

UPDATE ON SMOKEY MOUNTAIN PROJECT AND LESSONS LEARNED

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I. CURRENT STATUS OF THE WORK WITH SMOKEY MOUNTAIN CHILD SCAVENGERS

A. DESCRIPTION OF SMOKEY MOUNTAIN AND THE SCAVENGER COMMUNITY TODAY

10 years ago when ILO Project chance to Pilot a project for child scavengers Smokey Mountain was a huge dumpsite located near the pier for domestic at Tondo, Manila used for all the garbage trash of Metro Manila. It covered 2 barangays 128 and 129 with an estimated population of 20,000 people. These families depend on the dumpsite for their livelihood, the whole cycle of scavenging business. Their housing or shanties are made of light materials most of which we're taken from the dump. There was no water system and the dump itself is the huge playground for children. It had a parish chapel right at the top of the heap and other organizations-non-government / government agencies providing direct services and other interventions.

In 1994, dumping was suspended and on site development went on for housing facilities by the National Housing Authority (NHA).

TODAY. The old site of Smokey Mountain is part of the total Reclamation and development program of the government in the area. A 79 hectare reclamation area, just across the old Smokey Mountain, is the Manila Harbor center – an international seaport with dry-docks facilities for huge international vessels. The area is fully developed and is now 100% fully operational.

Fifty percent (50%) of the lots are already sold out with some big locators already in plane– MAKRO (a whole sale Price Club), Taiwan Cement Corp. and Star Cement Corp. to name a few. The old Smokey Mountain site is partially developed. Only about 10% of the 2.4 million cubic meters estimated total garbage has been taken out the bite ever since. The old Smokey Mountain is still there by its lonesome foreboding, a reminder of what once stood there, sans of smoke and the child scavengers.

Today, it is now a flat terrain for housing development. This is part of the total development plan of the government for the area thru (NHA) which has overall supervision. The housing area is 21.2 hectares site, which will be developed into a residential subdivision of 30 5-storey condominium buildings, a maximum of 120 units, for a total of 3,520 units. Two centralized sewage treatment plants (15 buildings for each plant) will be constructed sometime in April this year pending approval of resumption of work at the area.

To date, there are now 9 buildings with their foundation laid and 21 buildings completely finished which are ready for occupancy pending completion of the centralized sewage treatment plants which will be finished sometimes in November / December this year. 90 families whose temporary housing were burned down already occupied one of the buildings. Each housing unit has a loft on a mezzanine, with a total floor area of 32 sq. meters – main area is 20 sq. meters and the loft is 12 sq. meters. There seems no plan to provide for recreational facilities in the area except for a big vacant lot, which is reserved for institutional residents such as the parish chapel (with Fr. Beltran), school, clinic, market place, etc.

The Old Smokey Mountain Scavenger Community

They are now living at a decent site as a temporary housing prior to relocating to the permanent housing. They have amenities and facilities, which were otherwise not available before – water and light. They still scavenge for their livelihood at the new Smokey Mountain dumpsite – just 30 m away across from their temporary housing.

While waiting to be transferred to their Permanent Housing, the old Smokey Mountain residents were housed temporarily in what is called Temporary housing constructed for that purpose. These are warehouse type 2-storey buildings constructed for the purpose of leasing these out to the container yard owners after the residents will be transferred to their new houses. A total of 32 buildings (2 buildings were burned down), the site are situated just across the Manila Harbor Center and about 300m away from the Permanent Housing site. Each building has 88 units with 1 unit allotted for the interagency office use. The total units available are 2,784 units for some 12,000 people from Smokey Mountain. Each housing unit has a total floor area of 3 x 4 meters. The site has available facilities such as a sports complex, a market place, a chapel, a clinic, a livelihood center, day care center, police station, library and a training center.

As a result of the disturbance created by the demolition of the old Smokey Mountain, there emerge a big, displaced pool of unemployed (children and adult alike). The residents at the new site have to scrounge for whatever work is available within and around the vicinity. It was clear to them that scavenging is not a choice anymore, at least for the moment. For those who had the will, ^{they} were able to find jobs as laborers as the development of the Manila Harbor Center started. Those who had a little capital went into business. Some started a pedicab service (a cab powered by a bicycle), put up sari – sari stores and everyone else especially those along the main road followed thereafter. Today the main road including the peripheral streets is one big marketplace of dry and wet goods. The demolition also created a vacuum for Metro Manila for its garbage disposal particularly and especially the City of Manila, which has no available, space big enough to accommodate tons of trash daily. And so, a new site was found near the old site and a new Smokey Mountain emerged.

And soon there after, this new dumpsite, acting like a magnet, attracted new breed of scavengers– not only the old ones from the temporary housing but also the children nearby including Vitas and Katuparan Housing Site – a housing for Manila urban poor.

A New Smokey Mountain

The new mountain of trash is just 30m away from the temporary housing and just across the Manila Harbor Center. There are 2 dumping grounds – the one near the entrance of the dumpsite and the other at the far end. This is where most of the child scavengers are found since it is far away from the prying eyes of the law. This new dumpsite was put up to accommodate the garbage trash of the City of Manila only as other cities and municipalities have their own. This is enclosed with concrete (about 10 feet high) and a single entrance gate with guards. Child scavengers are not allowed. But there was plenty of child scavengers when we visited the site. According to a junk shop owner (he was with SABANA then as a community worker) was interviewed, there are hundred (little less than a thousand) of child scavengers working in shifts at the dump especially at the far end side. The youngest he saw was about 10 years old. According to him, most of the child scavengers (60% - 80%) come from the old Smokey Mountain community or temporary housing. These are the children of the child scavengers then. He himself stayed at the Temporary housing with his family.

B. SABANA TODAY

The SABANA Model of Protection and Rehabilitation services of child scavengers emerge as a result of the Action – Research-Reflection-Action methodology developed by the ILO Project Team in implementing the Pilot Project on Child Scavengers. The key elements of the model dignity HELP (Health, Earn, Learn, Parents Involvement). The SABANA as Learning Center became the focal point of all the program activities of the Pilot Project in its effort to take away the child scavengers from the dumpsite protection from the danger and hazards of the work and rehabilitating them for their return to normal life.

From a rented house at the foot of the old Smokey Mountain, from its initial Pilot Project up to the turn over of the project to ERDA (Educational Research and Development Assistance Foundation), SABANA had gone a long way. It was transferred to a Pre-Fabricated Building within the Vitas Housing Site provided by the National Housing Authority (NHA) for free until its present location at R-10, Marcos Hi-way, Tondo, Manila.

Sensing the relevance of the SABANA Program upon its assumption, ERDA continued all its program and mainstreamed them with the global trends of increased child participation.

ERDA gave SABANA its project name: Developing Sustainable Alternative Program Towards the Rehabilitation of Smokey Mountain Child Scavengers. The project had its framework that guides its implementors (see attach)

Physical Facilities

Presently, SABANA is housed in a 3-storey concrete building purchased sometime in 1999 with funds provided by Vlaams International. The front side of the ground floor is used as a display/showcase of products produced by the livelihood program while at the back, the Sewing Livelihood Unit and the T-shirt production unit are found. The second floor is utilized for the Learning Program and the third floor is the office and conference area. Adjacent to this building is a new 3-storey concrete building donated by Filinvest Development Corporation for SABANA. ERDA plans to transfer the Livelihood Program to this new building sometime this year.

The Children / Programs / Services

Learn Program

This is the education component of SABANA, which focuses on the academic, attitude, value and skills development of the children and youth. It has three (3) components: the Educational Assistance Program, the Tutorial Program and the School Program.

SABANA has recognized the importance of formal schooling in establishing the educational background of the child by providing the child beneficiaries direct educational assistance in the form of school uniforms, supplies and miscellaneous fees. Through this program, the project staff coordinates with the school authorities in facilitating the entry and re-entry of the children in the formal school system.

As a supplement to formal education, tutorial sessions are conducted to assist children and youth who are experiencing difficulties in their school subjects. The Tutorial Program is a two year program per batch designed to accommodate 150 students per batch in which time they are required to graduate from tutorial sessions and are expected to have improved and develop their skills in writing, speaking, reading and communication. As part of the program, regular home visitations and consultations are conducted to update parents on the on-going activities of their children in the program. To help the children discover their hidden talents and skills in the arts, the program integrates drama, song and dance activities in the tutorial sessions.

For the pre-schoolers, SABANA established the 10-month Pre-school Program on basic writing, reading and counting skills for children aged 4-5 ½ years old to prepare them to formal schooling. The program provides free school supplies and materials with parents contributing a minimal fee as counterpart.

Developments showing a positive response to the Learn Program include: endorsement of the public school principal for non-Smokey Mountain children to enroll in the tutorial program at SABANA, creation of a Task Force in Education at the National Level where SABANA is a significant pillar, discussion in the national level regarding issues on education the result of which was sent to DECS, replication of the Learn Program as model for education initiatives of other organizations, the low rate of school drop-outs, and the replication of the literacy modules created by Albin Salamat (e.g. Province of Romblon and the Municipality of Montalban, Province of Rizal).

The Eight (8) Learning Modules

By: Albin Salamat

These modules are intended for the working children. The purpose is to give them the opportunity to express themselves and share their experiences. The participants' experiences would form the bases for learning towards awareness and literacy development.

In every module, each participant will be guided to discover and learn the good things about himself. Through the process, he would be able to find that each one has his own unique physical characteristics, point of view and basic goodness. He would find that every child is blessed with a talent of his own by the loving grace of God.

These activities would serve as means toward developing and strengthening their basic reading and writing skills particularly those that refer to their own world of experiences.

The weekly activities comprise games, modeling, sharing and the use of other forms of arts such as songs.

These modules may serve as an "instrument of change" to improve the lives of the Filipino working children.

The following are the Modules from 1-8 with each Topic:

- I. "Me and All about Myself"
- II. "Me and My Body"
- III. "Me and My Hobby"

- IV. "Me and My Rights"
- V. "Me and My Family"
- VI. "Me and My Community"
- VII. "Me: As a Boy / Girl"
- VIII. "Me and My Values"

Earn Program

This program provides opportunities to learn livelihood skills and for income generation through income generating activities such as hand painting and hand paper making, card making, t-shirt printing/painting and other artworks (e.g. drawing, color combination, blending and shading). To improve and enhance their skills for these activities, artworks (i.e. drawing color combination, blending and shading) are regularly conducted and become part of the regular training schedule at SABANA center. To provide additional skills in livelihood, continuous skills training are facilitated and availed such as wood framing, silkscreen printing, hand papermaking, card making and paper mache and high-speed sewing.

