

# THE GREEN VILLAGE

ACTIVITY REPORT & INFORMATION LETTER



## INTENSELY INTENSE

The Green Village, as you've already noticed, is an amazing project. Of course it does have its little problems. Everyone who has any involvement in it, up close or from a distance, would without doubt agree that its biggest problem is its crazy intensity!!! Things are constantly in flux, changing dramatically in just a matter of days.

In 2016 we were forever breaking new ground; working according to plans, and yet always dealing with the unexpected, adapting, thinking and then rethinking, continually being thrown off course ...

Sometimes we failed to notice the positive results of these frequent derailments (despite our weekly meetings which we obviously continue to hold). The best time for taking a moment to stand back and assess is, of course, the year's end. So that's what we decided to do! As in all the centers, the Youth in Calauan took advantage of this opportunity to review the small, medium and big achievements that have occurred in the Green Village, and therefore also in their Life Projects. And I am pleased to tell you that the last three months of 2016 contained some noteworthy feats!

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OCT - NOV - DEC 2016

## HALFWAY THERE

We were at last able to start work on the road, thanks to the owner of the neighboring plot of land, who graciously gave us right of passage allowing us to cross his land. And we ended up with a new approach! Due to the rather perilous topography it was not possible to build a road using compacted gravel, so we had originally planned to build a 3-meter wide road out of concrete, as recommended by our engineers. And then we heard about Fazenda da Esperança on the Island of Masbate (an amazing ecological farm which welcomes recovering addicts). Their technique is to make parallel concrete tracks, each 1 meter wide. Very clever! For two important reasons: it reduces the amount of concrete required, while at the same time adding some greenery to the grey road.

However, we're not yet at the concrete stage, as progress has been delayed by the rather extended rainy season. That said, the ground has been levelled and the retaining walls are in place. This might appear insignificant, but in fact it makes a huge difference when you have to bring the 80 bamboo poles 60 meters from where they were delivered, instead of 100 meters, not to mention the 2.5m<sup>3</sup> of gravel, or indeed the 10 bags of cement. So, it's a half step forward, but a very big half step!

In November, work on the road begins.



Early December, after levelling the ground.



End of December, bamboo delivered and the track is now accessible ... on foot at least!

## LPC STANDS WITH ...

**"L" is for ... LPP!** In November we held 2016's fourth and final Life Project Plan ceremony. It was a unique event during which the Youth presented their progress through LP4Y training and their plans for achieving their professional goals. At the event we were delighted to welcome the Youths' families as well as some special guests, including many LP4Y volunteers such as Charles and Arnaud, but also Jean-Marc Delaporte, President of LP4Y, and two representatives from Decathlon, Mr and Mrs Iff.

**"P" is for entrePreneur ..?!** I know, it's a stretch, but we can't talk about the Calauan LPC without mentioning our incredible entrepreneurs. Let's start with the most recent: Sheralyn, previously with the Green Garden, is now working as a receptionist in Manila, not far from her old team mate Michael, who has signed a contract with CGI! Nickson, a Green Program graduate, showed such commitment during his internship with Microsourcing that he's been given a permanent contract. Apparently he was also able to inspire Randy, his successor, who is now working as a chef in a Manila restaurant; an exceptional achievement for someone who spent his whole childhood with Tulay Ng Kabataan. What a great way to end the year! And for the next batch, it's hard to know where to start! Perhaps with Sandra, Jonalyn and Dahlia, who excelled during their two-week internship at the Gastro-pub "Samuel's Plate", or maybe with Lalaine and Camille who spent the last two weeks of 2016 working as administrative assistants at the Calauan town hall ... or perhaps with the group's 3 future mechanics: Luodimer, Jonathan and Jonas, who have just completed their mechanic's training which took up every Sunday morning for the last 4 months. Well done!

