Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan
Parangal sa mga Magiting na pakikibaka para sa kalikasan at karapatan

September 25, 2020
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM
6th Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan

Parangal sa mga Magiting na Pakikibaka para sa Kalikasan at Karapatan

September 28, 2020
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM
A publication of the 6th Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan

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TRANSITION
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic
Cooperating Organizations

Center for Environmental Concerns is a non-government organization based in Quezon City founded through the initiatives of people’s organization. At the grassroots level, CEC works with communities and organizations, supporting initiatives to nurture ecosystems, defend common access to natural resources, and eventually improve their living and working condition in the context of a balanced and healthy environment. At the national level, CEC supports people-oriented, patriotic sustainable, and scientific policies and programs for the protection of the Philippines environment. At the global level, CEC engages in information sharing international net workings, cross-cultural exchanges and solidarity initiatives on common environmental issues and concerns.

Alay Bayan-Luson Inc. works for the realization and strengthening of a regional network of people’s organization and institutions committed to community-based and development-oriented responses in addressing the vulnerabilities stemming from poverty, powerlessness, environmental degradation and political abuse.

Kalikasan People’s Network for the Environment (Kalikasan PNE) is a national environmental campaign network of NGOs, grassroots organization, and environmental advocates. Serving as a national campaign center on broad spectrum of environmental concerns since its founding on November 27, 1997, Kalikasan PNE places primacy on addressing environmental issues from the perspective of advancing the welfare of the grassroots-level populace foremost.
Magsasaka at Siyentista para sa Pag-unlad ng Agrikultura (Masipag) is a farmer-led network of people’s organization, NGOs and scientist working towards the sustainable use and management of biodiversity through farmers’ control of genetic and biological resources, agricultural production and associated knowledge.

Panalipdan Southern Mindanao – is a broad alliance of environmental groups, human right organization, religious groups, research organization, academic, civil society groups, and people’s organization. It is an environmental rights group advocating and advancing environmental protection, land rights, food sovereignty, and national patrimony.

Philippine Network food Security Programmes (PNFSP) addresses core issues that threaten food security including conversion of agricultural lands, landlessness, import liberalization, feudal relation of production, backward means of production, migration and urban property unequal food distribution, and generically engineered food. The network also recognizes political instability, natural disasters, and development aggression as factors that worsen food insecurity.

Nilad is a regional network of volunteers, groups, clubs, association environmental protection advocates and individuals who are working to preserve, restore, and promote the protection of ecological (integrity) balance, biodiversity & sustainable development of Metro Manila. Some of the movements, Piglas (Navotas), Defend Manila Bay (Pasay), Pull Out Coalition (Manila) and save Manila Bay Movement.

Francis S. Morales Resource Center (FSMRC) builds on the legacy of Francis S. Morales, or Tatay Francis, who advocated sustainable agriculture and environmental care and served the people. FSMRC aims to strengthen the environmental resilience of marginalized communities through agriculture and science education.
Foreword

The Earth’s climate is warming at an alarming rate. This dangerous phenomenon is expected to bring extreme weather events, biodiversity decline, and public health risks, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic, that will hit harder vulnerable countries like the Philippines. Our country had consistently been among the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change impacts.

Everyone has contributed to climate change but not with equal gravity. Evidences show that the biggest culprits are the biggest and richest corporations in the world which command how the natural resources of the world are extracted and utilized. On the other hand, it is the poorest people, already in dire situations, who have contributed the least. Yet they are the most affected by poverty and disaster-inducing changes in climate.

In our country where economic inequality continuously widens, this means loss of food, less income, higher prevalence of diseases, and increased vulnerability to disasters.

Despite these difficult situations, hope lies in the individuals and organizations who valiantly protected, conserved, restored, and rehabilitated ecosystems on the ground. However, many of them are facing repressive attacks such as surveillance, harassment, intimidation, terrorist-tagging, or even killings - many of which happened even during the pandemic.

The trends in these attacks are that these appear as reprisals after individuals and organizations engage in environmental defense. Criminalization and red-tagging are used as justification. These seem to be part of investment guarantees accorded by the government to ensure the pursuit of so-called development projects. This longstanding state of violence put the country as the 2019 second deadliest country in the world for land and environment defenders. It is the first in Asia. These frontliners of the environment remain underappreciated and worse, vilified due to their advocacies. Justice remains unserved for most of the attacks on environmental defenders.