As demands for their products increased the program expanded its operations by investing in machines (i.e. in sewing and t-shirt production) thus greatly increasing its output. With its project expansion, SABANA is now accepting job orders for t-shirt printing and streamer printing hence, establishing a name in the printing business. An off shot of their continued skills enhancement and training is that the artists of SABANA are now facilitating skills training outside of it (e.g. other NGOs which need help in their training programs)

Over time, the Earn Program has shifted focus to providing income opportunities to the adults in its income generating activities in order to shift the focus of children from their earning activities to learning activities. Income generating activities for adults include sewing, candle production, small business operations and providing job placements.

Organizing

Part of SABANA Program's "sustainable alternative" is to recognize the role of the people in the continuing management and operation of SABANA. To do this, the program had embarked on continuous training organizing and formation of different groups among the children, youth and the women. Its organizing activities had resulted to the formation of different organizations among the children, youth and the women; Junior Educator's Club-SABANA (JECS), Child Rights Advocate Club of ERDA-SABANA (CRACES), First Aiders Club of ERDA-SABANA (FACES), Artists Club of ERDA-SABANA (ACES), three (3) ERDA-SABANA Parents Organizations of Barangay 129, Katuparan and Vitas Temporary Housing and the Katuparan Temporary Housing Cooperative (KATEMCO) and the Parents' Teachers Organization of the Pre-school Program.

Advocacy campaign is the main task of the CRACES group against child abuse and child labor. The FACES group responds to the health problems of the community and provides immediate medical assistance. Its members had attended basic training on health and nutrition and first aid administration. The youth who have attended a series of trainings on value education/development, gender sensitivity, leadership and organizing comprised the JECS group. They conduct peer teaching, assist in food preparation and maintenance of the SABANA center and act as group leader. The ACES group is composed of JECS who underwent training in arts and are involved in the production of hand painted T-shirts and paper recycling.

As part of its advocacy, the SABANA children took part in advocating for a separate children sector which resulted to a creation of Children Sector per Executive Order 421 dated June 20, 1997.

Capability Building / Training

To enhance awareness, skills and leadership potentials of its beneficiaries, SABANA conducted and availed of seminars/training packages which focus on four major areas: skills and capability development, exposure to possible income generating alternatives, raising awareness in life's realities and discoveries, and organizing/advocacy. Specific seminars and training packages include leadership training, organizing, child's rights, life planning, team building, advocacy, local governance, first aide, nutrition, Local Council for the protection of children, wood framing, arts and crafts painting, hand paper making and silk screen printing.

Perhaps because of or due to its activities, these resulted to the organization of Barangay children's association in the three (3) Barangay recipients of SABANA (i.e. Barangay 129, 105 and 101) where the children are actively involved in advocacy activities and community action; creation of pool of five (5) trainors who are responsible for the designing, implementing and training with specific focus on gender sensitivity, child's rights and issues, theater arts and creative arts, and printing; and the recognition and appointment of a SABANA child leader as a representative of the Children's Sector to the National Anti Poverty Commission (NAPC).

Health and Nutrition Program

All the children of SABANA have access to the health program particularly the training component and the provision of medicines and vitamins. Height and weight monitoring are done quarterly to find out among the children who need correction for proper nutrition intake. Children with primary complex were provided with complete regimen of the medicines needed. Regular medical check-ups were conducted of facilitated with the local health staff of the center in the community.

Continuing training on Health Education, First Aid and Nutrition were an integral part of the program, which were participated in by the children and the youth. For those kids who regularly come to the SABANA center for the Tutorial and Earn Programs, a feeding program was instituted for their supplemental nutrition intake.

Job Placements Services

This service intends to facilitate employment of SABANA beneficiaries who want to work through referrals and coordination with prospective employers, employment agencies or organizations.

Project Management / Staff Development

The strength of SABANA is its project implementors. For its 10 years Operations they were the captains "keeping the ship afloat": a Program Officer (a Regular employee of ERDA); a Training Coordinator; 3 educators; 2 Earn Staff; An accountant, and an office assistant all from the Smokey Mountain community.

Linkages between the field level staff and the central office based staff is clear. Roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated. The project is lucky to be given the needed support (technical, financial, administrative) and claimed that they could very well serve as a role model for other communities.

Except for the Program Officer who is a social work graduate, the rest of the staff have no formal background on social development but is being compensated thru training seminars and other activities. Continuous trainings along psychosocial intervention are provided for the staff to help them become good facilitators as well as educators and perform as educators. As of this writing, some of the staff together with their spouses have attended a marriage enrichment seminar; the whole project staff was on an out of town training on project management seminar and another training on writing for non-writers at Baguio City for 3 days.

When asked what kept them stay in SABANA; those staff we interviewed intimated that they love and enjoy working for the children; their work serve as their contribution to the community where they also reside; all have claimed they are learning a lot in the course of project implementation. Their challenge is "keeping the project alive".

Funding

SABANA has its own project funds. The major donor of which is Vlaams International Centrum a partnership between the Belgian Government and Belgian NGO's. The funding for the current year (2002) is the last year of the 5-year Program Funding (1998-2002) for SABANA. It was intimated to me that another 5-year Program Funding has been approved starting year 2003.

Linkages

Due to the high profile of SABANA and the success of delivering its services to its recipients, many other groups who also have their networks in the area were are inspired and motivated to deliver their services effectively and efficiently as well.

SABANA lead the Trisectoral Committee composed of 30 organizations – government agencies, Non-government organizations and people's organizations. SABANA heads the Education Committee of the Trisectoral Committee, and a member of the Livelihood Committee.

SABANA serves as an advocacy venue for 6 college students from different private and state colleges in Metro Manila.

C. THE EVOLUTION

The Project Document

The Project Document that governed the operations of the Pilot Project on child scavenger expected us to reduce child labor in Smokey Mountain within 2 years thru the four (4) major areas of activity: income generation and training for women headed households; vocational training and basic education for children; health services; and raising public awareness. There were already several groups

providing most of these services in Smokey Mountain for quite sometime with nary a dent in these sectors. And another group coming in to provide the same is certainly most welcome and won't matter anymore. The more, the merrier as the cliché goes. Forewarned is to be forearmed and alerted us to find out as much as we can about the place and fast before we were mired into something.

We breathed relief when several graduate students of AIM (Asian Institute of Management) offered to help by conducting feasibility studies on a number of projects, which included a cooperative for scavengers, health and family planning program and small-scale enterprises development. After painstaking analyses, much to our dismay, we concluded that the success rates of these projects are difficult to achieve since the returns of the coop and the business enterprises were no match to the returns offered by scavenging, at least in the short run. So we have to drop them as with the family planning program whose effect to child scavenger is much too long-term.

Disheartened but not discouraged, we went into several trial activities such as starting a sports program in cooperation with the Narcotics Foundation, an NGO dedicated to combat drug menace among the Youth. The plan was to give leadership training to the youth leaders and help them organize clubs and when teams were formed and play areas set aside, sports equipment would be provided. Though we provided the equipment and went on for a while, we discontinued our cooperation with the Foundation. We saw that the teams were composed of youth who had the time to pursue such activities leaving out the working children. Moreover, it was clear that sports were oriented towards boys missing out the girls who were working.

Next, we tried to introduce a training program for mothers. In cooperation with another NGO, the Salvation Army, we sponsored a training course for women in hi-speed sewing with preference to mothers of working children. But we could not get enough participants for a visible-sized training class until we included other women from Smokey Mountain and the surrounding area. With a high dropout rate, twenty-two (22) women completed the first batch of training with about 10 employed at nearby garment factories but only two remained employed. The next batch of trainees produced similar results. In spite of providing them with incentives such as transport money and financial assistance to purchase sewing accessories, we could not get enough participants and the dropout rate was high. Another training course, soap making suffered the same fate. Problems encountered include non-availability of raw materials in the area or if available was expensive, lack of funds to keep production going (in case of soap making) and lack of energy.

Another avenue we tried was to tap the resources of the DOLE through its Job Placement services. In cooperation with the NCR (National Capital Region) office, a day for registration for job placements for men was scheduled in Smokey Mountain. We solicited the help of the NGO's and other groups to announce to their members the scheduled event. On registration day, more than 700 people came to register. Unfortunately, there were few jobs available for them in the area and outside the area particularly for unskilled laborers. The intensive effort we put in to organize this event was not lost in vain, however, as it gave us valuable insights to the problem recurring from this sector that it was not one of information nor availing of the labor services but more of a profound one. This too we did not pursue.

Self-Assessment

After 6 months of trying out several approaches we are at a dead-end. We felt frustrated that we have not made a dent knowing that most project elements were left untouched and time was past slipping us. Added to this were the logistical and administrative problems confronted by the team especially on the issue of government counterpart staff whose presence in the field was merely felt and missing out the burgeoning learning processes taking place in the area.

And now, some major decisions have to be made. The past 6 months told us that child labor is not simple and easy to understand and addressing it would involve experimentation of approaches – a process of discovering, testing and retesting rather than a set of prescribed approaches. With this in mind, we now set a goal to developing a replicable model for the protection and removal of child workers from hazardous occupations, which means to claim success; the project must have removed some child scavengers from the dumpsite at the end of the project period. This means also that activities and budgets have to be revised. After all is said and done, the project is now well under way.

Protection of Children

To enable us to serve our objective, we need to have an accurate number of child scavengers, so we agreed to conduct a survey. The data gathered by the Rapid Appraisal of all households in Smokey Mountain yielded some one thousands child scavengers, about double the official figure. This was the group who was at risk and needed immediate protection. We have observed that the child scavengers were exposed to the sun all day in danger of dehydration. During lull times while waiting for the garbage trucks to arrive, we have seen them playing obliviously to the heat of the sun. We felt pity for them and entertained the idea of putting up a center. But a center for what? It seemed a good idea and began taking shape and finally the Youth Center was born right at the dumpsite exclusively for the child scavengers. The idea, at first. Was to provide drinking water for free to the child scavengers and while resting can avail of the balls, dolls, and games placed conspicuously around? As more child scavengers were drawn to the Center, two additional services were added – Food and First Aid. Lunch was subsidized and part of the price paid went to a “personal savings account” of the child scavengers, which he can draw when needed.

