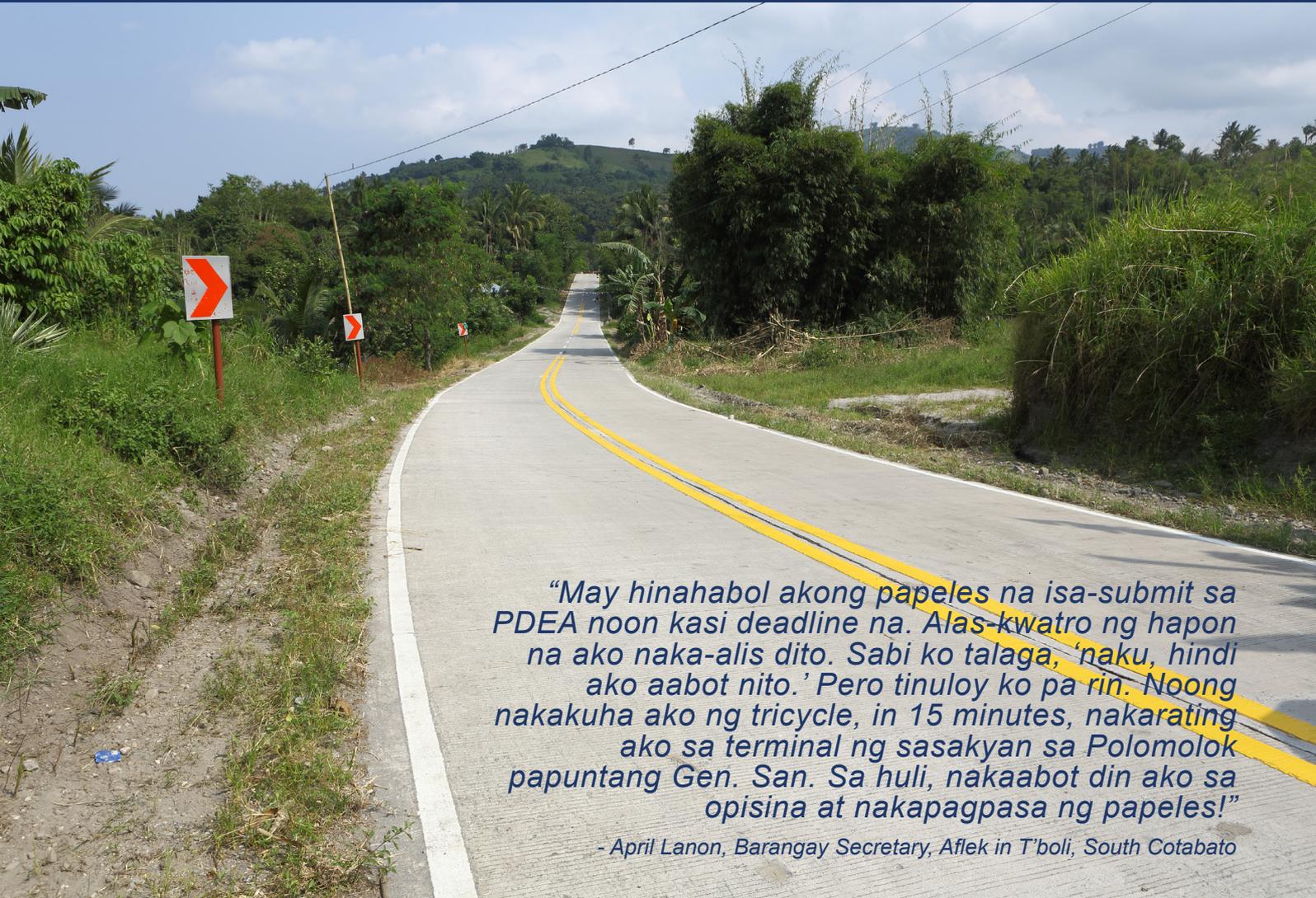


L-R: The 50-hectare Quirino Integrated Agricultural Development Project (QIADP) model farm nursery is sprawled at the foot of the Motocross Mountain in Cabarroguis; The QIADP cultivates a variety of fruit-bearing trees (such as lanzones, rambutan, pomelo, and coconut), the seedlings of which are distributed to local farmers.





In the Land of the Dreamweavers: Weaving the Road of Dreams in South Cotabato



“May hinahabol akong papeles na isa-submit sa PDEA noon kasi deadline na. Alas-kwatro ng hapon na ako naka-alis dito. Sabi ko talaga, ‘naku, hindi ako aabot nito.’ Pero tinuloy ko pa rin. Noong nakakuha ako ng tricycle, in 15 minutes, nakarating ako sa terminal ng sasakyan sa Polomolok papuntang Gen. San. Sa huli, nakaabot din ako sa opisina at nakapagpasa ng papeles!”

- April Lanon, Barangay Secretary, Aflek in T’boli, South Cotabato



The Dreamweavers of South Cotabato comprise of Indigenous People (IP) communities, namely the T’boli, the B’laan, and the Upo. They are called as such because they have long believed that the patterns of their fabrics manifest through their dreams. And deep in the SOCCSKSARGEN region of Mindanao, where majestic waterfalls cascade into snaking rivers, and verdant mountains lush with nature’s bounty are abound, the Dreamweavers find themselves home.

Top: A 2017-project under the CMGP, the Crossing Talcon-Aflek Road links together the first class municipalities of T’boli and Polomolok in South Cotabato.

Bottom: Provincial Capitol of South Cotabato at night.