In this sixth Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan, we once again honor exemplary environmental defenders as heroes who have done exceptional work on community organizing, service, policy, technology, and campaigns for the people and the environment, even at the face of danger and adversity. We are one with
the advocacies of all the nominees and all the unsung environmental defenders all over the country.

More than just to inspire, we hope that the stories in this GBK evoke more environmental defense and climate action as part of upholding our rights including our right to a healthy and balanced ecology.

Ms. Lia Mai T. Alonzo
Executive Director
Center for Environmental Concerns – Philippines
ABOUT THE AWARDS

The Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan (GBK) is a biennial awards event and lecture series honoring Filipino heroes and heroines who have defended the environment and people’s rights.

The Philippines is endowed with rich natural resources that can support the country’s national development and can ensure that the Filipino people can live in peace and prosperity. For the past century, however, our environment has gone through an accelerating phase of severe destruction, depletion, and warming. It has reached a tipping point, causing scientists to declare a climate crisis. This has widened inequality and aggravated existing widespread poverty.

In the face of these worsening environmental and socio-economic impacts, many among the Filipino people have offered their talents, efforts, time, and even their lives to defend the rights of the people and the country’s patrimony. And yet, many environmental defenders are facing harassments, killings and other human rights violations in an attempt to hinder from their advocacy.

In recognition of these work and sacrifices, the Center for Environmental Concerns, in cooperation with its partners, launches the 6th Gawad Bayani ng
Kalikasan (GBK) to recognize exemplary individuals and organizations who have become part of the people’s movement to defend our environment and the people’s rights.

Following a nationwide process of nomination and selection, each GBK honors a roster of seven awardees composed of three (3) individuals, three (3) organizations and (one) most distinguished individual or organization. It is followed by a lecture series in the form of forums to share the experience of the awardees to the general public. The GBK is a part of the efforts to encourage more people to become environmental advocates and to take urgent action, and to strengthen partnerships between civil society organizations in the environmental movement.
GBK aims to:

1. To promote awareness of critical environmental issues and the situation of communities directly relying on natural resources.

2. To recognize the valiant struggles of the people to defend the environment, lives, and rights and to serve as an example and lesson to the people who continue to confront similar challenges.

3. To recognize the exemplary deeds and initiatives of simple individuals and organizations who have contributed to the upholding the environment and people’s welfare at the national and/or local levels

4. To strengthen the link of the struggle for social, economic, and political rights and the sustainable preservation and conservation of the environment.

Categories

The following recipients of the Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan were chosen by the board of judges: three (3) individuals (Gawad sa Indibidwal), three (3) organizations (Gawad sa Organisasyon) and a recipient(s) of the Natatanging Gawad (Most Distinguished Award).

**Most Distinguished Award (Natatanging Gawad)** – Awarded either to individuals or organizations in recognition his/her/their being an inspiration and example to the Filipino people for offering time and talents for the defense of the environment and advancement of the people’s welfare.

**Individual Award (Gawad sa Indibidwal)** – Awarded to individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary ability and effort to uphold the environment and people’s welfare, whether in the form of advocacy, campaigns, education, research, technology development, community services, mass media, or cultural work.

**Organizational Award (Gawad sa Organisasyon)** – Awarded to people’s and community organizations and institutions that have demonstrated unity in upholding the welfare of the people and of the environment by exemplary actions and advocacy, campaigns, education, research, technology development, community services, mass media, or cultural work.
**Criteria for Judging**

The board of judges was composed of three personalities selected by the GBK steering committee. They chose the final list of awardees based on the following guidelines and criteria set by the steering committee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Individual Award (Gawad sa Indibidwal)</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service and Devotion to the People</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributed to the Defense of the People’s Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defense of the Environment and National Patrimony</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actively defended the people’s right to a healthy ecology and national patrimony serving the welfare of the people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gave inspiration to the people to continue engaging in the defense of the environment and people’s welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrated integrity and principles in the face of challenges and adversity</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Organizational Award (Gawad sa Organisasyon)</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of the Organization</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintains a significant and active grassroots constituency and upholds the principles of the self-reliance and democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Objectives and Principles</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upholds a scientific, pro-people, pre-environmental, patriotic and progressive orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campaigns and Actions</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiates activities and campaigns to defend the environment and people’s welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Result or Concrete Achievements</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attained concrete victories, helped communities through projects or campaigns, and enabled the organization to build its capacity and unity</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Most Distinguished Award (Natatanging Gawad)</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From a shortlist of individual and organizational nominees, the board of judges chose a recipient(s) of the Most Distinguished Award (Natatanging Gawad) based on the criteria for judging of their respective categories</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Awards Committee