Now that the groundwork was laid, it was logical to go to the next step. By talking and playing with them, bits and pieces of information were gathered by the team and came up with a profile of the child scavengers. The child scavengers being part of the family, was naturally influenced by people around him. Thus another phase of data gathering was initiated, the family profiles. The information provided by these profiles became the basis for yet another activity of the team – the family dialogues.

Removal of Child Scavengers from the Dumpsite

The success of the Youth Center became evident as more and more child scavengers were drawn to it and became regular “customers”. These child scavengers became the Center’s own salesmen as they invited other child scavengers to go to the center. The services it provided became visible to the community as more families became involved thru the home visits and family dialogues conducted by the Center staff. We now have a large pool of potential recipients for the second phase of the project.

But comes now the hardest part: how to motivate the child scavenger to stop work at the dump. To do this, two major issues have to be solved by the team: first, we must have a center suitably located to house the recipients for the new program, and second, what would this new program be like?

Finding the site of the Center, which we called the Learning Center, was easy and was located at the foot in one of the entrances of the dumpsite. This became also our unofficial field office where we conducted our staff meetings. Finding a suitable program was, however, difficult. It involved again the whole gamut of discovering, testing, retesting programs to suit this “special classes” of kids. As time went on, more and more demands of our time were spent at the two centers, until we became overworked and overtaxed, we thought we needed help.

Midterm Assessment

The project is now in its eleventh month of operation and by now the Youth Center was in full swing with its large base of "customers" supplying the Learning Center of its program recipients. The varied tasks of keeping the two centers operational were just too much for a limited (15) staff to do. We requested a Midterm Assessment and, Department of Labor & Employment (DOLE) thru ILS (Institute for Labor Studies) agreed to conduct the study. Two (2) major issues came out: first, the non-allocation of government counterpart staff, and second, the request of the team to drop the project elements as outlined in the Project Document. As a compromise, two (2) elements were dropped (i.e., developing a community plan for Smokey Mountain, and establishing the outline of a national policy on child labor) but retained one (i.e., organizing a credit training scheme to promote income generating projects for female headed households). Also, the study recommended a new administrative arrangement whereby BWYW was asked to function as a secretariat and to direct the work in the office, while ILO was to direct fieldwork. The project target to give education and training to 500 children was reduced to 150 and the government was asked to release its counterpart funds to the project activities.

Soon thereafter, two (2) counterpart staff was assigned in the field to set-up an income generating projects for women. But this did not materialize and soon the two staff eventually stopped going to the field.

The ILO headquarters noticed this new development and concerned about the outcome of its Pilot Project, decided to conduct its own formal evaluation scheduled in February 1991.

Tripartite Project Review (TPR)

The TPR external team was composed of representatives from the Philippine government, the Dutch government and ILO.

The comprehensive review resulted to the streamlining of the Pilot Project, It approved the activities and the work that had been done and recommended the focus on the new elements, (Learn, Earn, Health and Parent Involvement). The results of the TPR was presented by the team to the Secretary of DOLE expressing its concern on the lack of government participation and recommended that the Pilot Project be transferred from BWYW to NMYC (National Manpower & Youth Council), an attached agency of DOLE. It was contended that BWYW could not attend to the project having shifted its focus and its resources to a new and bigger study on Children under UNICEF. NMYC was a good option since its concern was vocational training and it had other government agencies working in its project particularly education and social welfare.

Review and Refinement

After the TPR, the project team deemed it necessary to review their past activities in light of the recommendations made by the TPR. It was also the chance to refine the four (4) components of the Learning Center being now the focus of the project. They also adopted the official names of the two structures – The Youth Center and Learning Center as the Drop-In Center (DIC) and SABANA (Sanayan ng mga Batang Nanambakan – A Development Center for Child Scavengers), respectively. The SABANA kids were divided into groups: SABANA I - those who were aged 7- 12; and SABANA II - those who were 13 and above.

NMYC, true to its new role as the implementing agency, had sent a field team composed of a project manager and three trainers to set up and handled the vocational training program for the SABANA II kids who were the out of school youth (OSY). To minimize disruptions of the operations by the entry of the counterpart staff, they were paired with the old staff as they "immersed" in the project operations.

Redirection

With the new arrangement and the immersion of the counterpart staff to the project operations, the project operations went on smoothly, more or less. By now, the end of the project period loomed past and becoming a reality. There was still one area, which was not agreed upon, and that is, the future of SABANA. It was also at this time that devolution of government functions were effected to local government, so the take over of SABANA operations by NMYC was out of the question. The City of Manila would be the logical choice since Smokey Mountain is under its political jurisdiction. The SABANA program would then be distributed to different local department units such as the health, education, social welfare, etc. And certainly the project staff would be left out. What would happen to SABANA? Who would take care of the children? These were the questions the team took to ponder. And ponder they did. There was one alternative left.

Pressed for time and raising against project termination, the team went around to look for an NGO which had been operating in the area, who's concerned were the children and whose programs were compatible to those of SABANA.

ERDA (Education Research & Development Assistance) Foundation, Inc. had been in the area since 1974 providing educational assistance, and being a founding member (for education) of the NGO Coordinating Council organized by the ILO Project Team, it was exposed to the activities of the Pilot Project.

Now, here was an NGO best qualified to take over the SABANA operations. Besides, the ILO Project Team reasoned out they will be leaving a modest amount of funds to tie them over a while. So without pomp and merriment, ERDA took over all of SABANA including the children on board, its project staff and the community at large, like adopting a child suddenly "orphaned".

Original Project Elements Dropped & the Reasons for Dropping

- 1.) To establish the outline for national policy on child labor

Reasons:

- a.) The focus of the project framework was on child scavenging and not child labor in general
- b.) Child scavenging is only a segment of the child labor issue. The issues confronting the child scavenger only pertains to this segment and would not do justice to the other segments of child labor such as those in fishing, mining, agriculture, domestic, etc. and therefore is not representative to be a basis for an outline for a national policy on child labor.
- c.) This would entail a long process of more studies, researches and consultations.
- d.) This would involve cooperation of other government agencies like Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), National Council for the Welfare of Children (NCWC), Department of Education (DECS), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and others whose mandate include child labor issue.

- e.) Findings of the Pilot Project on Child Scavenging would not be sufficient to form a basis for outlining a national policy on child labor. The project objective of developing a replicable model for Protection and Rehabilitation of the child scavengers might not be applicable to the other segments of child labor.
- 2.) To develop a community development plan for Smokey Mountain
Reasons:
 - a.) The focus of the Pilot Project is the issue on child scavenging at Smokey Mountain not the Complex issues confronting Smokey Mountain (e. g. land issue).
 - b.) This is not within the mandate of BWYW – the implementing agency, to come up with a development plan for Smokey Mountain. If at all, BWYW could come up with a development plan for the scavengers at Smokey Mountain.
 - c.) The government agency, which has the mandate to do this, is the National Housing Authority (NHA), which is in charge of the on-site development of Smokey Mountain.
- 3.) Organizing a credit-training scheme to promote income-generating project to female-headed households (this was retained but eventually dropped).
Organizing is a long process of an on going activity and involved a longer time, more funds and expertise, which unfortunately are wanting of the project team. The government could have provided the team the necessary staff for its counterpart but did not. So the project team pushed to drop this element, but also upon the strong representation of the government this element was retained and assigned two (2) counterpart staff in the field to set-up the income generating activity. Somehow, this did not materialize. The two (2) counterpart staff eventually stopped going to the field. As no one from the project team took over the function, this element too was eventually dropped.

Summary

The three (3) elements that were dropped were long term objectives that may help address the issue of child scavenging but were incompatible to the project inputs such as staffing, funding and time frame, and as such could not be retained or sustained by the pilot project.

II. LESSONS LEARNED

A good social “change agent” will acknowledge that the hardest part of any social intervention designed to introduce “change” is how to make people accept him/her and the intervention he/she is trying to impart. As an “outsider” the “change agent” easily become the target of suspicion and mistrust. But once accepted, it is amazing how people transform from being indifferent and diffident to friendly and accommodating. This was the challenge faced by the ILO Project Team then. These were our lessons:

A. THE PROCESS

Community Involvement

While waiting for the pilot project to be formally introduced to the recipient community as the Technical Advisor has yet to arrive; I did an initial “social mapping” in preparation for the challenges ahead. First, I contacted a network of friends who had been actively working with the urban poor

soliciting information about Smokey Mountain and contact persons. Then I went to Smokey Mountain and held informal talks with the parish priest casually mentioning the coming ILO Pilot Project for Child Scavengers in the area. He introduced me to the former president of Katipunan (a federation of People's Organizations in Smokey Mountain). Incidentally it was the Parish Priest who initiated the formation and organization of Katipunan in answer to the issue of Relocation. Manuel Manarang, a highly principled man, was very knowledgeable about the complex issues permeating in the area. He became my contact person and my guide every time I was in the area. We visited the new president of Katipunan and the president of the Scavengers Organization, Jaime Placides. The initial contact and the initial talks (with the community thru some informal leaders) plus the "social map" provided me some insights into the complex workings of the area. This provided me the initial inputs I needed when I met and orient Susan Gunn, the Technical Advisor and thus helped us chart the course of our work when we formally introduced the Pilot Project to the community. When Susan arrived, we began our work. We went to the project site and met the parish priest and the two-barangay chairman and introduced formally the Pilot Project and the team. There was some reluctance and resistance, at first, especially the barangay chairmen. But we persisted. We made home visits, held informal talks and consultations on matters pertaining to the area as they affect the project. Only until we had established some rapport, did we start going deeper into the community and met with various groups. Smokey Mountain was accessible and open to anybody and everybody who cared to visit the area. But not its people particularly the leaders. Their reactions accorded us was understandable in the light of events that brought mistrust to well meaning institutions particularly the government that this might be another ruse to justify relocation. By recognizing the authority and the local officials and the leadership of the parish priest and the respect accorded to them brought us the slight opening we needed to go on. Our persistent wooing showed our sincerity and determination to help, finally earned us their trust and confidence.

The informal talks held with the local authorities and the parish priest showed us the way to the people's organizations particularly Katipunan. With the help of Katipunan through its president, the team "immersed" in the community, holding informal talks and consultations with leaders and home visitations. All these activities made us visible in the community and made the project's presence felt.

These talks told us that the interest of the people was one of economics (e.g. land issue) and not the welfare of child scavengers. In fact, they were proud that their children were working. This knowledge gave us the understanding why people were indifferent to the project. At the same time, it told us that if we want the project to succeed, the community must be involved. If we want their involvement, the project must be able to address its perceive needs while not diverting our eyes from the intended beneficiaries – the child scavengers.

