



Make a Connection

Nurturing Future Leaders:
Philippine Indigenous Youth Leadership Training Program

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About Consuelo Foundation

Consuelo Foundation is a private operating foundation established in 1988 in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. Its mission is to support and operate programs in Hawaii and the Philippines that improve the quality of life of disadvantaged children, women and families. The foundation operates programs in the Philippines for the prevention of abuse and exploitation of children and women, amelioration of their conditions, and enhancement of their social and economic potential. In Hawaii, it operates programs to reduce child abuse, assist disadvantaged women, and strengthen families and neighborhoods.

More information on Consuelo Foundation can be found at www.consuelo.org.

About Nokia

Nokia has a positive impact on society that extends beyond the advanced technology, products, and services the company creates. Through its cooperation with the International Youth Foundation and other regional philanthropic and social responsibility programs, the company prepares young people to embrace opportunities created by the global economy and new technological advancements. The company has been an active regional contributor to youth and education causes for many years, with Nokia employees making their own contributions as volunteers in a range of programs throughout the world.

More information about Nokia is available at www.nokia.com.

About the International Youth Foundation

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) is dedicated to supporting programs that improve the conditions and prospects for young people where they live, learn, work, and play. Since its founding in 1990, IYF has worked with hundreds of companies, foundations, and non-governmental organizations to scale up existing programs and build long-term strategic partnerships.

Currently operating in close to 70 countries and territories, IYF and its partners have helped millions of young people gain the skills, training, and opportunities critical to their success.

More information on IYF can be found at www.iyfnet.org.

The *Make a Connection* :Nurturing Future Leaders program was launched in 2002 with an ambitious mandate to build the life, leadership, and livelihood skills of indigenous youth in the Philippines. It is part of a global youth development initiative of Nokia and the International Youth Foundation, which, since 2000, has benefited more than 280,000 young people in 24 countries.

In the pages of this report you will learn of the needs of the nation's indigenous youth, the methodology developed to meet those needs, and the program's success in building the confidence, leadership capacity, and livelihood skills of young people growing up in diverse and challenging contexts.

Through equipping 550 of these young men and women with leadership and life skills, the Make a Connection: Nurturing Future Leaders program has sought to promote the development of a cadre of youth leaders who will serve as positive role models within their communities and among their peers.

Highlighted in this report are data from an outcome measurement study of the program completed by Brandeis University in 2006. Nokia and the International Youth Foundation were intent on learning just how much young people really developed key life skills during their participation in the national Make a Connection activities. The results speak for themselves. Participants were found to have a much stronger connection to their community and culture; many have gone back to school; nearly all feel they have become better leaders; and the vast majority is supporting themselves and often other family members.

Our hope is that the information contained in this report will stimulate greater dialogue – and action – around issues facing indigenous youth in the Philippines, who have much to contribute to their communities and country.



Geraldine Marullo
President/CEO
Consuelo Foundation



Kimmo Lipponen
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William S. Reese
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Foreword

This publication describes the growth of a seven-year program designed to empower indigenous youth in the Philippines to assume leadership and connective roles in their own society and country.

Until the late nineties, the young indigenous people of the highlands of Mindanao and Northern Luzon, and those along the shores of the Sulu and Celebes Seas dared not assert themselves as the rest of society generally looked down on them or exploited them. Moreover, it was rare for a young chief to emerge in the face of a traditional and conservative leadership that was the preserve of elders and generally autocratic in nature. Since the troubled early sixties, secessionist movements were spearheaded by young charismatic commanders. Their fight against the government toward independence resulted in enormous costs in lives and property. That model was not a viable one.

Most mountain tribes—peace-loving as they were and led by traditional chiefs often overwhelmed by conflict—suffered much and remained as neglected as ever. With relative peace returning to their environment at the turn of the millennium, the indigenous youth were eager to join others in preparing for a new future without breaking too many cultural barriers. They needed skills, yet, in their new learning they wished to remain connected in a creative way with their traditional way of life. Thus, they were ready for a new culturally sensitive leadership training program. In this program they made new connections: between the old and the new, between traditional leaders and themselves, between their native culture and modernity, between indigenous people and the lowland majority, and across religions and politics.

The best testimonial to this program came during the Make a Connection Youth Congress in Cotabato City on May 31, 2005, when Naselpa Sarain, a 22-year-old Sama girl from Tabawan, addressed an audience of 100. Tabawan is one of the many islands in the Tawi-Tawi Province that lays on the edge of the Celebes Sea. It subsists on sea products and cassava, importing rice only for feasts and rituals. Rain is the main source of potable water as the dug wells produce brackish water. With the exception of a few teachers, the whole population is Muslim with a majority practicing a variant of “popular Islam” that blends ancestral beliefs and practices with Muslim rituals. In Sama society, women play an important role but mostly in running the day-to-day affairs of the family. But, they have no say in public gatherings as this is the preserve of male leaders. Here are her words:

“Here I am standing before you and I am surprised at myself. A year ago I would have never dreamed of behaving this way. In my village, I belong to a poor family; I belong to the Sama considered among the lowest on earth. And I am a girl who is supposed to remain quiet. And now I am here standing and speaking in public. I owe this to my training as a youth leader. Thanks to the Make a Connection program.”

Hers is the discovery of a new future, not only for herself, but for her community as well.

This publication tells us of the connective partnership between the indigenous youth and their trainers. They entered in it to break the chains of ignorance, apathy and poverty, and assume roles they never dreamed before.

Gerard Rixhon
Anthropologist

Introduction

This publication, *Make a Connection: Nurturing Future Leaders*, is an optimistic account of a program that has made a major contribution to Philippine society. It shows in countless ways that talented committed people, drawn from many sectors, can work together and help young people to connect to their culture and subsequently connect to schooling, leadership development, positive self reliance, and health.

Consider, however, that in this era of limited resources in support of youth development and life skills initiatives, bringing people together and working on a common mission is not enough. Initiatives of this kind must accomplish tangible goals, meet performance standards, and stretch and target resources to accomplish aims in an efficient manner.

Make a Connection: Nurturing Young Leaders has done all this. Tangible outcomes for participating youth have been achieved. Societal benefits have been documented. Evidence of this accomplishment derives from a survey research done by our group at Brandeis University. Yet, for all the statistics on project outcomes, what I most admire is the weaving together of the oral histories of participating youth, the real faces behind the numbers. In a word, through our survey results and new research by Consuelo Foundation, this publication tracks the successful trajectory of positive life skills development among indigenous young people from proud cultures, subject to incredible stress and challenges.