**"C" is for Celebrate!** Professionalism is not boring! Which is why we like to celebrate it regularly. Celebrate what, exactly? Well there's no shortage of things to celebrate, so we grouped them all together under the title of "Accomplishments of the Year" and presented them proudly at the center's Christmas Celebration, where we were delighted to welcome as guests newly employed Calauan graduates, including Sheralyn and Nickson, who came to talk about their experiences and to encourage the Youth for the year ahead ... Truly the cherry on the pancit (festive Filipino noodle dish). And by a happy coincidence we were also able to celebrate the return of Jean-Baptiste, ex-Tondo volunteer, who has taken over as Coach for the Eco-construction program for the coming year (replacing Lanivie who has had to return to the Mindanao LPC following a decision by the French Embassy regarding volunteers in the field).



Group photo during the LPP presentation ceremony on November 30th.



Sheralyn, receptionist at the Manila offices of Sodexo after less than one year's training with the Green Garden Program.



Jonas from the Green Garden, and Leo from the new Deco'Me program, MCs at the Christmas Celebration in charge of introducing the various key moments: presenting the year's achievements, testimonies from the graduates, speech by the center coordinator, ...

John Carlo with the Eco-construction program, explains to Loic, his coach, the problems encountered when positioning the steel mesh before the concrete is poured.



Creating the concrete base for the treatment pit.

September and October: finishing touches to the drainage pipes.



## TREATMENT CENTER

Exactly 6 months after the first big (or rather "Big") date, November 24th marked another major event for the Green Village. The team took delivery of the first bamboo poles for building the eco training center. They then steeped them in a solution of boron salts in the treatment pit for a week. There were lots of surprises during the process but the Youth from the Eco-construction program were all pleased to take this first step towards building the Training Rooms out of bamboo.

Since that day 400 bamboo poles have been treated and put to dry on the shelves in the Bamboo Dryer.

Pouring concrete into the forms to create the walls of the treatment pit. Luckily we now have a concrete mixer!



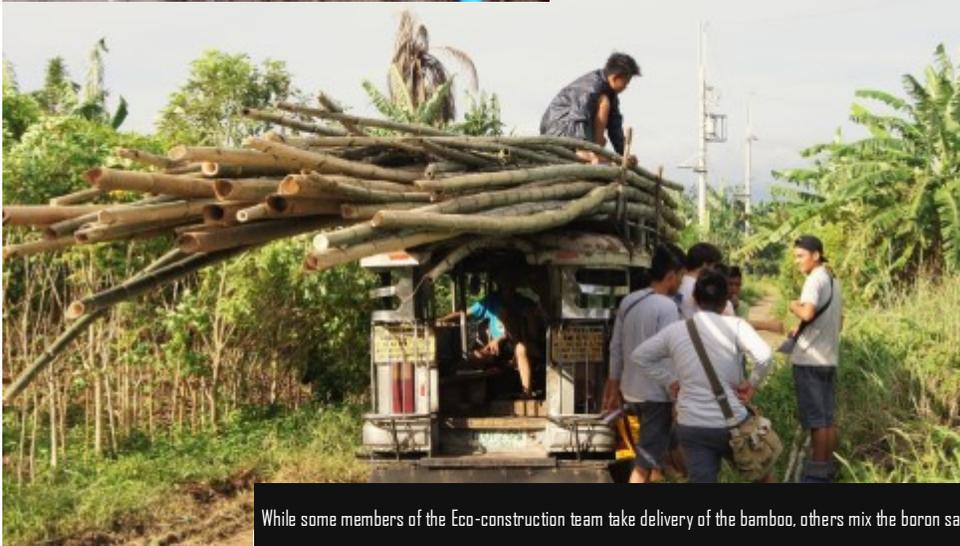
Finishing the treatment pit with a final white coat. What a lovely bamboo swimming pool!





The creation of the treatment pit provided the opportunity for the Youth to address several very tangible problems. First planning problems ... then physical problems: how do you fill a pit with water when the pit walls are 1m high and the pump hasn't been installed yet?

*by abed u anj*



While some members of the Eco-construction team take delivery of the bamboo, others mix the boron salts with water in the pit.

This is where the bamboo preparation process begins! First holes are made in the joints to allow the boron solution to fully penetrate the bamboo. Then the bamboo poles are put into the solution and weighed down to keep them submerged for a week. Lastly, they are drained and placed on the shelves of the bamboo dryer for 6 weeks.