Atty. Rose-Liza Eisma-Osorio
Managing Trustee, Phil. Earth Justice Center Inc.
Professor, University of Cebu School of Law
Chair, IUCN Academy of Environmental Law

Dr. Rowena Boquiren
Environmental Historian
Professor of History
Professorial Lecturer, University of the Philippines Baguio

Dr. Teresita Perez
Lecturer, Department of Environmental Science,
Ateneo De Manila University
Professorial Lecturer, Institute of Biology, University of the Philippines

Dean Antonio La Viña
Energy Collaboratory Director, Manila Observatory
Former Dean, Ateneo School of Governance

Sr. Ma. Carmen Dianne Cabasagan
Religious of the Good Shepherd
Member, Sisters Association in Mindanao

Dr. Paciencia Milan
Former President, Visayas State University
National Guru for Reforestation
BOARD OF JUDGES

Dr. Victoria Segovia
Head, Environmental Science Program,
School of Arts and Sciences, Philippine Women’s University
Board Member, Green Convergence

Ms. Lou Arsenio
Coordinator, Archdiocese of Manila Ministry on Ecology

Engr. Edgardo Sabado
President, Philippine Institute of Environmental Planners

Dean Antonio La Viña

Atty. Rose-Liza Eisma-Osorio
Nominees

Individual Awards Category

Robert Chan
Harold O. Buenvenida
Joseph Carabeo
Rey Ramos
Alberto Roldan
Brandon Lee
Roberto Verzola
Stanley Maanay
Aurora Santiago
Cherry Maramag Buyayo
Chricelyn Empong

Geraldo Jumawan
Jeffrey Dela Cruz
Jimmy Masagca
Joeffrey Latayan
Lauro Diego
Cristeta Metra Sison
Gina Lopez
Jazmin Jerusalem
Lilibeth Calanoga
Loramie Banyola

Organizational Awards Category

Asosasyon ng Aeta Mahawang (AKMA)
Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Bulakan (AMB)
AMIHAN sa Dahican – Save Our Seas
Am-In Tako Man-Es-Esa (Tayong Lahat ay Magka-isa)
Bantay Gubat
Climate Change Network for Community-based Initiatives
Holy Trinity Agro-Forestry Multi-Purpose Initiative
Napakabanang Mananagat sa Tigao (NAMATI)
Panahon TV
Rotaract Club of Downtown Batangas City
Sabokahan Unity of Lumad Women
Samahan ng Mangangisda at Mamamayan sa Latian ng Bulakan
Student Executive Council of St. Therese – MTC Colleges Magdalo Site
Team Albay Youth Organization Inc.
United Organization of Didipio Residents
University of the Philippines Mountaineers
Most Distinguished Awardees
Regina Paz “Gina” Lopez dedicated her life in serving the people and the environment. Her environmental crusade is widely regarded through the enduring work of the ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation, Inc. – Bantay Kalikasan and her fearless stint as Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Gina founded the program Bantay Kalikasan in 1999 which advocates for the protection of the environment. It would later be known for its successful reforestation of the La Mesa Watershed and the rehabilitation of the Pasig River. She was then appointed in 2010 as the chairperson of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission.

When Gina was appointed as DENR secretary in June 2016, her maverick leadership quickly led to the audit and subsequent closing of 23 mines, suspension of 5 more, and cancellation of 75 mining permits that were found to have violated various regulations and laws. She also issued Department Administrative Orders banning prospective open pit mines and giving solely the DENR secretary the authority to issue Environmental Compliance Certificates
(ECC). She also cancelled at least 6 ECCs previously granted to environmentally-critical projects, including a reclamation project in Manila Bay, due to their potential harm to the environment.