This publication—the story about how wonderful things can be accomplished despite grave political and economic barriers—will surely be of interest to global youth leaders and advocates. The global youth movement is hungry for information of the kind reported here. My hope is that this publication—with the many details concerning program design, curricula, and implementation—will enjoy widespread dissemination.

Andrew Hahn
Professor
Brandeis University, Heller School for Social Policy and Management



“Nowadays, being poor has become part of our tribal identity, whether we like it or not. Our ancestors didn’t aspire for us to be this way. We need to bring our own language (and customs) back to life. We can show the whole world that our traditional institutions are just like theirs. We are distinct, so we must live out this distinction.”

—Ed Tami Mansayagan, Manuvu Council Chair

Indigenous People of the Philippines

Indigenous peoples in the Philippines today experience deep-seated poverty and a sense of isolation. Unlike mainstream Filipino culture with a common historical bond of Spanish and American colonization, indigenous groups—who resisted these colonizing forces and retained their tribal identities—now find themselves relegated to the margins of Philippine society.

The 110 tribes of the Philippines—comprising 16 percent of 76.5 million Filipinos—share a collective history of displacement from ancestral domains, mainly due to the encroachment of enterprises such as mining, logging, and power-generating projects into their territories. The indigenous groups of Mindanao (the second largest island of the Philippine archipelago) have found themselves further displaced by the government's treatment of their land as “the next frontier,” where poor Filipinos from other parts of the Philippines had been encouraged to migrate over the last century.

Most indigenous groups, therefore, live in remote areas with little or no access to basic services such as health care and education. Enterprises such as mining and logging have depleted the natural resources of their domains, compromising their land-based means of livelihood. In Mindanao, indigenous people live in unstable political conditions marked by conflict between military and separatist Muslim groups. Generally unrecognized by the government, tribal leaders have felt a loss of mandate.

With the loss of their land as well as sovereignty, indigenous Filipinos have seen their customs, values, and traditions disappearing. Ironically, their having been called “cultural communities” by the government has led to their sense of degradation. “In Philippine society, ‘cultural minorities’ are good at cultural presentations—dancing and singing,” remarks Ed Tami Mansayagan, chair of the council of Manuvus (or Manobos), an indigenous group in Mindanao. “Tribes were sometimes forced to celebrate their sacred rituals to entertain people who didn't understand their tradition, caus[ing] our sense of dignity and integrity to erode.”

In 1997, the Philippine Congress approved the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA), meant to restore ancestral lands to indigenous groups and protect them from hazardous

development projects. Though the Act seemed like a breakthrough in the advocacy of indigenous peoples' rights, it had serious shortcomings, leading to a slow implementation of ancestral domain grants, insufficient consultations between indigenous groups and companies, and even the indigenous groups' harassment by other people claiming their land through this new legal channel.

Yet, inroads to progress and judicious integration into Philippine society have been paved. Aided by numerous peoples' organizations across the country, indigenous groups are slowly and thoughtfully accommodating modern changes into their lives. Some groups with access to education have formed their own indigenous schools, or “schools of living tradition,” as they are sometimes called. Other groups have reformulated their notions of leadership and representation, and now, for instance, accommodate women and youth leaders into their tribal councils.



Given the extent of poverty in their communities, it's not surprising that indigenous youth are considered a "highly vulnerable" group. It is estimated that only 37 percent of indigenous children in Mindanao attend elementary school and, in more remote areas, only about 20 percent of them complete it.

Those who do go to school with non-indigenous children tend to hide their tribal identity. Manuvu elder Ed Tami Mansayagan cites his own school days as an example: "I've asked myself, 'Why this need to hide my identity in school?' Many of us indigenous people can relate to this. We'd speak in Tagalog [the national language] even if the person we're speaking to belongs to our own tribe. We hide our identity because of the word discrimination. Every indigenous person experiences this in school. One simply has to be a Manobo or a Moro [Muslim] to experience how much this hurts."

Discrimination also comes in the official form of a "monolithic Manila"-based curriculum. "The national educational system is predicated on a national cultural model that treats all students alike, regardless of their native culture," says anthropologist Gerard Rixhon. "It's insensitive to the indigenous cultures and blind to the various religious tenets of the people, especially toward the Muslim and animist people."

Rixhon also notes the indigenous youths' insecurity about the future facing them and their tribes. "The young people are growing impatient with their traditional leaders because of the latter's slow pace and impotence in the face of new demands and threats. Clearly the youth wants to travel the road of the future and wants a say in it."



The Indigenous Youth



Indigenous Youth...

- aged 15 to 24 number 2.5 million
- comprises 20 percent of the indigenous people population
- lack education—about 70 percent are elementary or high-school dropouts or never attended school

History of the Program



In 1998, Consuelo Foundation, then known as Children and Youth Foundation of the Philippines (CYFP), met with NGO workers and indigenous teachers in Agusan del Sur, Mindanao. Consuelo Foundation at the time was grappling with the question of how best to approach the challenges of indigenous youth who were bewildered by the rapid pace of change and the inability or failure of their traditional leaders to lead them out of poverty. During the meeting, the community workers discussed their aspirations for the people they worked for, and it soon became clear that training the indigenous youth for leadership would be pivotal in ensuring their future.

Philippine-based anthropologist Gerard Rixhon was commissioned to design a program. Initially, he noted three directions the program could take: 1) the youth could “go full speed ahead” on the “highway of technological and economic development, turning their backs on their cultural traditions and identity;” 2) they could stay “in the comfort of the cultural womb of aging traditions, building a roadblock to progress;” or, 3) they could take “a progressive road to the future with a conscious grip on their precious ancestral and cultural values”.

With the third route deemed to be the most prudent, Consuelo Foundation, in collaboration and consultation with indigenous elders and youth, and some local and foreign anthropologists, set about designing the program. Called the Philippine Indigenous Youth Leadership Training Program (PIYLTP), its emphasis on indigenous youth leadership and its culture-specific curriculum set it apart from other development projects for the youth.

Consuelo Foundation drafted a proposal for funding of the PIYLTP to the Japan Foundation Asia Center. In 1999, Japan Foundation approved the project and provided funds to develop the PIYLTP curriculum and pilot-test it.