Propping up the bamboo vertically allows the water to drain out easily. Furthermore, the drained liquid can be collected via gutters, and reused.

## A QUESTION OF PROCESS

The first bamboo delivery arrived the day after construction of the bamboo dryer was completed (yes, we're very precise with all our planning!), and we have to admit that the first batch of bamboo to be treated presented us with many challenges! But of course, as ever, we set out to question, seek solutions and optimize the activity - a field in which we were all still novices.

Indeed this is exactly what we want to teach the Youth: to analyze, reflect, understand ... so that they can clarify and improve the process, the handling, the management of bamboo stock, etc.

In the end multiple improvements emerged, including the vertical dryer. The Youth are still working on clarifying the exact process regarding bamboo treatment and drying. It will probably take time to perfect, but that's the whole point: to learn from one's mistakes.



A very attractive outline that visitors can admire, never imagining its mundane purpose!

## THE HUT

The team has built a hut, about 4m<sup>2</sup>, close to the well to provide protection, in due course, for the water pump (which will probably be solar powered), the generator and any other outdoor equipment (solar panel inverter, etc ...)

Construction was carried out using discarded materials as much as possible. The walls are reinforced with leftover metal grids, and part of the structure is made with recycled wooden scaffolding, both from the Bamboo Dryer.

It has also been an opportunity to test a new, steeper roof structure, typical of some old Filipino constructions, which lends a certain charm!

# ARICH LAND

For a long time now we've been talking about having water and electricity on the site. Well we've delivered 50% of our promise! Water is at last available, and not just any old how. While digging, we suddenly came across an underground spring just a few meters down!

The diggers said it was a blessing. The Youth started dreaming of a natural swimming pool. We thought up dozens of new possibilities for the Youth, for the project, for the local community ... In particular because the water appears to have mineral properties, and we are keen to hear back from our local partner, the University of the Philippines, Los Baños, with official confirmation.

So this is how we were able to fill the 9m3 bamboo treatment pit, without use of a pump, and it's also the reason why our neighbors now turn up their noses at the old manual pump that squeaked, and why the children wait impatiently for 4.30 PM to come around, so they can bath in a pool made of coconut wood, and why we can look forward to high quality concrete for our future foundations.



Local craftsmen manually digging the well using ... you guessed it ... a tripod made of bamboo!



Whatever program they belong to, the spring brings the same smile to all faces.



The new municipal swimming pool in Calauan.



## IT'S BIG, IT'S BEAUTIFUL, BUT BEST OF ALL... IT'S COMPLETE

If the treatment pit is complete, the Bamboo Dryer must be ready! And this is without doubt the biggest achievement of 2016! We can confirm that the Bamboo Dryer is the biggest, tallest, longest and craziest of all the buildings in the Green Village (at least until the Conference Room comes along ... but that won't be for another 16 months, approximately).

Who says I'm not objective? OK ... if I have to be objective, I'll admit it certainly has its defects, but they are all part of its charm! Like Lucie's book, it is "marked by life" and by the learning experiences of the Youth. And the Youth feel the same way; because, while they admit that it was the toughest challenge they faced this year, it is also the thing they are most proud of.

In conclusion, both the building and the opportunities it provided are extraordinary!



## ROOFIND THE BUILDING

28 days, 15 Youths, lots of windy downpours, over 2,000 nipa fronds, several liters of sweat, 50 or so bamboo poles each 6 meters long, 8 trainers, 120m<sup>2</sup> covered, 3 roofs, 2 different levels, lots of repaired fishing nets. All to provide optimized natural ventilation for drying 400 freshly treated bamboo poles.



Early stages of the nipa roof, while on the small upper roof levels the solid structure is completed.



Noriel, a new recruit to the Eco-construction team, is already working solo fixing the nipa leaves.



David, the Eco-construction expert for "high level" work, working hard to finish the roofing structure of the upper roof levels.



Spaced bamboo slats are installed around the upper roofs, as per bioclimatic design principles, allowing the humidity from the drying bamboo to escape.



And exactly 28 days later ... Da daaah! All finished, following the positioning of the netting and wooden protective pieces.



