

17 February 2010

Ferdinand G. LaChica
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Philippines

Philippines Dictionary Project

Dear Mr. LaChica,

Greetings from New York!

I am taking the liberty of writing to you to request Bank Marketing Association of the Philippines' support for the Philippines Dictionary Project, a back-to-the-basics children's education project that promotes language proficiency. The Philippines Dictionary Project, which was started in late 2008, will be rolled out to Metro Manila in June/July 2010 in collaboration with De La Salle University which has officially adopted the Project as one of its Centennial Projects.

I am hopeful that BMAP's member-banks can take comfort from DLSU's stamp of approval and accommodate my request that each member-bank consider sponsoring one (1) Metro Manila public elementary school that holds special meaning for them and their. All it takes to sponsor a school is a one-time donation of P22,500.

While I realize that it is unusual for BMAP to respond to unsolicited grant requests, it would mean a lot to the Project's grassroots donors if much-respected banks would join their cause. Some of these donors include OFWs who have been contributing one dictionary at a time, because that is all that they can afford.

Just by way of background information, the Philippines Dictionary Project aims to improve the academic performance of all underprivileged Filipino children, especially those in public elementary schools, by ensuring that they have access to well-designed children's illustrated dictionaries. The emphasis on dictionaries purposely designed for children is important because children have their own special needs: large font, lots of pictures, generous use of color, foolproof phonetic pronunciation guides and definitions expressed in simple but full sentences, just to name a few. Dictionaries are very much needed by public elementary schools as limited vocabulary amongst the children prevents them from fully comprehending the passages that they read in textbooks. For now, the Project distributes only English dictionaries—US-published *Scholastic First Dictionary (Revised Edition)*—as child-friendly Pilipino dictionaries are not currently available in the market.

Distribution of the dictionaries to public elementary schools is by way of guaranteed loans to ensure transparency, accountability and sustainability. DLSU will act as Metro Manila's dictionary bank from which public elementary schools can borrow a set of 50 dictionaries for a nominal rental fee of P10 per book per school year. (A dictionary retails for P645 in Metro Manila or \$12.74 at amazon.com, so P10 represents a bargain!) For the protection of donors, local government officials

are brought onboard as the participating schools' guarantors; they shall replace any books that are stolen or damaged during the course of the school year. As one can surmise, transfer of practical good governance disciplines—fundamental disciplines honed to perfection by the banking industry—to public elementary schools is an ancillary objective of the Project.

In addition to acting as the custodian and auditor of the donated dictionaries, DLSU will also provide *gratis* teacher-training sessions to the participating public school teachers at the start of the school year when teachers congregate at DLSU to pickup their dictionaries. The actual session topic(s) will be selected by DLSU in consultation with the public school teachers. DLSU's College of Education will be leading the charge in formulating these sessions; in short, *pro bono* consultants courtesy of DLSU's College of Education!

I hope you agree that as a result of the Project's design, a humble set of children's dictionaries takes on the role of a catalyst for education stakeholders to come together and discover that each can contribute towards the reform of Philippine basic education. Arising from the dictionaries, a novel partnership amongst donors, DepEd teachers and administrators, premier universities and local political leaders is born.

Perhaps because of this formula, donors have financed the Project's spectacular growth—0 to 94 schools in 5 provinces (Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo, Leyte and Negros Oriental) in a mere 12 months.

To facilitate your and your team's review of the Philippines Dictionary Project, attached is DLSU's Commitment Letter as Metro Manila's 1st dictionary bank and a more detailed grant proposal. I also take the liberty of sharing an endorsement letter from Mr. Washington SyCip, who kindly donated to the project's pilot rollout in Negros Oriental in 2008.

Thank you so very much for your invaluable time.

I hope to be able to hear back from your office in the near future. Should anyone from your team wish to contact me with questions and/or feedback, I would welcome them by email at nina.patawaran@gmail.com.

Very respectfully yours,

(Signed)
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