The program was pilot-tested in three indigenous communities where Consuelo Foundation had an existing network of partners: among the Ibalois of Benguet, the Bajaus of Sulu, and the Manobos of Agusan del Sur.

From March to May 2000, 45 indigenous youth participated in the PIYLTP, which were held simultaneously in the three communities. Fifteen young Bajaus from Sulu—pedicab drivers by day and fishermen by night—were among the first batch of

graduates of the indigenous leadership training. Like their fellow graduates from the two other communities, they faced the challenge of starting a project. The Bajau youth chose to build a much-needed network of footbridges to facilitate the access of people and resources to and from their seaside community.

With the success of the Program in the pilot communities, Consuelo Foundation sought to broaden its scope and ensure its sustainability. A proposal for expansion of the PIYLTP was submitted to the International Youth Foundation (IYF) based in Maryland, USA.

“[W]hy focus on the indigenous youth? The answer is simply that the indigenous or ethnic groups are, alongside the slum dwellers, the poorest and most neglected people in the Philippines. Unlike the squatter communities, they live in relatively more difficult and removed physical environments and have no access to services. In addition, their native culture, strongly anchored on tradition, is at variance with the national culture of the country, further increasing their state of marginality.”—**Gerard Rixhon, anthropologist**



IYF, which oversees youth-development programs in 70 countries, found the leadership training package an ideal fit for one of the international initiatives it manages, the Nokia-sponsored Make a Connection program. Currently running in 22 countries, Make a Connection aims to develop in young people the life skills needed to interact with others, establish relationships with their communities, and participate in their nation’s economic mainstream. PIYLTP became part of the global Make a Connection program, while it retained its distinct, culture-specific modules for indigenous youth.

Supported by Nokia and IYF, Consuelo Foundation implemented the program, Make a Connection: Nurturing Future Leaders project, in 12 indigenous communities from 2002 to 2005, and refined the training modules over time.

The intended outcome would define the new indigenous leaders as equipped with a vision very much their own, yet very capable of navigating in the modern world.



Make a Connection: Nurturing Future Leaders

Like other Make a Connection programs throughout the world, the Philippine program offers general life and leadership skills to youth in need. However, the Philippine program is distinguished by a primary focus on encouraging indigenous youth to value their indigenous culture—a necessary first step in developing self-confidence and assuming leadership and responsibility for their communities.

Program Goal

Make a Connection: Nurturing Future Leaders helps indigenous youth develop life, leadership, and livelihood skills so that they can relate effectively and live productively in the culturally diverse Philippine society, and enable them to help improve the quality of life in their own communities.

Program Objectives

1. Help the indigenous youth understand and appreciate their cultural heritage
2. Develop their life, leadership, and livelihood skills
3. Provide them with an opportunity to engage in sustainable socio-economic projects in their communities
4. Foster in them a commitment to serve in their communities

Who May Join

- Indigenous youth, aged 16 to 25, with some education/literacy
- Out-of-school youth with leadership potential (as attested to by a Steering Committee or community elders)
- Geographic origin: from the same or adjacent communities
- Gender distribution: preferably equal ratio of male and female
- Single

How it Works: Project Life Cycle

- 1 Through partner organizations implementing the program, sites are chosen based on their accessibility, extent of deprivation, and the community's willingness to participate in the program.
- 2 Community members representing various sectors—elders, youth, women, and officials—are invited to a meeting to learn about the program and the role they will play in it, and may form a Steering Committee.
- 3 Participants are chosen based on the elders' recommendations.
- 4 An orientation lets participants voice expectations and understand the long-term commitment expected of them.
- 5 Participants go through the four modules of the Philippine Indigenous Youth Leadership Training Program over a period of 12 months.
- 6 Fieldwork is done by participants for better understanding and appreciation of their communities, in preparation for socio-economic projects they will set up.
- 7 Socio-economic projects are identified and assessed in terms of feasibility.
- 8 Skills training and capital are provided for specific projects identified.
- 9 Project monitoring is done by the partner-organizations over the next two years.

The Curriculum



Module 1: Search for Meaning and Identity

The first module aims to help the young participants reconnect with their indigenous identity, and, in the process, discover feelings of self-worth and competence.

Throughout a two-day session, participants reflect on and share their answers to these questions:

- What are my aspirations?
How do I plan to achieve these?
- Who are the significant persons in my life?
- What are the values of my tribe?
Which of these values help/hinder my community's growth?

How the Training is Run

The 12-month training package, composed of four modules, is held simultaneously in three to four different indigenous communities in a given year, with 50 participants in each site. Once the training is completed, the participants are provided with hands-on experience in running a project of their choice.

A typical session consists of one or more individual or group activities, followed by reflection, sharing, and processing. Group work normally involves drawing instead of writing, as some participants are not very literate.



Module 2: Cultural Appreciation

The second module aims to awaken among the indigenous youth a deeper appreciation of and responsibility to their indigenous culture. They also begin to face and resolve conflicts or dilemmas related to their indigenous culture and other facets of their identity, such as religion, lifestyle, and aspirations.



“More than half of the participants admit that they know very little about their culture. Many cannot speak their indigenous dialect and use the lowlanders’ language. It was, however, very evident that they take great pride in their culture, shown in their seriousness in reviving indigenous rituals and organizing annual cultural festivals in the community.”

- **Interim Report to International Youth Foundation, October 2002**

The Disappearing Smile of Mila

In one exercise, the participants meet an indigenous teen named Mila, who grew up not knowing she is half-Higaonon (an indigenous group from Misamis Oriental in Mindanao). When her lowlander classmates start taunting her for having kinky hair, she realizes her true identity and feels shame.

The tale of Mila allows participants to process their own feelings of insecurity and shame about their identity. It also provides them with a model of how to resolve their identity issues. In the story, Mila visits her mother’s tribal community, meets her relatives for the first time, and discovers things about her people to be proud of.

The Journey Up the Mountain

“If you could preserve your people’s way of life on a mountain peak, what would you bring on your journey to get there?”

The participants mull over this question to help them evaluate which aspects of their culture are worth preserving and which are no longer beneficial. They concretize these cultural aspects through symbols—indigenous costumes, tools, and ritual objects. They learn that part of valuing one’s culture is being critical about it.