Gina’s bold and progressive actions as environment secretary was lauded and supported by numerous civil society organizations and local communities alike but was met with staunch disapproval from the affected industries and businesses, including their associates in the government. In May 2017, the Commission on Appointments formally rejected her ad-interim position in the DENR.

Gina continued her dedication to service mainly through her show *G Diaries* wherein she focused on environmental conservation, area development, and innovations to help local communities across the country. Also included in the programs she pioneered were the well-renowned *Bantay Bata 163* and *Educational Television* (ETV). She passed away in August 2019 due to multiple organ failure.

Tireless in promoting the people’s sustainable and harmonious beneficence from the environment, Gina will always be remembered as a sterling ally of the people and a powerful environment defender to be reckoned with.
Dedicated to work for social justice, ecology, and social transformation – this is how his colleagues describe the life of Roberto Verzola.

Roberto, also known as “Obet” by most people, survived incarceration and torture in the Marcos dictatorship as a young activist. After Martial Law, he strived to build a more ecological and just society that respects all lives. He was instrumental in forming the first green political organization in the country called Philippine Greens. His book titled “Society, Ecology, and Transformation” continues to inspire new generations of green activists and advocates.

Obet was a champion of sustainable agriculture and clean and safe energy. He focused on “solutions work” with local communities, working with the grassroots like farmers in promoting System of Rice Intensification (SRI) which increased yield and promoted sustainable food production. He pushed for the phasing out of Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) when he took part in the Citizen’s Review Panel that exposed the technical deficiencies of the said power plant. He also authored the book “Crossing Over: The Energy Transition in Renewable Energy” and was deeply involved in campaigns and policy studies on nuclear power.
He founded the non-profit organization Center for Renewable Energy Systems and Sustainable Technology (CREST) in 2015. CREST promoted sustainable energy policies and the adoption of small-scale renewable energy systems especially for vulnerable communities. He was also the Vice President of Center for Empowerment, Innovation and Training on Renewable Energy from 2018 to 2020 and was included as advisor of SRI Pilipinas, and as board member of the Philippine Permaculture Association, and the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives.

Obet promoted for open source computing and fought against the monopoly of Microsoft. He also stood against biotechnology giant Monsanto’s commercialization of Bacillus thuringiensis (BT) corn through policy advocacy and participating in a 30-day hunger strike.

Obet’s life, as he would describe it, was an ultra-marathon: a lifelong commitment to changing mindsets and the society forward – which was proven true until he passed away. Equipped with technical knowledge and sharp societal analysis, he truly brought technology to social development work and environmental conservation.
INDIVIDUAL Awardees
“God wants you to act on what’s in front of you; one tree at a time, one beach at a time, one politician at a time.” These are the words of Atty. Robert Chan, an environmental defender whose faith is his constant source of strength.

Robert Chan is an environmental lawyer who leads the rag-tag squad of “para-enforcers” under the Palawan NGO Network Inc. (PNNI) in enforcing conservation laws often ignored by police and coastguard authorities in Palawan, the country’s last ecological frontier. He is known for being the “chainsaw man” of Palawan, having confiscated more than 700 chainsaws, along with several dynamite fishing boats and mining equipment.

Atty. Chan has spearheaded numerous arrests of illegal loggers, miners and poachers with no guns – just stealth, conviction, and a little-known citizens’ arrest law on hand. Although their method has come to be an effective and well-renowned tactic, these daring actions come at the price of sacrifice. Ten of their honorable para-enforcers were murdered in the past ten years. He also receives death threats and red-tagging constantly, limiting his movements. Moreover, their
projects often experience lack of funding, because their actions are deemed as too “confrontational” for potential donors.

He is also one of the leading voices in Palawan in three political moves: against the removal of five protected areas in the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System, against agreement that allows the entry of infrastructure in protected areas; and against the division of Palawan into three provinces.

Atty. Chan and the PNNI are known to operate across the entire island of Palawan, where there are over 1.28 million hectares of protected landscapes and seascapes that serve as habitats to unique, rare, and endangered flora and fauna. Their efforts contribute to the preservation of Palawan’s unparalleled biodiversity, watersheds, natural resource production, and even tourism.