All these experiences had taught us to be patient especially when dealing with people.

Another group of people we tapped for help were the NGO's to stimulate their cooperation on issue, which were of concern to the community and the project's concern. After all the meetings and discussions with all the concerned groups, we found out that none was concern for the welfare of the child scavengers, and did not care. But this was the sector that the project was concerned with. So we moved on. Project feasibility studies were conducted – found they were not feasible. Trial activities were carried out but they too were failure. The notion that we (outsiders) knew better than the intended beneficiaries was a misconception. By trying to apply a prescribed set of solutions or approaches without touching the core of the problem cost us precious time in advancing our objective. But we were right. Something must be done. We went to the real core of the problem- the child scavenger. But first, we need data. Who were they, how many, where . . . and so on. The results of the survey provided us the concrete picture of our objective. At last we had something to go on.

When finally the Youth Center was put up, some parents volunteered to help clean the area and manage it. As more child scavengers were drawn to the center, we expanded its services and invited more community people to work for the project to accommodate the growing number of child scavenger availing the center's services. We learned that the child scavengers themselves were promoting the center by inviting other child scavengers to come to the center. This showed we were effective in giving services to them. Meanwhile that we were giving services we were also getting additional data for the profiles of the child scavengers and later family profiles as more and more parents were involve. As we were becoming more visible (thru the services provided by the center) in the area, it stimulated the cooperation of the parents, which indicated their growing trust and confidence to the project and the team. Addressing the physical needs of the child scavenger and protecting them from the hazards of work was only half of the picture. We need to take them away from the dump.

To complete the picture we put up the Learning Center as a complement to the Youth Center. It provided us more valuable data, which helped us chart the course of the program. By putting up the Learning Center, in effect we had provided the mechanism that helped us attained the project objective- the removal of the child scavenger away from the dump.

The Child (C- hildren needs H- elp, and I- nspiration, L- ove for him / her to D- evelop)

The child scavenger was the central figure of the project. The rest just peripherals, which may or may not influence the outcome. Without him/her, there wouldn't have been a problem, and no pilot project.

Observing the child scavengers at a distance, talking with them and playing with them stirred in us sympathy for them and their situation. We had asked ourselves, then, "why us (as outsiders) should be the one to feel pity for these children? Why not their parents and why not the community?" We knew then, we had to do something.

It took us a good portion of the project duration (6months) to realize we were pursuing the wrong approach. It dawned upon us we were not getting any progress to the project objective. But those six months were not lost. The experience taught us and stimulated in us our resolve that we can do something for the child scavenger. And we did!

Going to the core of the matter was not easy. The child scavengers were aloof perhaps because they were busy with their work or else playing. And if you could get their attention, they were timid. We had to try several tacts before we could get into them. As we did, we had to continually stimulate their cooperation. All these taught us to be creative and innovative in our approaches especially when gathering data.

When the Youth Center was put up to address their needs— free drinking water, first aid, subsidized lunch, rest and recreation, we knew then, we had solved part of the problem. We knew we were on the right track. And this provided us the opportunity to be closer to the child scavenger.

The visibility of the project thru the services of the Center stimulated cooperation of the parents to be involved in the project. By rotating schedules, it enabled many parents to be involved in cleaning, cooking, and serving the child scavengers at the Center. It did not take long for the Center to attract more "patrons" as more child scavengers were themselves promoting the services of the Center with other child scavengers. This proved that we were giving them the right services.

Protecting the child scavengers from the hazards of his work was the first half of the project objective. The Youth Center served as the conduit to the other half of the project – removal of child scavengers from the dumpsite.

The putting up of the Learning Center was the easy part. Maintaining it was the hardest. We have to continually innovate ideas, introduce creative programs to make learning fun and substantial for the child scavengers to keep his interest. As more recipients enrolled in the program, more staff (we called them community workers) had to be hired from the community. Apart from the job opportunity the project brought to the community, it offered the community workers the chance to enhance their skills and improved their lot. As the demands for innovative approaches and creative programs increased, the need for further trainings and education for community workers also became imperative. (The community workers were the “kuya” / “ate” of the child scavengers).

Parents Involvement

By scavenging which earned him income, the child was expected to help in the upkeep of his family. To hope for a modest success of any project involving the children, the parents, grandparents, relatives and other significant adults who have influence over the children must be consulted and involved.

Parents meetings, Parents assistance to the project and Marriage Enrichment Seminars were only some of the activities tried and tested to enlist Parents participation. These activities gave us insights to the close ties of Filipino families, that no matter how bad, one perceived parents to be, they are still respected by the children.

The project, to really evolve, its services for the children, needed the consent, approval and participation of the adults particularly the parents. To do this, the concept of “Kasunduan ng Pakikipagtulungan” (Pledge of Cooperation) was forged. It was a memorandum of agreement between and signed by the parents and the project before any child was formally enrolled in the program. Agreeing to it was one thing and sustaining it was another. Forging the pledge was not easy since upon entry to the program the child was prohibited to go back to scavenging including regularly taking a bath.

This pledge of cooperation assured the initial support of the parents to the program.

The use of the 3 Fs of project management evolved this cooperation: forging the “Kasunduan ng Pakikipagtulungan” was a FAIR deal – if the parents want their child to avail of the services of the program, their cooperation was to be enlisted; FIRM – once they enlist their child to the program, there must be no scavenging; and FRIENDLY – home visitations made by the community workers enabled the parents to maintain their self-esteem and dignity.

Government Relationship and Involvement

The government, as one of the three (3) parties involved in the Pilot Project for child scavengers, had tacitly agreed that indeed there was a child labor issue surrounding the plight of child scavengers of Smokey Mountain. Through this project, the government thru BWYW, its implementing agency, hoped to explore and understand the problems confronting the child scavengers to guide them for policy decisions. Agreeing to something however, is one thing, and participating is another thing.

In the early stages of the work, except for the head of BWYW, there was no counterpart staff provided in the field. Due to this laxity, they missed out the learning processes burgeoning in the area, which could have provided them the learning experiences in project implementation now and in the future.

The midterm assessment did little to the lack of government participation except that the two counterpart staff provided did not last long. This would indicate the lack of concern and commitment to the work. "When the going gets tough, it is the tough that gets going", so goes the saying.

The Tripartite Project Review (TPR) set the redirection of the project. As it approved the work that had been done by the project team, it enabled the transfer of the project's control from BWYW to NMYC, an attached agency of DOLE. This showed the commitment of the government and its impartiality to the project. NMYC, true to its new role, soon thereafter assigned a team in the field to set up vocational skills trainings for Out of School Youth (OSY) of SABANA. These trainings left out the child scavengers who were the recipients of the project. It dawned upon us that no single government agency could take care of the needs of the child scavengers. Until the termination of the project, NMYC limited its function to just conducting vocational skills training to the youth.

The involvement of other government agencies to the project (e.g. local health center, local public schools, local authorities thru the Brgy. Chairmen, etc.) showed that if their services would be tapped, they were willing to cooperate with anybody.

But surely, the government could have done more, if it had taken more vigorously and seriously its function as an implementing agency. There was no questioning the important role of the government. An undertaking as comprehensive and as big as this project, no single entity is big enough to handle this than the government.

The Studies

Unlike the surveys conducted by the project team in the field (which were qualitative in nature), the studies conducted by external groups as a corollary to the project operations, were quantitative in content (e.g. socio-eco-environment assessment, physical health risk / nutritional assessment, psychological assessment).

Some of these technical studies, which were conducted by independent professional groups, apart from providing direct services to the child scavengers being the respondents, were pioneering studies, which set standards for future studies.

The data of the studies also provided the inputs in the designing of SABANA's program for intervention in rehabilitating the child scavengers. The significance of the studies to the communities and to the public at large was probably lost because these were not disseminated. If these studies were simplified, translated to Filipino, and disseminated in comics form, the impact of these studies would have been inestimable. Comics – reading is a poor man's past time. It could have been a powerful device for advocacy and public awareness to the hazards and dangers of scavenging.

By conducting these studies and using them proved that the project was **SMART**:

S – scientific

M – manageable (the child scavengers being the respondents)

A – advocacy

R – response to queries on physical / psychological health of the
Child scavengers

T -- timely

LESSONS LEARNED: SABANA I EARN T-SHIRT PROGRAM

By Mary Ng – American Volunteer

There were many “lessons learned” during the two years I was a volunteer with the Smokey Mountain ILO project. Initially, as a friend of the ILO Smokey Mountain Director, I visited the DIC at the top of the “mountain” and met some of the kids and the mothers that were working on a food program for the children. It was an amazing experience: the stench of the burning garbage was nauseating; hiking up to the top of the mountain on top of and through garbage was a next experience; being touched by the children was shocking and then moving and gratifying. It was as though they came from a different world. And, they did! It was a world myself and another American volunteer came to know. I did not keep notes on the days and hours that we were involved with the children and the CW’s (Community Workers). I did keep memories of a remarkable group of resilient children and a caring and devoted team of people who worked with the children. And, I am a still quite close friend with one of the original CW’s and his family.

Volunteers were one small part of the over-all ILO Smokey Mountain Project but we were made to feel an essential element not only by the “team” but the children! Over and over, if there was one lesson learned for me, it was the way the program remained focused on helping the children. Joyce Yukawa and myself began volunteering with the CCP Summer Art Program. We hoped to introduce not only art techniques but also some basic math lessons. We met and worked in the basement area of one of the CCP Complex buildings. WE provided materials and were amazed at the talent of the children; especially, their eye for detail. One 9-year old, Andoy would be totally focused while working on a drawing with incredible concentration. Once he was finished, he was a “kid” again. We visited a gallery also had opportunities to draw in different areas.

The T-Shirt Project grew out of the summer art program with \$100.00 of seed-funding (one time only) from the American Women’s Club of the Philippines through their Social Services Committee of which one of the volunteers was a member. Another lesson I learned was the emphasis the team placed in being involved with the volunteers. Lita, one of the CW’s and I worked together buying different T-Shirt to see which would shrink the least and hold them and to set-up an accounting system. Later, Lita and I met with the buyers at different Manila Museum shop who initially helped us with design and marketing suggestions.