Module 3: Indigenous Youth Leadership/ Establishing the Youth Organization

Module 3 aims to provide the youth leaders with the core competencies and attitudes to bridge the past and the future, and to help them gain a service orientation so that they are inspired to help their community grapple with the realities and issues it faces as an indigenous group.

While participants discuss hypothetical situations to practice decision-making, they also confront real-life issues affecting their community. They discuss existing community problems, identify their root causes and effects, and seek solutions. At this point they take the first steps in forming a youth group—listening to elders share their vision for the community, reflecting on their own role as youth leaders, and structuring their own organization.

The session emphasizes one core message: “I am connected to my people in blood and in spirit. The problems they face are mine. While my parents and elders are responsible for me, I am equally responsible for them.”

Module 4: Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and Community Research

Module 4 introduces the youth to the basics of research as a process of studying, learning, and documenting their community’s indigenous knowledge systems and practices related to sustainable livelihood. It also introduces them to the process of community assessment.

After the training, the youth immerse themselves more deeply into their communities. For approximately two months, they conduct field work—developing community profiles, resource maps, and documentation of indigenous knowledge focused on sustainable livelihood. To be responsive leaders, they analyze their community according to its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.



Sustainable Socio-economic Project Planning, Skills Training & Project Implementation

Over the next two to five months, each youth group brainstorms projects they would like to implement based on the results of their fieldwork. They conduct feasibility studies and prepare funding proposals for support of their projects.

When the proposal is approved, a revolving fund is provided by the program to finance the proposed project and other projects that are beneficial to the community and other youth of the area.

The partner implementer then provides resource persons to teach the group the skills they need to run their projects. For eight Iranon youth who set up a crab-fattening business, for example, the local partner, Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities, Inc.-Women in Enterprise Development, brought in a crab specialist from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the Department of Agriculture in Cotabato City.

After their businesses are launched, the partner implementer continues coaching the groups for at least two more years, helps them expand the organization to accommodate more youth members, and submits quarterly progress reports to Consuelo Foundation. Consuelo Foundation, meanwhile, regularly monitors the youth projects and the activities of the youth organization.





Changes in Indigenous Youth

In the survey conducted by Brandeis University in 2005, they noted significant changes among the Make a Connection participants, especially in their appreciation of themselves and their culture. Among 181 surveyed participants, they considered “connection to local community and culture” as the most vital life skill they learned from the training.

Candiis Contadan had a childhood similar to many youths of Mindanao. “I remember the strafing when I was just a boy,” says the Higaonon youth, recalling the battles between the military and separatist Muslim groups in his community. “Helicopters would come sweeping down to fire at nearby mountains with machine guns. We’d have to run for cover. My family would have to move from place to place. Sometimes there was no food.”

Candiis eventually quit school at age 14, finishing fourth grade. Today, he can read and write but with much effort. Yet he stood out as a leader during the Make a Connection training sessions held in his community. “The other participants naturally gravitated around him,” shares the facilitator, “treating him as their leader without being told to do so.”

The Make a Connection program harnessed Candiis’s potential to lead. “We cannot progress as a people if we leave anybody behind,” remarks Candiis. “As a youth leader, I have to help facilitate the growth of not a few but of everyone. It will have to start with me.”

Candiis’ story, along with those of other youths told here, reflect key changes in their attitudes and outlooks after the program. Their stories mark a deeper connection to their own selves, their heritage, communities, other peoples, and their own futures.

PROJECT IMPACT ON THE YOUTH

- They take pride in their indigenous identity
- Many go back to school
- They recognize themselves as leaders
- They are self-reliant
- They value their health more

SURVEY RESULTS

- 100 percent feel connected to their local community/culture
- Since joining Make a Connection, 35 percent have attended school or taken vocational courses
- 20 percent have earned a degree or certificate since completing the project.
- 91 percent feel connected to their community by volunteering
- 95 percent feel they’ve become better leaders since the program
- 91 percent support themselves
- 87 percent support family members
- 19 percent self-report dropping use of illegal drugs



A major rise in self-confidence was the most significant change among the youth—evident in self-assessment reports made by both participants and facilitators.

“I consider Make a Connection a gift from Allah. Before I joined the training, I was very, very shy. Now I can discuss my ideas and feelings with others. I also appreciate our cultural practices, our being Tausug and Muslim. I feel hopeful about the project we are planning—a cooperative consumer store in our *barangay* (village). Through it, we will be able to help not only ourselves but our community as well.”
—Vilma Julhani, Tausug youth of Jolo, Sulu.

“My T’boli tribe experiences much rejection when we go down to the city. We get laughed at and discriminated against when we look for jobs. If we get a job it would only be as maids. I used to wish that I could get born again into a different tribe. Thanks to the Make a Connection program, I gained the self-confidence needed to be a leader. I am now a preschool teacher with a far-flung assignment in the mountains to teach other T’boli. Before, others thought the youth were useless in their community, but they’re wrong.”—Rosalyn Lazelle, T’boli youth of South Cotabato.

Connection
to Oneself: Self-confidence

Connection to One's Culture: Valuing Heritage

“Before the training, I wanted to be a Christian and would deny my own tribe. Because if you're a Muslim, you're discriminated against when you try to find a job. People are afraid of you. But when Make a Connection came into my life, I learned to stand up for my tribe.”—Sim Adjijil, Yakan youth of Basilan.

“I am very happy and proud of the changes I am seeing in my son. He used to be irresponsible and happy-go-lucky. Now, he does his responsibilities at home and I am surprised by his interest in knowing our history, traditions and other aspects of Yakan culture. I am very proud of him because I can see he is trying to be a good Yakan.”—Daniel Adjijil, father of Sim Adjijil, participant from Basilan.

“After the training I learned to really value my tribe. I shouldn't be ashamed of being Teduray. Instead, I should be proud of this.”—Jovito Tagiman, a Teduray youth of Maguindanao.



Connection to Community: Empowerment and Service

The youth seriously took on their role as leaders of their communities and went beyond the basic expectation of creating their own socio-economic projects.

“From living in a ‘no man’s land’ due to all-out war that has made our people poorer, we’ve received hope through Make a Connection. The community bridge we fixed and the simple waiting shed that we built are just some of the projects we started. These are proof of how the Make a Connection program helped us fulfill our duties to the community. These are proof that the youth can be leaders not only in the future but also in the present.”—Cairia Ontong, Maranao youth of Lanao del Sur.