Installing the doors on the Bamboo Dryer: Jonathan and his Eco-construction team mates with Green Village trainers Dimitrio and Abe.



The Bamboo Dryer now has a more natural appearance, in harmony with the prototype dry toilets, don't you think?



Meanwhile Tatay works on the new gates at the current center, just minutes from his home.



### CLOSING THE BUILDING

First we ordered 14 small metal fencing panels from one of our neighbors on Site 2 who is a talented metal worker. When we reviewed the architectural design of the Bamboo Dryer in April, we realized that the panels made by the Youth were inadequate. And while metal is obviously not the number one eco material of the year, it does offer a reasonable compromise in terms of safety and cost, as well as being easy to install, which is an important factor at this precise stage of the project. It's a calculated sacrifice in terms of gray energy to benefit the rest of the village.

In addition, since we have neither the tools nor the necessary woodworking skills, we decided to commission the majestic wooden doors from a craftsman working in Santa Cruz (15 km from Calauan). These are high quality doors, made to measure out of solid wood, proving extremely heavy and difficult to install, but all that is forgiven when we see the end result: they are the cherry on the cake!

Plumbing on the site in late September: the drainage system for the treatment pit is in place, and the trenches have been filled in ... but where do they connect?



The Green Garden team with coach, Alex, and their trainer, Raymond, assembling the pipes for the natural filter. But they will have to wait for the rain to stop before they can position them definitively.



The Green Garden Youth work with their trainer, Raymond, to dig Y-shaped trenches for the phyto-purification zone, specifically for the Bamboo Dryer. Y for "Yoo-hoo!"



## PHYTO-PURIFICATION OF THE TREATMENT EFFLUENT

The Youth on the Eco-construction team are not the only ones achieving amazing things with the Bamboo Dryer. Let's not forget the other team of Youth, busy creating a whole system of pipes and ecological treatment of wastewater for which bamboo will be the key. The extended rainy season at the end of 2016 didn't make things easy for them but they've nearly completed the first phyto-purification system which will take care of natural filtering of effluent from the treatment pit. Now we just need the road to be completed so we can take delivery of a few square meters of gravel for the drainage system, plant the bamboo shoots whose roots will pierce through the recycled bags ... and we'll be done!



The bamboo shoots gathered in August along the roadside near Pampanga, a few hours from Calauan, are now ready for transplanting.



## THE FIRST IN A LONG LINE

The Youth in Calauan and ex-members of the Green Program now have a name for their new program: "Deco'Me". Their micro-economic activity relates to all aspects of the interiors of the structures built by the Eco-construction team: interior electricity, furniture and ecological decoration. The Youth have already worked on their logo with help from two LP4Y volunteers, Sarah and Miranda. You'll get to see it soon.

Anyway, that's just the introduction. The 15 Deco'Me team members have now made their first pieces of bamboo and wood furniture: a table in October, and a bench and a storage unit in November. There's even talk of a garden set being made out of reclaimed materials ... but we'll have to wait a month or two for photos.



The Youth from Deco'Me listen attentively to their trainer, Sonny.



Jericho is now fully confident using a wood knife to make holes. Leo passes on the lessons he's learned to Robbee, who's just arrived for his Discovery Week.



The new organizational tool to encourage the Youth to hold their meetings ... in comfort!



Angelo, Bernardo, Mary-Dhel and Leo work day after day on the storage unit where they will keep all the safety equipment.



The shocking state of the river running through the Green Village.



The Youth from the Green Garden do their best to save the river.



Sandra and Brian from the Green Garden discuss possible solutions at a meeting with the engineer from the Calauan Township Environmental Office and Barangay captains from the neighborhoods surrounding the affected area.

## PROGRESS

The Green Village aims to provide an ecological model for the local community. But it's hard to be a model, particularly an ecological one, when the river running through the site is more noticeable for the tons of trash it contains than for the fabulous Gabi plants which stand nearly 2m tall. So we called upon the Green Garden team which looks after environmental management on the site.