We did not have a formal curriculum when we started at the SABANA Center. We did have the idea that we wanted to combine education with an income-generating project. I had a background in education (B.A Art/English, General Secondary and partial Primary Credential; MA Education in Teaching and Administration) with a special interest and alternative education as well as Philippine Culture. Our first T-Shirt used designs from various ethnic groups around in the Philippines. In this way,

we hoped to teach some geography. Although not planned, we also learned more about the children's family history (where their grandparents had lived, for example) and what their occupations had been (farmers, fishermen). Each child chose a design from books, textiles, photos provided by the volunteers. The children then drew the design on the T-Shirt using crayons. Later, the CW's and Mom's ironed the wax out of the crayons leaving the colored design on the T-Shirt. We found this method to be fairly easy for all involved with a remarkably nice finished product. We also included a photo of the child working on one side of a 3 x 5 note card with a brief explanation of the SABANA Project on the back. We wanted the buyers of the T-Shirts, who would be from the wealthier Filipino Museum visitors and the ex-pat community, to know whom the children were.

Our second design was based on different birds of the Philippines. We visited Nayong Filipino to see the birds in the aviary of this out-door park. Again, the children had to be reminded that these were birds for everyone to see and enjoy and not for eating. Even with this information, once we entered the aviary, one of the children immediately picked-up a stone seeing "lunch" and not a zoo-type bird. A few months later, after the children had learned about the different birds by drawing them on the t-shirt, one of the CW's took the children on a return trip to the Nayong Filipino Aviary. This time the children were able to identify "their" birds.

We also did some T-shirts based on endangered species of the Philippines but the most successful t-shirt designs were those based on tropical fish. I'm not sure if this was because of the simple shapes and bright colors of the fish or because of their symbol from the tropics. Eventually, there was quite a collection of "created" fish as well. We also invited a volunteer student from Ateneo who taught the children how to do silk screening. Initially, he used a photo of the endangered Philippine eagle to make the screen. The children then colored the black and white image that had been printed on the t-shirts.

There were several problems we hadn't through: one, we worried about was the possibility of pedophiles using the photos and names from the t-shirts cards to try to contact the children. This proved not to be the case. Thank goodness. Another problem was the fact that some of the children finished T-shirts faster than other and, thus, could sale more. And, we worried about keeping the quality up and original so the children would not be "turning out" T-shirt as though they were in the factory. And how could we be sure that all of the children would be selling some T-shirts. What if one of the students did not sell any! The accounting was managed by a CW. We had hoped the kids would be able to do part of this work to gain experience with real math. They were very interested in how many T-shirts they sold and how much money they had "banked" but the actual account keeping was not of interest to them or, perhaps too complicated. My co-volunteer worried that we might be directing the T-shirt program too much in the way of production and losing sight of the children needs. We did need to take a break now and then to review what we were doing before the momentum over-whelmed us. The t-shirts at the manila Museum Shops and a various bazaars and a different monthly club meetings, were selling. We didn't want the t-shirts to be one-time fad but a continuing project. What did the children want?

We did not have a formal assessment program for the t-shirt project. This would have been helpful but I'm not sure possible at the time because we didn't know if the children would stay interested in the project, even if they would continue to come to the SABANA. It was in informal assessment. We knew the program was working because the children were there and they were earning money in a fun way and in a safe environment but how much did they really learn about the geography of the Philippines, the various cultural ethnic Filipino groups, and the animals they were drawing? Were they reading more? Much of the learning may have been more on a psychological level: meeting and making friends with foreigners; learning that they were welcome in areas of Manila other than Smokey Mountain, learning to hold their own and, proudly so, with groups of children from other depressed" areas, The Smokey Mountain kids were always considered on the bottom. Perhaps, we used our "status" as foreigner when

we were with the SABANA children out of the Smokey Mountain area to serve as a bridge to other communities. I felt strongly that the children should have an introduction to communities outside of Smokey Mountain; that they could then think beyond scavenging and not be like the proverbial "frog in the well" that thinks his patch of sky is the whole sky. I was brought back to reality with an "I love Smokey Mountain" T-shirt design. Of course, Smokey Mountain was home to the children. And, the children were our reason for being there. This was a lesson I learned with such joy. I truly feel this was the best teaching experience in my teaching career. The SABANA 1 team and volunteers and students were making a difference in the lives of the children and their families. There was a wonderful feelings of caring and concern from both sides. We held a birthday party for one of the Cow's at SABANA 1 and he cried because it was his first ever birthday party. As volunteers, we did receive much more that we give.

B. THE STRUCTURE

SABANA

This concept could be anything to anybody. It could be a program-- for child development; it might be a project for skills training. It might be even a laboratory where experiments are conducted to solve a problem; or perhaps a playground for children's fitness and sports development; or a hospital and a clinic for their health and nutrition; even a kitchen for cooking their food; or a dining room to eat, clean, healthy and nutritious food. This could even be a forum for experts and outsiders for their meetings and discussions or an assembly for conferences and consultations. Or simply a halfway house for child scavengers as they prepare to integrate their lives to the normal course of life or just a filter to screen bad influences.

SABANA for whatever it was, it was and still is the best thing that ever happened to the children of Smokey Mountain. It became the passport to a good life and to a better future for Andoy, Manuel, Albin, Rosalie, Vilma and Jaime- all from Smokey Mountain and the men, once scavengers.

SABANA was and still is a good learning experience for the project implementors. It opened an avenue of hope, that there is something that can be done for every child scavenger. The grandeur of its aim was not its strength but rather the people behind and its supporters who had the Compassion, Competence, the Confidence gained and the Commitment to serve and the Determination to succeed that made SABANA what it is today. SABANA was the greatest intervening factor to child scavenging.

Drop-in Center

This structure was put up right at the heart of the dumpsite at the initial stage of the pilot project to bring its services nearer to the child scavengers. This temporary set-up was deemed necessary to motivate the children to avail of the services and to win them eventually to our side. This we did very well. As the staff befriended the children, bits and pieces of information were logged - in everyday to the file of each child provided for the purpose. Eventually the DIC became a source of supply of recipients for enrollment to the SABANA program. It served as a funnel by which those children who enrolled at SABANA were already screened and qualified for the program. This two - pronged approach- DIC, the Youth Center, and SABANA, the Learning Center, was a novel scheme that gave the pilot project a high success rate. The existence of DIC was however short - lived when dumping was suspended but by then SABANA was already ahead on its way with hundreds of child scavengers enrolled in the program.

C. PROBLEMS (What we would NOT DO again)

The lack of government counterpart staff became a source of minor friction between the ILO Project team and the BWYW. Though it did not deter us from doing what we did, I felt a great loss that they missed out what could have been a great learning experience (as we did!). As project implementor, the learning processes would have been a great help in designing a program for similar projects on child labor. Corollary to this was our realization that no single government agency was capable of handling a program like SABANA. The four (4) major components of the program: Health, Earn, Learn and Parents Involvement could only be provided by the cooperation of different agencies like DECS, DOH, DSWD, NCWC and the local government. Since this is an integrated approach, it must be coordinated by an agency whose mandate can compel the concerned agencies to provide the services when needed.

Another problem, which we think we would like to avoid, was the short duration of the project. The original time frame of three (3) years plus another two (2) years extension could have given us enough time to refine the elements of the model and to "prove" the effectivity of the model as well as its replicability.

Perhaps, because of or due to its short duration there was no provision for an exit plan. This made the project and the team hanging in the balance as to the future of SABANA. However, has fate had it, SABANA was and is in good hands.

SUCSESSES (What we would DO again)

The composition of the project team – a combination of outside experts and the local indigenous talents, was a winning team. Armed with commitment to serve, there was no other way the outcome of the project would go. Coupled with this, was the unique tandem of the two ILO project staff, the local counterpart in-charge of field operations and the technical advisor, who was the national coordinator. This made it easy for us to be accepted and enabled us to immerse in the community.

The hasty exit of the program enabled us to devise a plan, which would guarantee that the SABANA program would continue for at least another year. By tapping the services of ERDA, the only NGO we felt who could continue our program and which had been providing educational assistance to the children in the area since 1974, to handle its operations for one year, we felt relieved and confident that SABANA will survive. We were not wrong, SABANA did survive.

The two - pronged approach "model" of protection and rehabilitation, which was developed as a result of the action – research – reflection – action methodology used by the team was a replicable model. With refinements, it could include other components, which proponents would like to test depending on its needs. Whether components will be added or taken out, the model in itself is complete; this was the legacy of the project.

WHAT "our children" REMEMBER ABOUT SABANA

As I leaf through the pages of my TOR and Susan's summary brief (of the Pilot Project on Child Scavengers) my thought were raising back in time as I remember the child scavengers, and Smokey Mountain-its filth and smell and the people, and SABANA-Manuel, Albin, Vilma and the others; and Susan. Now, all friends of mine, I smiled to myself, as I prepare to meet them once again.

Here are the reminiscences of those who were directly affected as they remember with fond memories their "one moment in time", of the "goliath" that was once called as Smokey Mountain and of their "david" that was SABANA.

"Dati simple lang ang pangarap ko, maging teacher, don kasi sa tambakan naglalaro kami. Ako yung teacher-teacher nila. Pero habang tumatagal, ambition ko tumataas dahil sa hirap ng buhay nakikita ko" (In the past, I had a simple ambition. At the dumpsite, we used to play school and I was always the teacher. Soon though, I opted for a higher aim, and this is because of the poverty that I see). I discovered I had a talent in the visual arts. I knew from then on that I wanted to do just that. And, SABANA helped me realized this dream.

I was ten years old when I joined SABANA. "Kung wala ang SABANA at ang ERDA siguro magiging undergraduate ako. Kaya napakalaking tulong talaga sa akin." (Without SABANA I would not have been able to graduate, SABANA was a great help for me). It was also in the organization that I learned to, and eventually honed my skills in drawing.

I inspires other child workers like myself when I represented the Philippines in the Global March against child labor, "marching the cause" in the South Asia, Europe, and North America. I designs (literally) for SABANA's hand painted t-shirts, up for sale as an income-generating project for the organization.

I look up at the people who made me see things I had never seen before nor ever dreamt of seeing. I am eternally grateful for the experiences SABANA brought to my life.

JESSICA MOORE

Ang baho baho mo! (You stink!) Everyone in school, teachers and classmates alike would tell me.

Ah... but this made me even tougher. This made me begin to race against time. I knew that school was the answer to my problems. For the first time, I had a more serious ambition and how to reach it, was my first challenge. And then, ERDA-SABANA came.

"9 years old pa lang ako noong pumasok ako sa SABANA. 1990 na-expose kami sa training sa labas tulad ng theater at training sa arts" (I was nine when I entered SABANA, it was in 1990 when we were exposed to so many things, like theater and other arts). It was at this age too, that I realized that scavenging was not a fun activity at all; I had to scavenge to earn money. SABANA however made clear that getting in to the

program meant I had to stop working and start taking school seriously (including taking a bath).