“Despite our age, we can do something for peace and development.”—Analyn Simpall, Maguindanaoan youth of Cotabato City.



Connection to Other Cultures: Openness and Respect

Facilitators noted an initial hostility between Maguindanaoan and Iranon youth who joined the same training in 2003. But these youths became more open and accepting of each other after the training. In June 2005, participants representing various tribes got a chance to meet each other in a Youth Congress held in Cotabato City.

“When we had the 14-day leadership training, a lot of changes took place in our lives, especially when it came to how we perceived other tribes. We used to laugh at tribes from other places—how they spoke and acted according to their own culture. Back then we didn’t appreciate their culture. After the training I learned to appreciate other cultures and other tribes. That’s what’s needed to have peace.”
—Zenaida Basalon, from Pansacala, Cotabato City.

“We, the youth of Luzon, had this idea of Mindanao as a land of violence. We thought the people there were bad—murderers, especially the Abu Sayyaf [a terrorist group]. During the boat ride on our way [to the Youth Congress] there, we worried about our safety. But when we arrived, the different tribes warmly welcomed us. I realized then that we should unite and help each other towards peace and progress for our nation.”—Jojo Longkino, from Nueva Vizcaya.



Connection to the Future: Direction in Life

The youth put the life skills they learned to good use, especially given the primary challenge they collectively faced: overcoming poverty.

“Before I joined Make a Connection, I was a bum in my community. My life had no direction. Because my family was poor, I thought I’d end up poor as well. But when I joined Make a Connection, I learned how to face life’s challenges. I’m now back in school as a working scholar. When there are no classes I would work as a stevedore in town. I used to feel ashamed about my job, especially when people my age would see me in really soiled clothes. But now, whatever challenges come my way, I know I’ll be ready to face them. For this I’m grateful to Make a Connection.”—Jerson Vicente, a Kalanguya youth.

“I feel sorry that I left the program for a while to join the New People’s Army [a communist group], thinking that I will be able to help my community through armed struggle. I was mistaken. That’s why I returned to continue the program. I now realize that violence does not solve problems. We solve our problems by acquiring skills and changing our attitude towards ourselves and our fellowmen. Make a Connection gave me new knowledge about myself, my culture, and new skills that I am now using to improve my life and that of my family.”—Ernesto Taquien, Higaonon youth from Misamis Oriental.

“My plan for the future is to be an Agricultural Extension worker, facilitating the transfer of farming technology to the people in hard-to-reach countryside areas like our ancestral domain. Make a Connection is giving me access to a network of people who could help, as well as to a wide selection of technologies that I could learn and share with my fellow B’laans.”—Cecille Sangkay, B’laan youth of General Santos City.



Socio-economic Projects Generated

The success of the project is underpinned by the opportunity the project provides for the trainees to apply their learning in concrete projects, which benefit not only themselves but their communities as well.

An ordinary day finds Rico Manda at his youth group's fishpond in Cotabato City. This Iranon youth has much to be proud of. Using the loan from Consuelo Foundation, he and his group bought a 26-foot motorboat and materials to build a caretaker's house. They used the rest of the money to rent a one-hectare fishpond for raising crabs.

Before Rico's group began the enterprise, a crab specialist from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources gave them training. "I learned how to tell if the crablets are getting sick and how to fatten them up," says Rico.

Since throwing their first batch of 5,000 crablets into the pond two years ago, Rico's group has earned P20,000 (USD 400) from their harvests. They have also branched out into farming *tilapia* (a local fish), shrimps, and prawns. Their motorboat ferries people from their community to other places, and their rest-house has given their youth group a second home.

"We're very happy because now we have a livelihood," shares Rico. "Because our project has been successful and we're earning from it, our sacrifices haven't been in vain."

Other youth groups formed through Make a Connection have begun their own enterprises as well. The startup livelihood project, after all, is the immediate challenge the program poses to them.

Projects Fill Community Needs

"We're happy that our business helps the community," shares Cairia Ontong, whose youth group opened a bakery in their Maranao village. They bought a small oven, bread roller, and other equipment using seed money from Consuelo Foundation. Cairia's neighbors no longer need to travel a far distance to buy their bread—just like the Maguindanaoans and Iranons in remote villages where youth groups also set up bakeries.

The B'laan and Kalanguya youth also served their communities in the same way. Seeing that farmers in their villages had to travel a far distance to have their produce milled, the youth groups set up mills for corn and rice, respectively, in their communities.





Projects Build on Dominant Livelihood of Community

Several groups chose projects to help improve the current form of livelihood of their communities. Many groups went into diversified and sustainable upland agriculture—introducing new farming technology and adopting the use of organic fertilizers and pesticides. The Higaonons and T'bolis introduced new crops and high-value fruits such as durian and mangosteen. The B'laan youth started a 2.5-hectare demonstration farm to show current upland-farming practices to other farmers.



Socio-Economic Projects at a Glance

- Neighborhood bakeries
- Neighborhood stores
- Silkscreen print and frame shop
- Community farms engaged in organic farming
- Mills for corn and rice
- Livestock-raising (poultry, goats, hogs, cows)
- Crab-fattening
- Fish-vending
- Rubber-tree nursery
- Seaweed (carageenan) farming
- Vermiculture (use of earthworms for composting)
- Group marketing of citrus fruits
- High-value vegetable production
- High-value fruit production
- Fishing and fish drying

Changes in the Community



Reviving Sukuran and Tribal Values

“For the first time, I am excited about a project,” shares Datu Tony Lumandong, a Higaonon youth organizer. “I’ve been an organizer for a long time now, but this is the first time I am participating in a project that has a clear follow-through—with concrete projects the whole community can work on and benefit from.”

Datu Tony is referring to the Higaonon values—*pabatun-batuna*, *pahaun-hauna*, and *palalagimot* (caring, sharing, and working together)—that the Higaonon youth group is consciously reviving through their livelihood project. Their project called *sukuran* is a Higaonon term that means “what one is capable of doing.” It’s also a unit of measure of land that a family cultivates.

Higaonon youth Melchor Lanta explains: “We have communal farms of about three hectares planted to corn, bananas, and onions, and we also have our own individual farms.” The youth till the communal farms together and likewise help each other till their individual farms.