Recognizing that the pressures on Palawan’s environment will never be resolved unless systemic poverty and corruption is addressed in the country, Atty. Chan does not shy away from going up against powerful political interests from big business and government despite of all the threats and red-tagging thrown to him. With boundless energy, refreshing candor, and faith in action, Atty. Chan continues to be a source of inspiration to the people of Palawan and arguably the entire nation.
Alberto Roldan
Individual Awardee

Ever since China ramped up their aggression in the West Philippine Sea (WPS), we always hear of Filipino fisherfolk at the unfortunate end of things. In these times when the government grit goes missing, the communities and their organization becomes more important than ever. In the midst of these bureaucratic neglect, Alberto “Ka Bobby” Roldan could always be found at the frontlines of defense.

Ka Bobby was born from a family of peasants in Bataan. He then learned to become a farmer and fisherfolk himself in his youth. He became active in various peasant and fisherfolk organizations when he saw the need to safeguard the rights of these poorest sectors of the society and to protect the environment.

As a community organizer, Ka Bobby regularly participates in coastal community mangrove protection and rehabilitation activities in Central Luzon, particularly in Bulacan, Pampanga, and Bataan provinces since the 2000s. He also worked with fisherfolk affected by the Obando, Bulacan dumpsite and landfill project which began in 2002. He has also been active in the campaign against large-scale black sand and nickel mining in the province of Zambales. At the wake of typhoons in the same province, he was always present when providing relief to vulnerable small-scale fisherfolk.

When the April 2012 standoff between PH Navy and Chinese ships occurred in Scarborough Shoal, he volunteered to assist affected fisherfolk of Zambales who
were unable to go fishing in the contested waters. Since then, he became more involved in the campaign for the protection of the WPS and the promotion of the rights of Filipino fisherfolk against Chinese piracy and looting.

Ka Bobby assisted in organizing a fact-finding and solidarity mission on the WPS in Zambales in 2015. He also brought to the cities the challenges faced by the fisherfolk affected by Chinese occupation in the WPS and effectively exposed the effects of government handling of China’s aggression. Addressing Chinese occupation in the contested waters is direly necessary as it is believed to be costing Philippines PHP 33 billion a year, on top of the global marine environmental impacts of their activities.

As the Vice Chairperson for Luzon of fisherfolk organization PAMALAKAYA-Pilipinas, Ka Bobby assisted in strengthening several other small-scale fisherfolk organizations in Central Luzon by engaging in multi-stakeholder fora and assemblies, and dialogues with local government units and regional government agencies.

Due to Ka Bobby’s work as an organizer and his active exposure of destructive projects that afflict farmers and fisherfolk, he is often target by state red-tagging. He receives death threats and recently had his picture on posters in Mariveles, Bataan, maliciously associating him with the New People’s Army and labelling him as “terrorist”.

Despite the impending dangers, Ka Bobby shows no signs of stopping in bringing into light the issues of the marginalized and the environment. He believes in the strength of the masses to enforce genuine environmental protection however big and dangerous the adversaries are.
Cristeta Sison, also known as “Ka Tita”, is a community organizer in Central Luzon whose leadership empowers communities in Zambales and Pangasinan in fighting for their livelihood and opposing large-scale mining. She is an inspiration to many small-scale farmers and fisherfolk.

Ka Tita had been for a long time one with the grassroots in defending the environment. In 2003, she was one of the founders of an organization named Sagipin ang Kalikasan that aimed to oppose destructive mining operations. She headed Agapan ang Kalikasan (AGAP) when it was founded in 2009. AGAP was comprised of farmers and fisherfolk that opposed mining in the mountains of Sta. Cruz, Candelaria, Masinloc, Palaguig, Iba, and Botolan in Zambales. She became the Regional Coordinator for Disaster Preparedness Organization in an Inter-Provincial Conference held by the network Alay Bayan-Luson Inc. in 2013.

In cooperation with various groups, Ka Tita and her organizations co-organized medical missions, disaster preparedness trainings, relief delivery operations and cash transfer programming among several barangays which benefitted thousands of individuals from poor and disaster-vulnerable families. She also gathered
support from the church, scientists, and environment advocates to aid their campaigns. She assisted in an environmental investigative mission on mining areas by civil society groups and in the late Gina Lopez’s mining audit.