I guess I am lucky and so are the other children and young people in Smokey Mountain, because SABANA (kuya Albin) is always there. May I conclude: "Pero wag kang makuntento, makipaghamunan ka sa panahon" (Nevertheless, don't be contented, always challenged time).

ANDOY
Fernando Avelino

SALIN-AWIT (song)

Pananambakan sa Daungan

(Hango sa tunay na kasaysayan ni Rogienel Duran, 13 taong gulang SABANA kids)

Nilapatan ng tono ng awiting
"Nang dahil sa Pag-ibig"

I – Kahit bata pa ay nagtrabaho
Nang sa magulang ay, makatulong ako
Hirap at pagod ay naranasan ng
Munting bisig ko

Ii – Napilitan na manambakan
Gamit ang bangka sa may daungan
Di man lang alam,
Masamang dulot nito sa katawa't isip ko

KORO:

Nang dahil sa SABANA, natutong magbasa
Nang dahil sa SABANA, nasanay magpinta
Ang buhay ko ngayo'y
Puno ng pag-asa at kulay na kay ganda
Nang dahil sa SABANA, ako'y namulat pa
Karapatan ko'y nabawi ko na
Nang dahil sa SABANA, buhay ko ay nag-iba

KODA:

Pakinggan ninyo ang munting payo ko
Karapatan ay alamin n'yo
Hatid nito, ay pagbabago
(ulitin ang koro)

Scavenging at the Pier

(taken from real experiences of Rogienel Duran, 13 yrs. Old, SABANA kids)

Borrowing the tune of the song
"Nang Dahil sa Pag-ibig"

Still a child I'm working
So I will be of help to my parents
Tired, difficulties I've experienced
In my arms
Was forced to scavenge
Using a "bangka (small boat) at the pier
Did not know the hazard effect
To my mind and body.

CHORUS:

Because of SABANA I learned to read
Because of SABANA I learned to paint
My life now
Full of hope, color and beauty
Because of SABANA I was
Aware of my rights
Because of SABANA my life has changed

CHORUS:

Listen to my little advise
Know your rights
It will bring you change
(repeat chorus)

NANG DUMATING ANG SABANA

(Halaw sa tunay na karanasan ni
Roselyn Encallado, 10 taon gulang
Batang SABANA)

I – Dati ay hindi napansin

Ang paghihirap ko

Nakaakma sa disgrasya

Pagod, puyat at minsan ay gutom

Nakaka-absent din, lumiliban din

II – pangarap kong, maging isang guro

Tila lumalabo

Bumabagsak sa paaralang

Parang nais ko nang huminto

Nanghihinayang din, nanghihinayang din

KORO:

Nang dumating ang SABANA

Hinango ako sa basura

Dating kalahig at sako ngayo'y

Lapis, papel at libro

Sana ay mangyari 'to

Sa bata ng buong mundo

Pag-asa ay makakamtan din

Ngayong na ang panahon

KODA:

O kay ganda ng bukas

Kumilos ka ngayong

Buhay mo baling araw

Magiging ganito o

(ulitin ang koro)

Pinagtulangang buuin nina:

(collectively created by:)

Ma. Hope Encallado – 13 y.o.

Roselyn Encallado – 10 y.o.

Maricris Caacoy – 10 y.o.

Michael Abadilla – 9 y.o.

Princess Babon – 10 y.o.

WHEN SABANA CAME

(taken from the experience of
Roselyn Encallado, 10 yrs. old
SABANA kids)

Before I was not aware

Of my sufferings

Of facing dangers

Tired, weary and hungry

Absence and missed schools too

My dream to be a teacher

Seemed hopeless

Failing in school

I feel like quitting school

But what a waste!

CHORUS:

When SABANA came

It saved me from the dump

I used to hold "kalahig" and sack

Now pencil, paper and book

I hope this happens

To all the children of the world

Hope we will achieve

Today is the time

CODA:

Oh what a beautiful tomorrow

Act now!

Your life in the future

Will be like this

(repeat chorus)

ANG NAKALIPAS

(Binuo ng grupo nina Luis,
Jonathan, Jedo at John Carlo
nasa Mataas na Paaralan)

Sa unang pagpasok naming,
hindi maikakaila
Di mapinta ang aming mukha,
dahil sa matinding hiya
Ngunit nang magtagal
ang aming pagsasama
Ito'y nabura at nabuo ang tiwala

Kay sarap alalahanin,
nagdaan na kay tulin
Masaya kaming naglalaro,
nag-aaral kumakain
Madalas ay nagtatanong,
minsan ay may napipikon
Nangungulit lamang pala
para pansin ay ituon

Mga bagay na sadyang
naghubog sa amin
Gabay at pag-unawang
kinailangan naming
Aming talino at kaayahan,
tinulungan kaming
Ito'y tuklasin
Binigyan din ng pagkakataong
ito ay pagyamanin

MGA ISLOGAN:

1. Pag-aaral, pagpipinta
Magagandang lugar na napuntahan
At halakhakang kay ligaya,
Bumuo ng pangarap kong
Magiging gabay sa t'wina
2. Pag-unlad sa sarili'y, sa SABANA natagpuan
Ngayong nasa mabuti nang kalagayan
SABANA naman ang tutulungan

THE PAST

(created by the group of Luis,
Jonathan, Jedo and John Carlo,
High school)

When we first came,
it cannot be denied
You cannot draw our faces
because of shyness
But when we got together
for quite sometime
This was erased and trust was built

Its good to remember
The past passing by
We were happy playing
studying, and eating
Many times we questioned,
sometimes we get irritated
Only to find
we want attention

Things that really
shaped us
Guidance and understanding
are what we need
Our talents and skills
they helped
Discover
And was given the chance
to recover

SLOGANS:

1. Schooling, painting
I've seen beautiful places
where laughter and joy
Developed my dreams
To be my constant guide
2. Self development, at SABANA
we discover
Now we are in good conditions
SABANA we will assist

TULA:**BALIK-TANAW SA KAMUSMUSAN**

(Binuo ng mga batang matagal na sa SABANA)

Noong ako'y isang musmos pa
 Naging Kanlungan ko ang SABANA
 Doo'y marami akong mga kaibigan
 Sa paglalaro ay may kalayaan

Tinuruan ako ng mga kasanayan
 Tulad ng pagpinta at pagbabantay sa kalusugan
 Naimulat din sa akin angkin kong karapatan
 Maging ang paggamit ng mabubuting kaugalian

Mga ate at kuya rito'y mababait
 Pagtulong at pag-unawa'y di pinagkakait
 Kailanma'y hindi ko ipagpapalit
 Pag-asang sa pagkatao ko'y kanilang naiukit

POEM:**A REMINISCENCE OF MY CHILDHOOD**

(composed by SABANA graduates)

When I was a little child
 My shelter was SABANA
 There I have many friends
 In playing we were free

I was thought a lot of skills
 Like painting and taking care of my health
 They taught me my basic rights,
 Good manners and right conduct

The staff at SABANA are kind
 Did not deprived us of assistance
 and understanding
 Never will I exchange
 Hope in my personhood which helped mold

WHAT "we remember" ABOUT SABANA

"Ang SABANA sa aking buhay ang nagsisilbing katuparan, hindi ng pangarap, kundi ng pangako. Dinanas ko na ang matinding gutom at pagod ngunit paulit-ulit rin akong nasagip sa akala ko'y kawalang-pag-asa sa pamamagitan ng mga tao at mga pangyayaring hindi inaasahan. Nais kong makatulong sa pag-ahon sa kahirapan at kamangmangan ng mga kabataan. Nagagawa ko ito sa tulong ng SABANA. Pinangako ko sa aking sarili na magiging instrumento ako sa pagbabago ng buhay ng ibang tao. Unti-unti matutupad ang pangakong ito sa pamamagitan ng SABANA". (SABANA serves to fulfill not a dream but a promise. I have experienced starvation and weariness yet how often have I been snatched from near-despair by what seemed like coincidences and helpful people who showed up as if on cue. I want to help the youth help themselves to rise above poverty, ignorance and hopelessness. SABANA helps me do that. I vowed to myself that I would be an instrument in changing a person's life for the better. I see my work with SABANA leading to the fulfillment of that promise).

MY 12 YEARS OF JOURNEY WITH SABANA

On the 1st year of journey, the project gave me a **LIT CANDLE**. It's bright showed me that scavenging demeans the lives of Smokey Mountain children. Truth that I never realized before because of the material gains.

On the 2nd year of journey, the project gave me a **HORSE BLINDER**. In focus, I begun to see the plight and started to believe in the project cause.

On the 3rd year of journey, the project gave me a **MIRROR**. An instrument that helped me introspect my capability to contribute.

On the 4th year of journey, the project gave me a **STETHOSCOPE**. I wanted to hear what my heart says and how my body systems agree. The diagnosis? It is a mission that requires heart more than intellect.

On the 5th year of journey, the project provided provided me a **CONMPASS**. It lead me to a certain direction with confidence that I can be a significant person in the project.

On the 6th year of journey, the project gave me a **MAGNET**. My good deeds shone and attracted others. In fact, some children look at me as a role model, it's flattering.

On the 7th year of journey. The project gave me a personalized **BILLBOARD**. It made like a best selling item. Hectic training schedules, network meetings, advocacy activities and speaking engagements preoccupied me. Really tiring but fulfilling.

On the 8th year of journey, the project provided **PLANNER**. It taught me get things done in proper time and order. I learned to systematize

On the 9th year of journey, the project, gave me a **MAP**. I reached the different islands of the Philippines to share my rich experiences. I started to extend and it means touching more lives.

On the 10th year of the journey, the project provided me a **WEIGHING SCALE**. I stopped and made reflections for a while. "Is what I do for others and for myself in equilibrium?" I learned to balance things.

On the 11th year of the journey, the project gave me a **THESAURUS**. It helped me understand that all I did and evinced in the past were synonymous or relative to **dedication, commitment, compassion, concern, service, and the real context of love.**

On the 12th year of journey, the project gave me a **WHITE DOVE**. I am at full liberty and courage to face more challenges along the journey called **LIFE**.