Sukuran is built on the three aforementioned Higaonon values. “The most significant achievement of this project so far is its promotion of these three values that the Higaonons hold very dear,” says Datu Tony. “This is what’s important to us. We are not counting the income. We want to see how we’ve started right and how far we’ve come.”



Other Contributions to the Community

Through their leadership and livelihood projects, the youth of Make a Connection have made significant, positive impacts on their communities. Indirect Make a Connection beneficiaries add up to about 6,000 people from 11 tribes.

Literacy and Education

- Adult literacy programs organized by T'boli youth
- Establishment of preschool classes by T'boli youth
- Book-donation drive to start a community library by B'laan youth

Infrastructure and Cleanliness

- Building of footbridges by Bajau youth
- Repairing of community training centers
- Environmental cleanup campaigns by Sama youth of Tawi-Tawi
- Construction of community bridges by Maranao youth

Civic Involvement

- Voters' education during the 2004 national and local elections
- Participation in local government (eight youths elected into youth councils)
- Assistance in ancestral domain claims by Higaonon and B'laan youth
- Relief work for flood victims
- Initiating/actively participating in community peace-building activities

Youth Development

- Anti-drug abuse campaigns and symposia organized by youth groups in Jolo and Cotabato
- Summer sports fest by Sama youth of Tawi-Tawi

Cultural Pride

- Cultural revivals through annual festivals and competitions in local communities
- Revival of indigenous rituals
- Assistance in a project to codify traditional laws by Teduray youth
- Dialogue with religious groups about tribal rituals by youth of Nueva Vizcaya

Leadership in Action

The youth officers of the B'laan community in Sitio Calfungal, General Santos City, helped their community regain part of their ancestral domain. They provided advocacy and documentation support in the community's application for a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title of a 70-hectare pastureland the lease of which had expired. The settlement of the case in favor of the B'laan community was peaceful, without the violence that marred a similar, expired pasture-lease turnover in another community.



Lessons Learned

In its retrospective study of Make a Connection: Nurturing Future Leaders from 2002 to 2004, the Brandeis University team sums up the program thus: “The story that is revealed is of a program located in multiple areas of both desperate poverty and political instability, serving a population with great assets yet many needs often overlooked by programs.”

The Brandeis study sees Make a Connection as built on “proven principles of youth development;” “exceptionally thoughtful and based on a clear understanding about what works;” and “quite effective” in terms of implementation.

Over the three-year course of running the program in 11 sites, the organizers and implementers themselves have culled various insights into what works for Make a Connection.



Evolving Role of Tribal Elders

Traditionally, elders are the only recognized leaders of an indigenous community, the youth play no role in decision-making. As the elders give their blessings to the program, they are accepting a modern idea of leadership into their way of life. When tribal elders accept the Make a Connection program into their community, it signals their willingness to see their own culture evolve.

Consuelo Foundation Senior Program Specialist Elsa Ravelo says, “The elders have to be cited in particular for their capacity to provide support while at the same time remaining in the background and allowing the youth to feel greater ownership of and responsibility for the project.”

Honoring Tribal Values

Livelihood projects that have been set up, especially those involving farming, honor an important element of indigenous identity: connectedness to the land. Youth groups engaged in farming use organic fertilizers and pesticides, keeping true to an intrinsic tribal value of living in harmony with nature.

Facilitators note the need to be culturally sensitive in handling the training sessions. For example, some participants expressed hesitation in performing rituals of their tribe for the sake of presentation, saying this shouldn’t be allowed. In such cases, facilitators modified instructions and clarified that explaining a ritual is different from re-enacting it.

Instilling Cultural Pride as Key in Building Self-confidence

What emerged as a common trait among indigenous youth is their shyness or lack of self-confidence. The significant rise in their self-confidence after the training may be attributed to its main emphasis: the restoration of the youth’s pride in their indigenous culture.

Maguindanaoan tribal leader Timuway James Palao observes, “We have had sad experiences of projects presumably intending to help the lumad [indigenous] youth, but in reality, did not. The [Make a Connection] program is different because it strengthens the cultural roots of the youth. After a few months in the training, I noticed the great bonding among the participants, the community leaders, and tribal leaders. The self-confidence of the young have improved dramatically, and they now show love and appreciation for their indigenous practices and traditions.”





Partner Implementers' Key Role in Acceptance of Program

Choosing partner implementers who have established ties with particular tribal communities was key in the various communities' acceptance of the program. These partners were highly credible among the elders. The partners were also open to the elders' suggestions and knew how to work with them, such as accommodating the observance of rituals before and after some activities.

Unstable Political Context Makes Life Skills Relevant

Because Make a Connection operates in areas of political insecurity, the program has managed to turn situations where young people faced threats into empowering "learning moments." The youth and facilitators have managed to deal with temporarily suspending operations due to armed conflicts in the project sites. One group's encounter with military harassment has made lessons in conflict mediation all the more relevant.

Need for Cross-cultural Interaction among Tribes

Facilitators noted that bringing different indigenous youth groups together and building a network of trained youth would be a worthwhile endeavor. This saw fruition at the Youth Congress held in May 2005 in Cotabato City, where trained youth, representing different tribes, interacted with each other for the first time. As a direct result of the congress, the Make a Connection Youth Network was established. This network continues and sustains the interaction, sharing, and mutual support among the program participants.

Organizer's Extended Support Lends to its Credibility

According to partners, Make a Connection has a more lasting impact on communities mainly because of its long time frame. It guides the youth from beginning to end—from their training to the sustenance of their livelihood projects. Doing regular evaluation and progress reports also help the partners more quickly identify areas for improvement, such as spotting the need to produce a standard Training Implementation Guide. The long-lasting commitment of Make a Connection as well as the full support of all sectors concerned—the partners, youths, and communities—make the program highly effective.



Challenges Ahead

There is a need to reach out to more indigenous youth so that these “pockets of good practice” can have a nationwide application, motivating program graduates to extend a helping hand to their peers.

