

A Grass to Secure the Community (Western Union Chain of Betters)

Shelter development assistance / Volunteer assistance

Location : Angat, Bulacan
Date : April – November 2016
Client : Masanaga of Angat Homeowners Association

Project partners

- Masagana of Angat HOA
- University of the Philippines Task Force Arki (UP-TFA)
- University of the Philippines Circle of Landscape Architecture Students (UP-CLAS)

Funding support

- Western Union

Contract / agreement value

- USD 1,000

Project brief

Western Union Philippines, a financial services and communications company, gave a small grant through its Chain of Betters initiative, to support a community-based project implemented by TAO-Pilipinas. The beneficiary community was Masagana of Angat Homeowners Association with member-families living at a resettlement area located in Angat, Bulacan. Site development in the area has been incremental and remains incomplete; the area's sloping terrain experiences severe soil erosion especially during the rainy season. The community, whose members are mostly urban poor, has taken collective efforts such as placing boulders and pouring concrete, but those were not adequate to prevent soil erosion. The Western Union-supported project involved planting vetiver grass as a more sustainable solution to arrest further erosion and stabilize the soil. TAO-Pilipinas and Masagana worked with a pool of volunteers who were members of student organizations from the University of the Philippines College of Architecture, UP-CLAS and UP-TFA, in implementing the project.

Members of UP-TFA oriented community members about the soil stabilization process on October 29, 2016. A week later, about 45 students undertaking the National Service Training Program (NSTP) of UPCA spent two days planting vetiver bare-root slips and bamboo cuts along areas susceptible to soil erosion. Community members proceeded to plant the rest of the vetiver in the following days. A second batch of NSTP class of 35 students planted additional bamboo cuts along the edge of steep slopes on November 14.

About 12,000 vetiver slips and 72 bamboo cuts were planted. Majority of the vetiver grass survived to full growth and eventually helped in stabilizing the soil. On the other hand, very few of the bamboo cuts survived due to weather conditions and incorrect planting method.

Project outputs

- Planting of vetiver and bamboo for erosion control
- Student extension work in community



Student-volunteers and Masagana community members plant vetiver root slips along sloping portions of the site (November 2016)