

press release



Fishing is the main livelihood in Catbalogan, Samar. Typhoons Yolanda and Ruby affected the community's economic livelihood as fishermen lost their boats, which are also the main transportation service for children who need to cross the waters to get to their schools.



(L- R) Department of Education Secretary Armin Luistro awards the certificate of recognition to Standard Chartered's Head of Corporate Affairs, Brand and Marketing Mai Sangalang for the bank's support to DepEd's 'Pedals and Paddles' program. Under the 'Banca ng Buhay' livelihood project, around 300 students will no longer need to cross the seas between the island barangays or endure a 40-minute walk on rough roads due to the absence of access roads to the inland, to reach their school.



The 'Banca ng Buhay' project also aims to provide livelihood support to the boatmen and their family. After ferrying students, the boats can be used by the beneficiary boatmen for fishing. Capacity-building for livelihood and basic financial management trainings will also be given to their wives who will also be given start-up capital for small-scale business enterprises.

STANDARD CHARTERED BANK PHILIPPINES' 'BANCA NG BUHAY' ALLEVIATES PLIGHT OF SCHOOLCHILDREN, BOATMEN AND WOMEN IN SAMAR

Partners with PBSP, DepEd, and LGU to provide boats for livelihood and transport service for public school students of Catbalogan City

Standard Chartered Bank Philippines (SCB PH), in partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd), Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) and Negrense Volunteers for Change Foundation, Inc. (NVCFI) will donate thirty-eight (38) fiberglass boats to five island barangays in the Sierra Islands of Catbalogan City, Western Samar.

Catbalogan City was among the areas in Western Samar devastated by typhoons Yolanda and Ruby in 2013 and 2014, displacing families and damaging houses, including public schools. The typhoon affected the community's economic livelihood as fishermen lost their boats, which are also the main transportation service for children who need to cross the waters to get to their schools.

Standard Chartered is launching '*Banca ng Buhay: School Boats for Mobility and Livelihood Project*' to alleviate the plight of public school children and provide livelihood to boatmen and their families. The project is the last phase of the bank's sustainability support to Typhoon Yolanda affected communities.

"Standard Chartered Bank's response to Typhoon Yolanda has come full circle since 2013. From immediate relief, to rehabilitation efforts and now sustainable livelihood programs for impacted communities – we take pride that the bank and our employees play an active part all the way," said Mai Sangalang, Head, Corporate Affairs, Brand and Marketing of SCB PH.

The UK-based bank has been supportive to the immediate response for the victims of typhoon Yolanda through emergency relief operations, construction of donated school building and houses in partnership with various NGOs, and now sustainable livelihood opportunities to support the full recovery of the affected families.

"We look forward to stronger partnerships with program partners, local government units and agencies to deliver the message of hope to our Filipino brethren who may have lost so much but have found the faith to heal and rebuild lives," said Sangalang.

Convenient school transport service for students, livelihood for boatmen

Under the SCB PH's '*Banca ng Buhay: School Boats for Mobility and Livelihood Project*', around 300 students will no longer need to cross the seas between the island barangays or walk on shallow water during low tide from where they live or endure a 40-minute walk on rough roads due to the absence of access roads to the inland, to reach their school.

The 38 fiberglass boats which will be manufactured by NVCFI, will be used to ferry for free the public school students residing in Barangays Cagutsan, Mombon, Bogongon, Buluan, Cinco and Canhawan daily going to Antonio G. Tuazon National High School in Barangay Rama. These students pay 5 pesos per way to get to school, an amount difficult to shoulder for families of fishermen with average daily income of Php100-200 if with a good catch. Some of the schoolchildren even wrap their uniform and school things in plastic as they swim to school when they are unable to hitch a ride or pay a fishing boat.

Poverty and the difficulties students face hinder their desire to stay in school. City DepEd office of Catbalogan noted a decrease of 46% in enrollees in high school due to these factors.

With the donated boats, Standard Chartered aims to support the DepEd's advocacy of providing access to education particularly in far-flung areas in the provinces. The bank also hopes that when the 38 boats become available this school year, it will result in significant improvement in school attendance and improved academic performance of the students.

In selecting the beneficiary for the program, PBSP and the local DepEd in Catbalogan City headed by City Superintendent Cris Eco is prioritizing boatmen with children who will also benefit from the free ferry service. The barangays will be putting up streamers announcing "Free boatride to students" to encourage and increase students' enthusiasm to attend school this school year.

The 'Banca ng Buhay' project also aims to provide livelihood support to the boatmen. After ferrying the students to their schools in the morning, they can use the boats for fishing. Nets and other fishing accessories will be given to the boatmen as part of the package.

"Banca ng Buhay hits two birds with one stone. First, it helps provide families or parents of students with additional livelihood opportunities. Second, it provides a safe and reliable means of transportation for students at no cost who need to cross seas going to and from school. This will definitely impact on the students' interest in going to school and on their parents' capability to support them -- things that will lead to increase in regular attendance which will eventually translate into better performance," said Mario A. Deriquito, Department of Education Undersecretary.

Livelihood training for wives

PBSP, NGO partner of Standard Chartered for this project, will also conduct capacity-building for livelihood and basic financial management trainings to wives of boatmen that will allow them to start small-scale business enterprise such as food processing and livestock farming. The bank will provide each family with start-up capital for small business or livestock farming. Its employee volunteers will also facilitate info sessions on the bank's global campaigns such as financial education for the youth, Seeing is Believing or eye health care, and Positive Living (with HIV).

"Standard Chartered's approach in providing boats and seed funding, building the capability of the community, and setting up community enterprises is a sustainable approach," added USec Deriquito.

PBSP is implementing the whole project while the fabrication of the 38 fiberglass boats will be handled by Negrense Volunteers for Change Foundation, Inc (NVCFI). PBSP is also handling the coordination and collaboration with local stakeholders such as LGUs, beneficiary schools and boatmen. PBSP will also conduct project monitoring and student performance together with the DepEd City Division of Catbalogan.

The boats will be turned over to the beneficiaries in August.

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