After 2 weeks removing trash from the river by hand, and installation of a grid to block the arrival of more trash ... a tropical storm showed us (partly by burying the newly installed grid in mountains of trash) that it was not enough to selfishly deal with "our" problem relating to trash on "our" land, but rather we needed to introduce fundamental changes and offer a solution for trash management for the local community. This is an integral part of the Green Village message, but it's no small feat for a team of 15 Youth who already have their hands full!

So we got in touch with the Calauan Town Hall. The following week, 2 of our Youth were able to gain an understanding of how the township deals with waste management, through meetings with the engineer from the Township Environmental Office. The Youth from the Green Garden are going to set up trash collection and sorting in the neighborhoods surrounding the Green Village.



October 3, 2016.



December 23, 2016.

## THE END IS IN SIGHT

OK, we'll admit it, we weren't able to complete the storage workshop by the end of 2016 as planned ... but not through want of trying! The Youth from the Eco-construction team were there, full of enthusiasm, with 8 trainers as backup and volunteers at their sides. The walls were raised up to the last bottle, and the roofing structure completed, the doors and grills were in place, the plaster smoothed, the nipa leaves sewn in place ...we were so close. All it needed was fewer rainy days, and a wood supplier with a less fluid understanding of delivery dates.

But even in its unfinished state the workshop displays its hidden charms. This "waste" building has become an object of beauty and has transformed the tepid responses of the early days into fully-fledged admiration. In fact only yesterday Annie, from the Green Garden, whispered to me "You'd never guess it was made of bottles. I didn't imagine it would look so nice!" All in all, I think we can say "Mission Accomplished".



John Carlo from Eco-Construction finishes the last layer of bottles before the roofing structure is added.



Despite the never-ending rain, the Youth from Eco-Construction, assisted by their trainers, continue building, installing the door frames and starting with the roofing structure.

### THE WORKSHOP ROOF

Back at the beginning of October, the walls were not yet finished. But the technique had been mastered and the Youth from Eco-construction were fully autonomous in their work. As soon as the Bamboo Dryer was completed, work restarted on the workshop walls which were completed in just one week. Next step: to protect the bottle-built structure the same way we did the Bamboo Dryer, that is to say, with nipa leaves sewn onto bamboo slats. Once again the Youth are fully autonomous at this task, but first we needed the wooden roofing structure which is still one of the hardest things for the Youth to master.



A great example of teamwork between the Youth and the trainers. Here's the result!



## PALITADA!

The word "palitada" (plaster) must have been the most frequently used word in the Green Village over the last couple of weeks in December 2016. And for good reason: the plastering of a wall made out of bottles (glass and plastic, in interlocking layers) is not the easiest of jobs. And despite the best skills in the world (let's be generous) it remains a time-consuming task requiring patience and precision. But ... they've done a great job, and for that we admire them all the more!



Luodimer from Eco-construction learns beside his trainer, Levy, who is an expert in building techniques.

## PREPARING THE FLOOR

With the roofing structure already completed, and plaster gradually covering the walls ... it's now time to plan and prepare the floor of this technical building. What are our requirements? We need something solid, to cope with the traffic of constantly moving materials in and out, dust and mud, the works. But something easy to clean, without needing to be spotless. How about a floor made of bottles? Oooh ... no. We need something quick, the training rooms are already being laid out ... OK, let's stick with the compromise option that worked well in the training room prototype. We'll pour a concrete floor. But first priority: level the ground.



Rucelle fills in the open bottle mouths to make plastering easier for Luodi. Preparatory work that pays off.



What could be more logical than to use the earth dug in the creation of Phyto-purification treatment ponds to level the workshop floor. That's what John Carlo, Lito and Grace thought. So they asked Vic, their trainer, to help them.



John-Carlo from the Eco-construction team, and team leader of the workshop project this week, meets with Jean-Baptiste, his coach.

Camille from the Deco'Me team prepares frames for the signs which describe the various Green Village installations.



Guided tour: "On your left, let me first present the anti-rust water filter, the traditional water storage system, or "Banga Pinoy" which contains 3,000 liters, and on your right, the covered bridge build by the scouts!"