A Dream for Tomorrow

Many of the IP communities in South Cotabato reside in the municipality of T'boli, which can be reached through an hour-and-a-half drive from the provincial capital—Koronadal City. While they are known to be very protective of their rituals and traditions, these IPs have shown resilience to the modern world. Aside from living in harmony with other tribes, they believe in the importance of sending their children to schools, and organizing themselves as a community so they can gain respect from other locals.

In order for community-building to be sustainable and be truly deemed a success, they need to associate with their neighbors. This is made easier through concrete thoroughfares, like the Crossing Talcon-Aflek road—a 2017 project under the Conditional Matching Grant to Provinces (CMGP) program under the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). Now, IPs are able to travel from their villages to town proper such as Polomolok for transactions and errands.



Top: Locals belonging from different indigenous people groups live harmoniously in Brgy. Aflek in the municipality of T'boli.
Bottom: A T'boli native weaves T'nalak fabric—the designs of which are believed to appear in the dreams of the T'boli weavers.





Weaving Past Challenges and Present Opportunities

Barangay Aflek resident Babeth Making, a pure B'laan, has observed the transformation of her tribe over time. According to her, *“Ang mga B'laan kasi, umaangat na ang kaisipan nila. Marunong na silang magbasa at magsulat. May mga pinag-aralan na.”* This is because IPs prefer to live in the lowlands where they have access to facilities such as schools, markets, and health centers.

“Yung iba, pumupunta lang sa bundok kasi nandun ang sakahan nila. Pero yung mga tirahan nila nandito sa baba. Bukod sa maganda na yung daan, nandito na rin kasi lahat ng pangagailangan nila,” Making added.

Making and her husband are farmers themselves. This is how they can send their only son to school who is now studying at the Aflek National High School.

Meanwhile, Aflek's community organizer and another B'laan native Herdelyn Malangka expressed how grateful the village was for the improved road. She shared, *“Halos lahat dito nagpapasalamat kasi sementado na ang daan. Hindi gaya dati, ang hirap maglabas ng produkto. Kung gagamit ka ng motor, madalas masiraan kasi lubak-lubak ang daan. Kaya kung ano man ang kikitain sa pagbenta ng mais o palay, napupunta pa sa pagpapagawa ng sasakyan.”*

Improved roads also contributed to the efficiency of barangay-level government officials in carrying out their tasks.

For instance, April Lanon, Aflek's Barangay Secretary recounted one of those days when she had to rush to another government office to submit a report. *“May hinahabol akong papeles na isa-submit sa PDEA noon kasi deadline na. Alas-kwatro ng hapon na ako naka-alis dito. Sabi ko talaga, ‘naku, hindi ako aabot nito.’ Pero tinuloy ko pa rin. Noong nakakuha ako ng tricycle, in 15 minutes, nakarating ako sa terminal ng sasakyan sa Polomolok papuntang Gen. San. Sa huli, nakaabot din ako sa opisina at nakapagpasa ng papeles!”*



Babeth Making, a pure B'laan native has noticed how her tribesmen learned to adapt to the changing nature of time.
Top: Community organizers in Barangay Aflek gather together to discuss pressing concerns of their community.



Barangay Captain Balansi Kayawan gathers some residents together to share how the paved roads is creating a significant impact to their community.

A Road that was Once Just a Dream

The Crossing Talcon-Aflek road is located in one of the most remote areas of South Cotabato that is among the province's vital road projects funded under the CMGP. Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator Jennifer Bretaña indicated that, *"It is our priority to connect Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas or GIDAS to urban centers."*

Bretaña also shared that while roads are part of infrastructure development that's linked with improving the environment as well as peace and order, these are all held together by good governance. And with good governance at the heart of developmental framework, South Cotabato puts a premium on regularly updating its standards and policies to better serve the public. Such is an effort that is achieved through participating in the CMGP program.

A road that connects the Dreamweavers to the rest of the

region was just once a dream. And for the IP communities of these geographically isolated areas, that dream is now weaved into reality, and it has enabled them to foster greater relationships with their neighbors. As an eco-cultural destination that is among the most unique in the country, the Dreamweavers now have the chance to easily share with the rest of the region and the world what they are truly capable of as they now dream even bigger dreams. ■



L-R: A dedicated team from the Provincial Engineer's Office is in charge of implementing and maintaining road-related projects under the CMGP; South Cotabato's Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator Jennifer Bretaña underscores how CMGP helped improve not just the provincial roads, but also the lives of locals living in far-flung villages.



Roads2SDGs Knowledge Products



Local Road Asset Management for Local Governments

The Local Road Asset Management (LRAM) Manual is designed to guide local government units in institutionalizing road asset management practices. Taking this approach, local governments can move beyond and avoid the pitfalls of non-booking of road assets, among others. While the LRAM Manual focuses on the management of the local road assets, the principles and processes captured therein are also deemed valuable to inform and guide concerned functionaries in the management of other types of assets.



Local Road Projects Quality Control & Quality Assurance Guidebook

The Local Road Projects Quality Control & Quality Assurance Guidebook is developed for the quality management of local roads, and is designed as reference for Local Government Units and oversight bodies, and for non-state actors, individuals, and groups who perform quality assurance work of local roads. It was built upon the Construction Quality Control Assurance Manual prepared by AusAID in 2011 for the DILG's Provincial Roads Management Facility (PRMF) Program. Quality assurance of roads is not just the job of any single entity. Local government units, oversight agencies, and quality management and assurance practitioners all play critical roles in ensuring that roads are constructed according to standards. Thus, they are enjoined to use this Manual as a tool to help them guarantee the quality and safety of local road networks.



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