Outputs (Jan 2002-Dec 2005)

- 551 direct indigenous youth beneficiaries from 15 tribes
- Approximately 6,000 indirect beneficiaries in 12 communities
- Original training module refined—the program now consists of four modules
- A Program Implementation Guide developed together with indicators and tools for assessment of program outcomes on the youth
- 38 adults trained as facilitators
- 11 12-month trainings completed
- 11 youth organizations formed (4 registered)
- 1 cooperative established and registered
- Project cost per participant: PhP 33,300.00

Make a Connection's Network of Participants

Make a Connection: Nurturing Future Leaders is implemented only in indigenous communities. Because indigenous peoples of Mindanao are considered more marginalized than those in other parts of the Philippines, 11 out of 12 project sites are in Mindanao. One site is in northern Luzon.

YEAR	Indigenous Peoples	No. of Youth	Location of Communities	Local Partner Implementer
1999 Program development and pilot-testing sponsored by Japan Foundation and led by Children and Youth Foundation of the Philippines	Bajau	15	Jolo, Sulu Province	Notre Dame of Jolo College-Community Extension Service
	Manobo	16	San Luis, Agusan del Sur Province	San Luis Lumad Community High School
	Ibaloi	15	Taloy, Benguet Province; and Baguio City	Shontoug Foundation, Inc.
2002 Now under International Youth Foundation and Nokia's Make a Connection Program	T'boli	16	Lambangan, South Cotabato Province	Marcellin Foundation, Inc.
	B'laan	35	Bawing and Upper Labay, South Cotabato	
	Tausug	50	Jolo, Sulu Province	Social Action Center of Jolo
	Higaonon	51	Balingasag, Misamis Oriental Province	Sentro Para sa Ganap na Pamayanan (SENTRO)
2003	Kankanaey	18	Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya Province	Tribal Cooperation for Rural Development, Inc. (TRICORD)
	Kalanguya	23	Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya Province	
	Bugkalot	10	Dupax del Sur, Nueva Vizcaya Province	
	Sama	50	Tabawan, Tawi-Tawi Province	Social Action Center of Jolo
	Maguindanaoan	25	Cotabato City	Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities Inc.-Women in Enterprise Development (NDFCAI-WED)
	Iranon	25	Cotabato City	
2004 Consuelo Foundation provided additional funds to reach out to one more indigenous group	Yakan	47	Sumisip, Basilan Province	Nagdilaab Foundation, Inc.
	Maranao	50	Kapatagan, Lanao del Sur Province	Bangsamoro Youth-Ranao Center for Peace & Development, Inc.
	Teduray	51	Upi, Maguindanao Province	Lumad Development Center, Inc.
	Subanen	50	Siay, Zamboanga Sibugay Province	Indigenous People's Apostolate, Prelature of Ipil
	Aromanon Manobo	50	Carmen, North Cotabato Province	Community & Family Services, Inc. (CFSI)

1999 2002 2003 2004

Taloy, Benguet Province; and Baguio City
15 Ibaloi Youth

Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya Province
18 Kankanaey Youth
23 Kalanguya Youth
Dupax del Sur, Nueva Vizcaya Province
10 Bugkalot Youth

Cotabato City
25 Maguindanaon Youth
25 Iranon Youth

Balingasag, Misamis Oriental
50 Higaonon Youth

Kapatagan, Lanao del Sur Province
50 Maranao Youth

San Luis, Agusan del Sur Province
16 Manobo Youth

Siay, Zamboanga Sibugay Province
50 Subanen Youth

Sumisip, Basilan Province
47 Yakan Youth

Carmen, North Cotabato Province
50 Aromanon Manobo Youth

Jolo, Sulu Province
15 Bajau Youth

Upi, Maguindanao Province
51 Teduray Youth

Jolo, Sulu Province
50 Tausug Youth

Tabawan, Tawi-Tawi Province
50 Sama Youth

Lambangan, South Cotabato Province
16 T'boli Youth
Bawing and Upper Labay, South Cotabato
35 B'laan Youth

Appendix 1 Participating Indigenous Peoples

Cordillera Region

This region refers to the mountain ranges occupying half of northern Luzon. Composed of six provinces and Baguio City, its rich soils have given its people mountainside rice terraces to farm. This region has been marred by military violence—in response to the Cordillera people's protests against destructive projects in their territories, such as the building of several hydroelectric dams.

1 Bugkalot

The Bugkalots live in the Caraballo and Sierra Madre Mountain ranges in Luzon. Primarily engaged in swidden farming, they are spread out across the provinces of Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino and Aurora.

2 Ibaloi

The Ibalois inhabit almost the whole of Benguet Province in Northern Luzon. They represent one of three major ethnic groups in this area. Their name means “people from Baloy,” an existing village near the Agno River.

3 Kalanguya

The Kalanguyas make their home in the mountain regions of Nueva Vizcaya and surrounding provinces. The term Kalanguya contracts this people's common expression, “Keley ngo iya,” which means, “What in the world is this?”—a line invoked to bring peace during conflict situations.

4 Kankanaey

The Kankanaeys live in Mountain Province, Benguet, Ilocos Sur, and the highlands beyond northern La Union. Their nucleated communities are closely linked to their rice terraces. Women are traditionally back-loom weavers while the men engage in woodcarving, pottery, and making furniture.

Mindanao

Mindanao is home to at least 27 tribes of indigenous peoples, 13 of whom are Muslim: the Iranons, Maranaos, and Maguindanaoans live in the mainland, while the Samas, Tausugs, and Yakans, among others, live in island provinces. Non-Muslim ethnic groups called Lumads include the Bagobos, Higaonons, T'bolis, B'laans, Tedurays, Subanens and Bajaus.

5 Aromanon Manobos

The Aromanon Manobos can be found in South Cotabato. They build their tribal identity on creeks

and rivers that run through their old 600,000-hectare territory called Darapa. Eleven subgroups are distinguished among the Aromanon Manobos.

6 Bajau

Known as sea gypsies, the Bajaus live along the coast of the Sulu archipelago. Also known as Sama Dilaut, they are identified with the Sama people of Sulu. But unlike the Sama who have long settled on land, some Bajau began to live ashore only in the past few decades, driven to abandon their nomadic boat culture due to changing times.

7 B'laan

The B'laans are primarily located in Davao del Sur, and their ancestral domains include the watershed areas of Davao and Cotabato. They share the language of the T'bolis.

8 Higaonon

The Higaonons, whose name means “people of the wilderness”, live in Bukidnon Province, Agusan del Sur, and Misamis Oriental. They follow the datu system of leadership, which governs the entire community. The datu passes on his title to the most deserving son.