"MY SINCEREST GRATITUDE TO OUR GOD ALMIGHTY FOR MAKING ME PART OF SABANA PROJECT"

By: Albin Salamat

Bago ako naging bahagi ng proyekto ng ILO nagsilbi muna ako sa kumunidad bilang Pangulo ng isang malaking community org. ito ay ang Katipunan Para sa Pag-unlad ng Smokey Mountain na kung saan nakafokus ang atensiyon ng samahan sa pagpapalakas ng kasapian at usaping relokasyon. After na malagdaan ni dating pangulong Cory Aquino ang isang memorandum na nagsasaad na na no force relocation for Smokey Mountain at on site development na lang ang gagawin ay nagbitiw ako sa aking tungkulin sa kaisipang tapos na ang nakaatang na responsibilidad at kailangan namang harapin ang tungkulin ko sa aking sariling pamilya.

Matapos ang pagbibitiw nag- balik ako sa basurahan bilang isang maliit na negosyante (pamimili ng mga lumang sako na nakukuha sa Smokey Mountain) masasabi kong tahimik walang iniisip na pangamba sa usaping relokasyon at nagtitiwala sa mga taong pinagkatiwalaang mamuno sa organisasyon, at kahit papaano ay kontento sa gawaing binalikan kasama ng aking maybahay.

Halos wala pang isang taon ng bisitahin ako at iencourage ni Zeny Ostos at Susan Gun ng ILO project na maging bahagi ng kanilang proyekto, sa katotohanan nito hindi ko halos binibigyang pansin ang mga taong ito dahil una tulad ng nabanggit ko para sa akin tapos na ang bahagi ko at isa pang katotohanan wala akong panahon makigawa sa mga bata. Para matapos lang ang pakikipag-usap kay Zeny sinabihan ko ito na bumalik at pag-uusapan namin ito ng aking may bahay. Matapos ipanalangin ito at pag-usapan naming mag-asawa ay nagdisisyon akong tanggapin at subukan ang bagong paghamon. Kung susuriin hindi sapat ang pinansyal na matatanggap sa proyekto kumpara sa aking kinikita sa maliit na negosyo subalit nakita namin na may malasakit ang proyekto sa kapakanan ng mga batang nananambakan at ito ang kaunauhang proyekto na nakatuun ang pansin sa mga batang maggagawa..

Bilang bahagi ng SABANA, napakarami bagay ang aking natutunan, lumawak ang aking pananaw at higit sa lahat natutunan kong malaman ang pangangailangan ng mga kabataan. Sa sabana ko natutunan ang kahulugan ng trabahong kasama ang puso, ang kahalagahan ng commitments, hindi mahalaga ang pinansyal na natatanggap ko sa Sabana, mas maraming bagay na mahalaga pa kaysa salapi ang naibigay sa akin nito. Una ang aking pakikipagrelasyon sa mga kapwa mangagawa, ang mabuksan ang aking mga mata sa katotohanan ng panganib na sinusuungan ng mga batang nanambakan na noong una akala ko ay walang katotohanan dahilan sa ako mismo ay isang mananambakan sa ikalawang henerasyon. Dito muling umukit sa aking puso ang madalas kong tanong sa aking sarili noong ako ay bata pa, bakit ako namamasura sa kabila ng napakabata pa ng aking katawan, Hindi ba dapat noon pa may SABANA ng sa gayon ay marami ng kasing edad ko sa ngayon ang naligtas sa Kamatayan na nasagasaan ng bulldoser? o mga batang maaring naging matagumpay sa larangang nakalaan para sa kanila? Sa SABANA napagtanto ko ang kahalagahan ng buhay ng kabataan marahil sa isang bahagi ng buhay ko ay naranasan ko rin naman.

Mga bagay na naranasan ko sa SABANA na kailan man ay hindi ko pinagsisihan. Ang pagmamapang at pagkuha ng datos ng bawat pamilya. Mga pagsasanay na isinagawa na naging malaking tulong sa akin. Ang pagbisita sa mga pamilya na dala-dala lamang ang isang papel at ballpen na habang nakikipag-usap ay gumuguhit ng sa gayon ay hindi kami mahalata ng aming kausap na sila ay kinukuhaan namin ng impormasyon, matingkad na natutunan ko dito ang pagkuha ng datos na naroon ang pagtitiwal nga kinakausap. Ang paglabas kasama ng mga bata at makita at maawa sa kanila na ang alam lamang nilang mundo ay ang mundo sa Smokey Mountain at nakaligtaan o di nila alam na may kabila pang mundo maliban sa Smokey Mountain. Ang pagbibigay halaga sa gawaing iniatang sa akin, nalala ko at hanggang ngayon ay dala dala ko ang sinabi ni Zeny "BAWAL ANG MAGKASAKIT" Naalala ko rin ng kami ay hamunin na dahil kulang ang budjet ay maaring hindi kami makasahod ng ilang linggo at dito nakita namin kung gaano kahalaga sa amin ang proyekto, ang may puso ay naiwan at natyiga ang wala ay mga nawala. Marahil pamamaraan na ito ng maykapal dahil sa katotohanan mahal niya ang mga bata. **Pakikipagkaibigan**, isang alaala sa SABANA na hindi malilimutan sa kabila ng lahat ng pinagdaanan kahit na may kanya-kanya ng mundong ginagalawan and bawat isang naging bahagi ng SABANA ang relasyong pagkakaibigan ay nanatili sa lahat. **Ang Pagtitiwala** : Sa mga taong naging tagapanguna ng proyekto, hindi ko matatawaran ang pagtitiwala na ibinigay nila sa bawat isa sa amin. Una sa pangyayari na ang mga tao muna sa kumunidad ay pagtiwalaan na maging kabalikat sa pagpapatakbo ng ganitong programa **PAMAMARAAN NG PAKIKIPAG-UGNAYAN**: Sa SABANA ko natutunan kung paanong makipag-uganayan sa mga magulang at kung paano maipaliwanag sa kanila ang proyekto. Sa Sabana rin akong nabigyan ng pagkakataon na makaharap at maka-usap ang Pangulong Cory Aquino.

Magmahal at mahalín: Dito ko natutunan kung paanong magmahal at mahalín ang mga batang salat sa pagmamahal., masaya ako sa mga bagay na ginagawa ko sa SABANA subalit sa kabila nito ay may isang bagay akong pilit na hinahanapan ng kasagutan na ang ang SABANA ang naging daan upang malaman ko kung ano ito. Nasabi ko na dati wala akong tiyagang makipag-ugnayan o makigawa sa mga bata, mg dumating ang SABANA, natutunan ko ito at nalaman na ito marahil ang gusto ng Panginoon na abutin ko, mga kabataang nangangailangan ng pagmamahal, mga kabataang dapat na nasa paaralan at wala sa ibabaw ng basurahan, mga kabataang dapat na malayang nakapaglalaro, mga kabataang inaagawan ng pagkakataon na matuipad ang layunin at pangarap ng Diyos. Mga kabataang katulad ko rin noon na may pangarap na nais maabot sa kabila ng kahirapan ng buhay. Dito ko napagtanto ang nais ipagawa sa akin ng maykapal, kasama ng aking pamilya na maabot ang mga kabataang ito sa pamamagitan ng pagtulong na maabot nila ang kanilang pangarap. Noong 1993 nagpasya akong iwan ang SABANA at mag-aral sa isang mission na kung saan ay mas matagpuan ang kakulangan hinahanap ko at matapos ito nagpaya kaming mag-anak na pumaibulog sa Mission ng sa gayon ay mas marami pa kaming maabot na mga nangangailangan . Sa Youth With A Mission napagkatiwalaan akong maging bahagi ng Student Sponsorship Ministry na kung saan ang ministeryo ay umaabot sa mga mahihirap na kabataan ng Smokey

Mountain na nais makapagtapos ng pag-aaral. Ni hindi ko inisip na ang ERDA na kung saan ay siyang nappatuloy ng programa na may kahalintulad din ng programa ng YWAM ay hindi nagbibigay ng sponsorship sa High School. Nalaman ko ito at aking napagpasyahang ang lahat ng mga batang nasa SABANA ay susuportahan ng YWAM sa kanilang pag-aaral. Muli nakita ko na ang kamay ng mapagpalang Diyos ay nasa mga kabataan ng SABANA. Marahil masasabi ko na mas marami ang naibigay at natutunan ko sa Sabana kaysa naibahagi ko. Taas noo at may mababang puso kong sasabihin sa maraming tao na ako ay minsang naging bahagi ng SABANA..

By: Manuel Manarang

English Version Of Manuel Manarang's Remembrance of SABANA

Before I became part of the ILO Project I served in the community as president of the big community organization – “Katipunan Para sa Pag-unlad ng Smokey Mountain” where my attention was focused on the organization addressing the issue of relocation. When president Cory Aquino signed a memorandum stating no force relocation for Smokey Mountain instead on site development project will be enforced. I resigned thinking I am finished with my task and I had to attend to my responsibility to my own family.

After resigning, I went back to the dumpsite this time as a small scale entrepreneur (buying plastics sacks from scavengers) I would say that was quite living since we are assured of no relocation and also trusted the incoming leaders and this time I am with my wife earning a living.

In less than a year, Zeny Ostos and Susan Gunn visited me and encourage me to join the ILO project. I did not pay attention to this invitation, I thought I am finished with my work in the community second; I don't have the passion to work with the children. Just to finish my conversation with Zeny I told her to come back because I will have to consult my wife. After my talk with my wife and some prayers, I decided to accept the invitation and try this new venture. If I will evaluate the financial gains from the project are less compared to what I'll be getting for my small business at the dump, but I sense the sincerity of the project team and the objective to address the flight of child scavengers and this is the first of its kind.

As part of SABANA – I have learned a lot, to have vision and learn needs and concerns of the children. Thru SABANA, I've learned to work with a heart the importance of commitment, money that I get, as compensation was not important. I learned to relate to my co-workers, my awareness that scavenging is dangerous to children. Before no one can convince me that scavenging is dangerous because as a child I was a scavenger too, the second generation of scavengers in Smokey Mountain. Hence, I was reminded of a question, as a child, why am I scavenging? Why was there no SABANA during my time so that those who were run over by the bulldozer were saved, or children who could have excelled? At SABANA, I realized the importance of the life of the children as I have experience as a child.

My experiences at SABANA that I never regretted: data gathering, family profile, mapping, training activities that had helped me a lot. Family home visits where we only have a piece of paper and pen. Hence I've learned that when interviewing it is necessary that you trust the interviewees: field trip / exposures with children, I can't help to have pity on the children; all they know is Smokey Mountain. Giving importance to every task assigned to me; up to now I cannot forget Zeny saying “Don't get sick”.