## FOLLOW THE GUIDE

The Youth in the Deco'Me program have made and painted about 100 small signs for a variety of uses: names for each building in the Green Village; reminders of the rules regarding communal living and respect for nature and the work carried out.

This offers a good opportunity for the 3 teams to work together like real suppliers, detailing their needs and responding to the needs of another team, taking minutes of meetings held, agreeing on solutions ...



Here Brian, the Green Garden's head of environmental matters, explains to Mary-Ann and Jamaica from Deco'Me the environmental rules that apply to their sign making.



Approaching the site you immediately see signs explaining the basic rules that apply here: Respect nature! Signs in Tagalog (the local language) will be added shortly.



Mary-Dhel and Dalia of the Deco'Me team carry out the weekly smoking of the bamboo table.



Robbee and Angelo apply chili oil to the bamboo bench



The Deco'Me team experiment with Borax and Boric acid bamboo treatment

## FOUR OPTIONS

The Eco-construction team used to be the experts in this field, but now the Deco'Me team are ahead. They're already on their fourth bamboo treatment test.

The bamboo bench was treated with chili oil (homemade!); the table was smoked weekly for 2 months; lengths of bamboo were left to soak in running water (thanks to our spring), according to another method; and of course they've also tested the efficiency of the boron salt pit adopted by the Eco-construction team, but it's nonetheless good to check results with your own eyes.

Now all they have to do is analyze the results and draw their conclusions, which will be most useful as they continue to develop their activity. It's not necessarily the easiest part of the job, but it calls into play multiple skills



Jonas, with the Green Garden, approves of his work uniform.



The well-run briefing meetings reflect the Youths' newly acquired professionalism.

## FROM HEAD TO TOE

Perhaps you remember how in May 2016, when we started construction work on the project, we provided t-shirts and polo-shirts with the Green Village logo, along with safety shoes.

But we became aware that this was not enough, and that something more was needed to maintain a sense of professionalism on the site. Being outside and often in the rain certainly didn't help.

So we decided to take the idea of work gear further, adding work pants, boots, waterproofs and full body security harnesses, among other things. At the same time the 8 trainers were also fully equipped to ensure they were seen as credible role models.

Faced with these changes the Youth stepped up. Each team now needs someone to be in charge of safety equipment, to manage both the equipment and the rules which govern it. The Deco'Me team was even asked to make a storage unit where the equipment could be kept.

It's a lengthy process, but the professionalism of the center is constantly evolving.

Rucelle models the Fall-Winter 2016 Collection "Safety First!"



The rainy season has affected us all this year, and the waterproofs have been particularly welcome!



In Eco-construction they're used to working up high, and they have the equipment to do so.

# LET'S TAKE A STEP BACK

**GREEN**: everything already completed, installed or built in the Green Village.

**ORANGE**: our on-going challenges.





# The Youth are our Future, Let's Work with Them !



[www.fb.com/lifeproject.foryouth](http://www.fb.com/lifeproject.foryouth)



[www.lp4y.org](http://www.lp4y.org)

The *Green Village* project is a unique project in LP4Y. It is especially supported by Coopération Humanitaire Luxembourg (CHL) providing financial support and an evaluation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Luxembourg (MAE) through a three-year partnership agreement raising 2/3 of the budget. Others numerous organizations and partner companies support us through financial or material donations as EDF Energies Nouvelles, Degroof Petercam Luxembourg, Philippines Luxembourg Society, Capgemini, Apprentis d'Auteuil, Bureau of Plants and Industry, Society for Conservation of Philippines Wetlands, Société Européenne de Satellite (SES) Luxembourg. This project counts also unvaluable local partners bringing technical consultancy and general punctual or continuous supports as the Municipality of Calauan, Aaron Lecciones Architects, Forest Products Research and Development Institute, Deutsche Bank Manila, University of Philippines in Los Banos through the Civil Engineering Department, Laguna Water District, Water Agroforestry Nutrition and Development Foundation, Balik Probinsiya, Solutions, Bambooroo, Habitat for Humanity Foundation Philippines.



To make a difference with the Young Adults from LP4Y, please contact us at [info@lp4y.org](mailto:info@lp4y.org)