9 Iranon

The Iranons occupy the border between Maguindanao province and Lanao del Sur. Known for outstanding maritime skills, the Iranons used to ply the route connecting the Sulu and Celebes Seas.

10 Maguindanaoan

The Maguindanaoans live in the provinces of Cotabato and Maguindanao. Along with the Tausugs, they are considered the most politically dominant Muslim ethnic group in Mindanao, from which emerged the Mindanao Sultanates.

11 Manobo

The Manobos live all over Mindanao, but they are most numerous among indigenous groups living in Agusan del Sur. Logging and mining operations have encroached into their territories since the 1930s.

12 Maranao

The Maranaos, whose name literally means “people of the lake”, live around Lake Lanao in Lanao del Sur province. Forming the largest Muslim group in Mindanao, the Maranao municipalities comprise the only non-westernized areas of the Philippines. They

are renowned for sophisticated weaving, wood and metal crafts, and the intricate design motifs known as *sarimanok* (abstraction of a cock and dragon) and *naga* (snake).

13 Sama

The Samas are greatly dispersed along the coastline of the Sulu archipelago. The word Sama comes from the term *sama-sama*, or “togetherness”—suggestive of this people's peaceful nature. Samas are highly literate and call their chief community leader *panglima*.

14 Subanen

The Subanens (or Subanonns), who originally lived by the river (*suba*), can be found today mostly in the uplands of western Mindanao—Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga Sibugay. They engage in swidden farming and call their leader *timuay*.

15 Tausug

The Tausugs are the dominant group mainly occupying the Sulu archipelago. It is said that the word Tausug means “brave people”, derived from *tau* (people) and *ma-isug* (brave). In 1450, the Tausug established the Sulu sultanate and expanded their jurisdiction over Tawi-Tawi, Palawan, Basilan, Zamboanga and Sabah.

16 Teduray

The Tedurays are scattered all over Mindanao. Their name comes from *tew* (man) and *duray* (a bamboo hook-and-line fishing instrument). They still practice their traditional means of livelihood, such as swidden farming, fishing, and hunting.

17 T'boli

The T'bolis live in the mountain ranges of South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat provinces. They are known for their intricate ceremonial dress and spirited music and dance. Women weave their unique fabric called *tinlak* using abaca cloth, a back-strap loom, and tie-dye techniques.

18 Yakan

The Yakans live in the island province of Basilan. Based on their folktales, the Yakans descended from migrating Dayaks from Northeast Borneo and Samas from Johore, Malaysia, centuries ago. They practice Islam and their leader or imam holds both political and religious authority over the community. They are mainly farmers and build their homes spread across farmlands.

Appendix 2 Network of Partner-Implementers

Bangsamoro Youth-Ranao Center for Peace and Development, Inc. began as a youth organization advocating for peace and the right to self-determination of Bangsamoro, the collective name of Muslims in Mindanao. Today, it focuses on rehabilitating communities displaced by war, including the Maranaos of Kapatagan, Lanao del Sur.

Community and Family Services International (CFSI) addresses the needs of refugees, relocated communities, and victims of trauma or abuse. Formed in 1981 at the Bataan Center, serving mostly Vietnamese refugees, this Philippine-based organization works with other international partners and operates in various countries. The group links Make a Connection with the Aromanon Manobos of Carmen, North Cotabato.

Lumad Development Center serves the Lumad or indigenous peoples in South Central Mindanao and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. It advocates for their rights to ancestral-domain claims and self-determination, and engages in community organizing, feeding programs, and education in health, sanitation, and literacy among children and adults. It links Make a Connection with the Tedurays of Upi, Maguindanao.

Nagdilaab Foundation, Inc., based in Isabela City, Basilan, has been engaged in peace and development work in local communities in the last 20 years. It links Make a Connection with the Yakans of Sumisip, Basilan.

Indigenous Peoples Apostolate is based in the Prelature of Ipil, which covers 16 municipalities in Zamboanga Sibugay and three municipalities in Zamboanga del Sur. It aims to help the Subanen communities in these areas become self-reliant through programs in food security, health care, alternative education, and sector organizing. This group links Make a Connection with the Subanens of Siay, Zamboanga Sibugay.

Notre Dame of Jolo College-Community Extension Service serves the economically and socially disadvantaged non-academic community of the Provinces of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, home to several Muslim indigenous groups. Through various development programs such as cooperative development, non-formal education, and community organizing, it has helped people to become self-reliant individuals and communities.

Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities, Inc.–Women in Enterprise Development (NDFCAI-WED) is an 18-year-old, church-based organization, serving communities in need regardless of faith. Its projects include basic education, enterprise development, and skills training, and its literacy programs have received awards from UNESCO. It links Make a Connection with the Iranons and Maguindanaoans of Cotabato City.

Tribal Cooperation for Development, Inc. (TRICORD) is a 15-year-old organization working with the upland communities of Northern Luzon. It offers programs in health, education, natural resource management, and community organizing. It links Make a Connection with the Kalanguyas, Ibalois and Bugkalots of Nueva Vizcaya.

Sentro Para sa Ganap na Pamayanan, Inc. serves as the Secretariat of the National Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines. Working with various indigenous groups all over the Philippines, it links Make a Connection with the Higaonons of Misamis Oriental in Mindanao.

Marcellin Foundation addresses the needs of children-at-risk—providing them with therapy, education, as well as life- and livelihood-skills training. This organization, founded by Marist Brothers in 1992, links Make a Connection with the T'bolis and B'laans of South Cotabato.

San Luis Lumad Community High School is an innovative secondary educational institution for the indigenous youth of San Luis and neighboring tribal communities in Agusan del Sur. Through a curriculum that is largely based on the indigenous way of life, it aims to enhance the cultural identity of the lumad youth while, at the same time, equipping them with the knowledge and skills for livelihood and life in dialogue with lowland cultures. The school first opened in 1996.

Social Action Center of Jolo is the social development arm of the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo. It has been establishing and assisting cooperatives and cottage industries since the 70s. It links Make a Connection with the Tausugs and Samas of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Shontoug Foundation is one of the pioneers in facilitating the development of poor and marginalized communities in Baguio City and the Benguet Province. Having been involved in the field of development for 30 years, Shontoug was able to carve a niche in designing and adopting indigenous development models in the upland communities. It is known for its culture-based, participatory approaches in community development and institution building.