I also remember when they challenged us that we might not be able to get our allowances for one week because of constraints, some stayed others left. Perhaps, this was providential; in reality He loves the children.

Gift of Friendship: a memory I will never forget, inspite of what we have undergone, and although we have now our undertakings we remain friends.

Trust: for those who lead the project, I can't discount the trust they have given each and everyone of us.

Method of Collaboration: they went to the community and invited the people to be their partner in implementing the programs. I've learned at SABANA how to coordinate with parents and how to present the project to them. I was given the opportunity to talk face to face to President Cory Aquino.

Love: I've learned to love the children, I am happy doing my task at SABANA, but inspite of this I was restless and longing for something and I searched for an answer and SABANA was the way. I have said before that I don't have patience working with children but when SABANA came, I've learned and perhaps this is God's will to reach out to children or youth who need love, children / youth who should be in school and not in the garbage, children happily playing, children deprive of opportunity to reach out and fulfill God's promise. Children / Youth like me who hard dreams inspite of poverty.

Hue I have realized what God wanted me to do, together with my family to reach out to the children / youth to fulfill their dreams. In 1993 I decided to leave SABANA and went out to study on mission, this time I found what I was looking for and together with the whole family we went on mission to reach out for more. At YWAM (Youth With a Mission) I was trusted to head the Student Sponsorship Ministry ministering to poor children / youth to finish their schooling. I found out that ERDA do not support high school and college education like YWAM, so I decided that all SABANA children would be YWAM beneficiaries. Again, I saw the goodness of the Lord in children / youth of SABANA. This time I can say I learned more than what SABANA has given me. With Pride and Humility, I can say that once I was part of SABANA.

My remembrance of SABANA:

SABANA-the children of Smokey Mountain and here is a song for them

I believe the children are the future
Teach them well and let them lead the way
Show them all the beauty they posses inside
Give them a sense of pride
To make them easier
Let the children's laughter, remind us how we use to be
Everybody is searching for a hero
People need someone who looked up to
I never found anyone who fulfill my needs
A lonely place to be
So I learned to depend on me
I decide long ago, never to walk in anyone's shadow
If I fail, if I succeed, at least I've lived as I believe
No matter what they take from me
They can't take away my dignity
Because **THE GREATEST LOVE OF ALL**
Is happening to me
I felt the greatest love of all inside of me
The greatest love of all is easy to achieve
Learning to love yourself is

THE GREATEST LOVE OF ALL

And if by chance that special place
That you've been dreaming of
Lead you to a lonely place,
Find your strength in love

SABANA CODE OF HONOR

S – sincerity of all the people involve in the project; **A** – approach, consultative and participative; **B** – bold in the objective to help the child scavengers; **A** – address issues concerns rightfully and honestly; **N** – never give up no matter how tough; **A** – ALLELUIA

THE “pipol” (PEOPLE)

Ms. Jojo Dy, ILO Regional Advisor-“Maka-Pilipino”; Dr. Gert Gust, Director ILO-Manila-for the trust and inspiration; Susan Gunn, my technical advisor-my role model in professional integrity; the Smokey Mountain community workers (CWs) their hospitality, that was a gift of friendship; the foreign volunteers especially Mary Ng-they were “men for others”; Ms. Amy Torres, Director ILS-DOLE-she was an angel, gave us respite when we are all very tired; Mang Boy, the driver-his smiles and the guard of all; Mr. Benny Lim (RIP) for the project EPAs; Fr. Tritz and Ms. Dolor Cardeno of ERDA-for their “YES TO SABANA”; Roy for being there by my side.

Today, to sum up these memories, I am borrowing Fr. Tritz words: “GOD has put together the right people at the right time to help”.

Lastly, if I may share, SABANA has gifted me 3Ss – Simplicity, Stewardship & Sharing.

Zeny L. Ostos

ANDOY: FROM ICON TO ICONOCLAST

THE MAKING OF AN "ICON"

"Mas magaling kami!" (We are better than the rest!) Andoy reminisced. With a smile in his face, with relish his experiences at SABANA, during exposure trips, attending art and drama classes. It was during this exposure the young Andoy observed the great "divide" between his groups and the other group of children attending these classes (e.g. expensive clothing, good food, they have cars, etc.). "We might not be rich, but we're better (in our art and drama classes!). "Makakasakay din ako ng kotse" (Someday I will have my own car!)

At a tender age of 4, Andoy was exposed to the dumps (and became a child scavenger) when his family migrated to the Big City. It didn't bother the precocious child the smelly atmosphere of his new "home". In fact, he was having fun together with his newfound friends. Here at Smokey /mountain, "lahat ng bata ay pantay-pantay" (all the children here are equal).

"INFANTUATION"

Imagine a nine-year old boy – a t-shirt worn over his head to protect himself from the sun and to prevent inhaling the smoke, along sleeved shirt with a pair shorts, long socks that covered his knees tied with a rope and a high rubber boots. In his hand is a "kalahig" – about a feet long steel bar with a wooden handle and a pointed hook at the end used to gather any recyclable trash and on his back the "buslo" (basket) to hold the booty held by a strap over his shoulder. Soot and grime cover his body, too small for his age. This is Andoy. He is typical of literally thousands of child scavengers working in shifts at the dumps everyday. This was the image of Andoy during that fateful day when the ILO – DOLE Project team chanced upon him at the dump. This was the private world of Andoy and his friends a huge playground and their battleground to survive everyday life. That chance encounter proved the turning point of his life.

Andoy was motivated to join the activities of the ILO – DOLE Project specifically designed to look after the welfare of children in hazardous work. Organizational activities continued for child scavengers to motivate them away from the dumps. It was then that SABANA was born. The Center was in a rented house at the foot of the dump with the "Learn – Earn" program for Andoy and other child scavengers.

He was then in – school attending intermittently his grade 3 classes. "In school education is too formal, too rigid and has many restrictions. While at the dumps, we can do anything and we learn faster. But it was due to and because of SABANA "mas lalong nabuksan ang aking pananaw" (my vision has expanded) e.g. that scavenging is dangerous and hazardous and that learning is fun. Everyone has a dream and at SABANA every child is motivated to dream and to aspire for life. "SABANA became an alternative to Smokey Mountain but much better".

He stayed with SABANA even until the Project was turned over to ERDA. The takeover on SABANA's operations ensured the continuation of its programs and services. This time the Center was transferred to its new site at Vitas, Tondo, Manila. He was grade 5 and proved to his schooling thru ERDA – Educational Assistance Programmed. He continued to high school, thru a scholarship grant from YWAM (Youth With A Mission) facilitated by a former SABANA community worker – Manuel Manarang. On his second year, he left SABANA and joined the Parish Cultural Group.

THE SEARCH

The Parish Cultural Group, formed by the Parish Priest of Smokey Mountain for environmental awareness or so Andoy thought. Their first European tour included Germany, Sweden and Denmark in 1995, with a theme: *The Children of Mother Earth*.

The tour was a success and generated more funds for the parish. Andoy was elated to belong, to be part to be recognized and be applauded by people. "Masarap pinapalakpakan, feeling may nagagawa ako" (translate in English). And he also saw the difference between his own country and the other countries and started asking himself – why perform for environmental awareness to these countries when in fact our own country is much more worst off environmentally? We should have done it first in our own country!

On his fourth year high school, he had his second European tour in 1998, which included Germany and Holland. But this time they were only 20 in a group with him as the leader. More funds were generated. Andoy at this time started to doubt that these "Cultural Presentations" were really for fund raising rather than what it purports to be. He became disgruntled when controversy regarding fund uses arose. He left the group when he felt he was not happy anymore, and went back to SABANA this time – 2000.

THE RE-SHAPING OF THE "ICON"

It was while Andoy was busy with the Parish Cultural Group that he graduated from high school (1998). He went on to college hoping to earn a college degree – took up BS Custom Administration. ERDA found a benefactor to finance his college education. This time his life took a new turn -- the call for family life. He married his girl he met and was part of the cultural group. At SABANA, he became a junior educator and later on an artist of the T-shirt production unit. When asked about his re-union with SABANA, Andoy jestingly answered, "Hindi pa ako tapos dito sa SABANA" (I'm not yet finish here at SABANA). And quoting a Tagalog phrase "ang hindi lumington sa pinangalingan ay hindi makakarating sa paroroonan".

College education, SABANA volunteer worker and family life, Andoy struggled.

OVERCOMING THE "ODDS"

Andoy at 22 seemed a determined man to succeed. Looking back at that fateful encounter at the dump, he can only smile and probably grateful that he did what he did. A month away from graduation – you can see his smiles and the twinkle in his eyes; he now sees the culmination of his dream and that of his parents. When asked what made him continue his studies he smiled and said, "dahil sa nanay ko!" Kinukulit niya akong mag-aral – Kaya gusto ng pagbabago".

"Graduating na ako ngayon. Gusto ko pagkatapos ng college mag-masteral ako. Marami pa akong gusto – ayoko ng bumalik sa madilim na nakaraan" (I'm graduating, after college I want to proceed to masteral studies, I want a lot of things, I don't want to ever go back to that dark past).

Andoy Avelino

II. LESSONS LEARNED

A. When asked what I / we remember of SABANA.

I will put it this way: **SABANA** (S – sincerity; the dedication of all the people involved in this project was felt in all the phrases of project implementation; **A** – approach, the participative and consultative approach won't do you wrong – instead you learn; **B** – bold, in our endeavor in the project to help and take care of the child scavengers; **A** – address, issues, concerns that confront you rightfully and honestly; **N** – never give up (never mind if you get tired); **A** – Alleluia

With **SABANA** these were my lessons:

- With collegial partnership manifested by the Technical Adviser (Susan Gunn) and ILO experts, **PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY** was felt
- The work – administration, trainings, networking / linkages meetings I could only say this “huwag pagsamantalahan ang maliliit / maralita, siya ang nangangailangan ng tulong” (do not take advantage of the poor / less privilege, they need our help)
“No to Corruption”
- The people whom I've work with: Manuel, Alvin, Vilma and Rosalie; their smiles, warmth, concern – that was a gift of friendship
- The Volunteers – Mary Ng; they were men for others
- Amy Torres who was there when we're on crisis – she was an angel

I could only say that **SABANA** experiences:

“God has put together the right people at a right time who could **HELP** (**SABANA** model)

In the end: **Simplicity, Stewardship** and **sharing** that **SABANA** has gifted me.

Zeny Ostos