



2020 JUNE NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends and Partners:

The message of Peace and Reconciliation (PAR) is articulated and demonstrated even in the midst of CoViD19 public health crisis. This is particularly made possible by 5 budding women entrepreneurs who are being mentored by the PBCI-CFP Tribe. They are Sihaya Ansibod, Annie Catua, Wanay Baluyan, Mandy Velasco-Pantoja, and Bennette Grace Maniulit. They are developing their own micro-enterprise and have been marketing their products and experiencing encouraging results.



These are the social enterprises and products of the five budding women entrepreneurs being mentored by the PBCI-CFP Tribe.

These women are the Creator's embrace of encouragement as we navigate through the oppressive system, injustices, and unpeace around us.

The people's suffering caused by CoViD19 is exacerbated by a mix of incompetence and militarism. As of 09 July 2020, there are 51,754 total number of cases in our country. 1,314 people have died of the disease. 12,813 have recovered. The virus infections have not yet peaked. Our health agency's testing capacity and contact tracing system are very inefficient. Among the countries in Southeast Asia, the Philippines has the highest rate of active cases—at 37,627. We have the lowest case recovery rate.

This global crisis is first and foremost a public health issue. And yet, our government chose to respond to the coronavirus pandemic through violent, militarized fashion. What we're experiencing are curfews, harsh penalties for being outside, and an impoverished population descending into hunger. Since 19 June 2020, there have been 60,782 arrests and 2,692 Filipinos still detained. Even though quarantine violations are bailable offenses, those detained, mostly living on daily wages, cannot afford to bail themselves out. A number of civil society organizations have expressed that putting more people in our densely populated jail for light offenses will only exacerbate the transmissibility of the CoViD19 virus.

We are determined to see our human realities through the reality of God's rule. We choose to see the socio-political conditions around us through the Psalmist's perspective. "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you" (Psalm 89:14). We are reminded that *PeaceBuilders Community* and *Coffee for Peace* are ministries dedicated to articulate and demonstrate the good news of God's rule—that of righteousness and justice, that of love and faithfulness—in our lives as individuals-in-community. We are reminded that Jesus, the human embodiment of God's righteousness, justice, love, and faithfulness, is the center of our community; Jesus is our strength to "show and tell" the Good News that indeed, the Creator is with us in the midst of the sufferings and injustices we are experiencing. We are reminded that the Holy Spirit—the One who hovers over us and dwells within us—comforts us and energizes us as we walk with the people who are being oppressed by the structures and systems of these unjust principalities and powers.

Our liberation in Christ empowers us to imagine a radically transformed social reality. With this inner liberation, view of reality, spiritual energy, and hope-filled perseverance, we live our lives as a community. We pray. We lament. We make an inventory of what the Creator had entrusted to us as individuals and as a community. With these resources inside us and around us, we freely imagine what God can do through us and beyond us. A woman and her boyfriend are being led to start farming. A young mother started producing a shrimp paste and it sells well. An Indigenous woman organized a native weaving community and produced face masks being sold internationally. Another woman started a baking business and orders from around the city are coming in. A young wife is growing a farmer-to-consumer produce supply chain in Manila and it's expanding.

A and J Mahayahay Farm. Aldren Banal and Jobelyn Basas (Indigenous name, Sihaya Ansibod) are partners in peace and reconciliation (PAR) advocacy and in social entrepreneurial initiative. Aldren is taking the two-year full-time social entrepreneurial course at the PeaceBuilders School of Leadership, specializing in marketing. Sihaya has been with us for the past seven years—starting as an intern, then became a field operations worker, and now serving as Director of Field Operations. Sihaya belongs to the Eromanen ne Menuvu Indigenous People.



We encourage our staff, whom we see as gifted in business, to be social entrepreneurs. Aldren and Sihaya chose to explore being farmer-entrepreneurs or ‘farmerpreneurs’ and we’re committed to support them as they build up their own equities. With their own savings, they bought a vegetable and coffee farm and they want to develop it as a Coffee for Peace Model Farm.

Annie’s Shrimp Paste. She is our beloved Frani Catua. Her business name is “Annie.” Frani is a mother of two daughters, both in elementary school. Her husband, Jobel, works in the Middle East. Frani studied hotel and restaurant management at Philippine Women’s College in Davao City. She has been with PeaceBuilders Community since we started in 2006. She’s also a trained barista at Coffee for Peace. Annie is our full-time cook at the PBCI center, appreciated by our local, national, and international guests.



Frani produces shrimp paste, a Philippine delicacy. As an Indigenous person belonging to the Ata Manobo community, her product is prepared with native touch and at the same time handled with internationally-accepted food preparation standards. This project is a personal investment by Frani, who dreams of sharing her PAR-framed entrepreneurial skills to her fellow Ata Manobo in her home village.

Kalinga PeaceMask. Wanay S. Baluyan belongs to the Banao Indigenous People in Kalinga Province, Northern Philippines. She founded her own company called Kalinga Woven Fabrics Manufacturing. Her current main product is the *Kalinga PeaceMask*. Wanay finished our two-year social entrepreneurial course at the PeaceBuilders School of Leadership.



After her PAR facilitator’s training and entrepreneurial internship, she went back to her province and gathered local native weavers. They used the indigenous woven fabrics as materials for clothing, hand bags, scarves and other products. Then COVID19 crisis came. Facemasks became a hot demand. Now, they’re getting orders nationally and internationally for their main brand—*Kalinga PeaceMask*.

Mandy’s Artisan Bread. Amanda Velasco-Pantoja is a multi-talented artist. She is a fashion designer by profession and a skilled business woman. During the pandemic, she found more time to develop one of her passions—baking.



We were her pilot customers. Our community began to love her line of artisan bread. *Mandy’s Focaccia Bread* became a favorite, first by her friends, then by her friends’ friends. Now, she’s getting orders from all over Davao City. She’s not yet planning to make this her main business. She just enjoys baking and appreciates the increasing sales. Mandy’s husband is Byron, the youngest of our three children. Mandy and Byron are the parents of our 7th grandchild—Zylie Estrella.

Produce Peace+ Wild Honey.



We have shared with you the story of Bennette Grace Maniult and her team at *Produce Peace+*. The new development is that, on top of fruits and vegetable distribution, they’re now involved in marketing wild honey produced by their new partner community—an Indigenous

People’s farming association on Mt. Daraitan, Province of Rizal. Please continue to pray for Bennette’s husband, Norman, who works in Kuwait as a dental technician. Please pray for Bennette and her team as they manage the growth and development of *Produce Peace+*.

Thank you very much for your love and prayers.

Yours in Christ,

Lakan

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**We help multiply
 God-loving transformational leaders
 who are committed to organize
 peace and reconciliation communities
 through inclusive development
 and social entrepreneurship.**