Despite entering her senescence, she tirelessly persists on working with the communities. She co-established a broad alliance for the environment, livelihood, rights, and safety called Movement for the Protection of Environment, Livelihood and Rights in Zambales (MOVENOW) in response to the growing threat of four mining operations in the province. Her sharp analysis and linking of destructive mining operations with disasters through scientific evidence was integral in uniting communities who further launched a Barikadang Bayan in Brgy. Bayto to decisively halt mining operations in their area.

Ka Tita occasionally faces political-driven harassments and apparent surveillance operations but she continues to fight hand-in-hand with the toiling masses whom likewise inspire her to continue struggling for livelihood and the environment with them.
ORGANIZATIONAL AWARDEES
Nagpakabanang Mananagat sa Tigao
Organizational Awardee

Nagpakabanang Mananagat sa Tigao (NAMATI) is an organization dedicated to voluntarily managing 57 hectares of marine protected area (MPA) for 26 years now in Barangay Tigao, Cortes, Surigao del Sur.

Before NAMATI was established, the place was with rampant illegal fishing using dynamite, cyanide, and other destructive practices that destroyed fish habitats and reduced fish catch. The current chairperson convinced other fisherfolk within the community to act on the issue, hence NAMATI was formed.

Marine protected area management is the top priority of NAMATI. They have a 24/7 guarding and patrolling system, maintain their equipment, restore damaged coral reefs and install artificial coral reefs. As a result, the source of marine resources was preserved and Surigao del Sur remained to among the top sources of high-value marine products. They also conduct coastal cleanup, mangrove planting/management, environmental orientation and bayanihan with non-members to promote awareness and gather support. They maintain livelihood projects that were availed through partnership with national government.
agencies and non-government organizations. These livelihood projects provide considerable sustenance to the organization and their activities.

Aside from occasional violators of the regulations in the MPA, NAMATI’s biggest challenge is the political discrimination in the form of threats and physical harassments and cut-off support from the municipal government of Cortes. In an attempt to force them to surrender the MPA to the municipal government unit, their fish nets were destroyed and their guardhouse almost burned which caused them to start all over again. For two instances, two of their Bantay Dagat were jailed for defending the MPA.

NAMATI continues to protect the waters in their barangay despite the dangers that come with it. They believe that protecting the environment is an urgent task that everyone needs to take.

NAMATI is the first organization that influenced the local government units of CARAGA Region and the first ever marine protected area established in the region. To date, over 25 marine protected areas within the Province of Surigao del Sur have been established with more or less 1,000 hectares of marine resources that are protected and conserved mainly by people’s organizations.
Sabokahan Unity of Lumad Women (Sabokahan) is an organization of women from eight ethno-linguistic tribes across Southern Mindanao that was founded in 2003 by Abiok “Bai Bibyaon” Ligkayan Bigkay and 8 other strong-willed lumad women after the victory of their pangayaw (tribal war) against the logging concession Alcantara and Sons during the 1990s.

The Lumad have been perennially marginalized due to development aggression and government neglect. Sabokahan helps in empowering the Lumad communities for their overall struggle for the right to education, health, self-determination, their ancestral lands, and a healthy environment. As the only Lumad women’s organization, they also push for the respect to the right and capacity of Lumad women and LGBTQ in the Lumad struggle.

Sabokahan currently leads the Save Pantaron and Pulangi River Campaign. As they believe in the grassroots’ role and potential as the first and last line of nature’s defense, they unite the local communities through education, organizing, and mobilizations to defend Pantaron.

Pantaron Range is the backbone of Southern Mindanao’s biodiversity and is home to one of the largest remaining old growth rainforests in the Philippines with rivers that provide the Davao Region’s main water supply. The forest is also home to the Manobo tribe and acts as their pharmacy, subsistence, and cultural identity. Because of its abundance in mineral deposits, large-scale mining companies are
working aggressively with the military to displace communities, including the Lumad that protect their lands.

Sabokahan help save the critical biodiversity sites in the Pantaron Range and Pulangi River through issuing statements, and participating in media interviews, mobilizations, and international engagements such as the Women in Action on Mining in Asia (WAMA) hosted in Cambodia. They also helped in filing petitions at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) XI and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). Sabokahan also employed the tool Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) to improve the local environment. Aside from these, they also offer relief drives, basic education, and brought reproductive health information and services closer to their kin.

Because of their unyielding defense of their ancestral lands, Sabokahan and their communities have been a constant target of militarization by the Alamara paramilitary along with other state forces. In January 2020, the paramilitary attacked the UCCP Haran evacuation center where the Lumad have been staying after getting displaced. They often experience red-tagging (tagging as New People’s Army and terrorists), harassment on and forcible closure of their schools, and denial of relief to the said evacuation center. In response, Sabokahan conducted psychosocial therapy sessions for the women and children, initiated sanitary and health protocols and sewed face masks for the affected community members.

Sabokahan Unity of Lumad Women is still continually challenged. Along with the fear brought by the dangerous Anti-Terrorism Law, they also worry of systemic starvation, entrance of large-scale mining companies into the Pantaron Range, and the violence of militarization that awaits them should they return home.
United Organization of Didipio Residents (UODR) leads the struggle in Didipio, Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya against plunder of natural resources. Their advocacy also transcends outside their province as they prevent the destruction of watershed haven of Northern Luzon and echo the call for the rightful utilization of natural resources all over the country.

UODR is composed of concerned Brgy. Didipio residents and officials, and individuals from different local organizations all in opposition to the Australian-Canadian mining company OceanaGold Philippines Inc. (OGPI). It was founded on July 1, 2019, just eleven days after the expiration of the 25-year Financial Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) (mining permit) of OGPI.

Operations by the OGPI have been consistently met with disapproval from residents and national and international organizations alike due pollution, unfulfilled agreements, and irreparable damages. Previous environmental investigative mission and fact-finding missions revealed multiple violations linked to the mining company. These include severely high copper levels rendering two river channels biologically dead with water unfit for recreational use, and also deceptive collection of the residents’ signatures for consent.
Upon the expiration of the FTAA of OGPI, the UODR took on the initiative to rightfully enforce the long-overdue halting of the company’s operations and call for the non-renewal of its permit. They set up the people’s barricade to prevent the entry of the mine’s supplies and necessities to continue operating. They also made checkpoints to ensure that no copper concentrate gets out of the company. All of these were manned 24/7, causing the company to fail on its attempts to fully operate.

The UODR unifies with several other sectors including the local government units up to the provincial level, religious sectors, and private and civil society organizations. They also filed petition letters, held dialogues and staged protests reaching the Malacañan Palace. Their efforts to expose the situation in their community have reached the national television, and also prompted a United Nations inquiry.

Amidst the health crisis in April 6, some 100 members of the Philippine National Police in full riot gear dispersed the peacefully-manned barricade to force the entry of OceanaGold fuel tankers. They also arrested Rolando Pulido, chairman of a local organization. The dispersal was seen as overkill and with ill-intent.

The UODR continues to courageously stand their ground in guarding the entrance and exit of the community to stop the company from operating for more than a year now. They also call for the non-renewal of the permit, and for the company to fulfill its task to rehabilitate the mined area. They persist to show what the masses, when united, can decisively do to oppose the business-as-usual framework of environment exploitation.
Previous Awardees
2009 Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan Awardees

Eliezer “Boy” Billanes

Dr. Margarita Torre-dela Cruz

Emmanuel Maria Calonzo

Datu Guibang Apoga

Cordillera Peoples’ Alliance

Central Visayas Fisherfolk Development Center, Inc.

Seamancor Eco-Developers, Inc.
2011 Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan Awardees

Leonardo L. Co

Dr. Gerry Ortega

Datu Tomas Ito
2013 Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan Awardees

Kalumbay Regional Lumad Organization

Rodne Galicha

Armin Marin

Wilhelmus Geertman

Magsasaka at Siyentista para sa Pag-unlad ng Agrikultura

Kababaihang Nagtataglay ng Pambihirang Lakas
2015 Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan Awardees

Talibon-Trinidad Integrated Farmers Association

Marieta Corpuz

Most Rev. Jose R. Manguiran

Engr. Fidella “Delle” Salvador

Bukluran para sa Inang Kalikasan (BUKAL)-Batangas

Institute for Environmental Conservation and Research
2018 Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan Awardees

Abiok “Bai Bibyaon” Ligkaian Bigkay

Josefina Panginen  Archbishop Sergio Lasam Utleg D.D.  Francis Morales

Central Luzon Aeta’s Association (CLAA)  People Surge  Center for Lumad Advocacy, Networking and Services (CLANS)
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