



BIENNIAL REPORT

2018-2019

SALIGAN continued its work with the marginalized and disadvantaged sectors in 2018 and 2019 despite major setbacks in human rights and citizen's participation due to the political and social contexts. Policy work was stalled by constant turnovers in the government and the 2019 midterm elections. Amidst all these, SALIGAN, its partners and networks, persistently found ways to work toward social change through the use of law and legal resources.





Mindanao: LAMPARA Paralegals after graduation.



Bicol: Punong-Barangays and VAW Desk Officers of the Municipality of Sipocot attended a refresher course on gender sensitivity orientation and their roles under RA 9262.



Manila: Graduates of the Paralegal Formation after they have completed their three-part trainings and participation in the quarterly paralegal clinics.

EDUCATION: PARALEGAL FORMATION

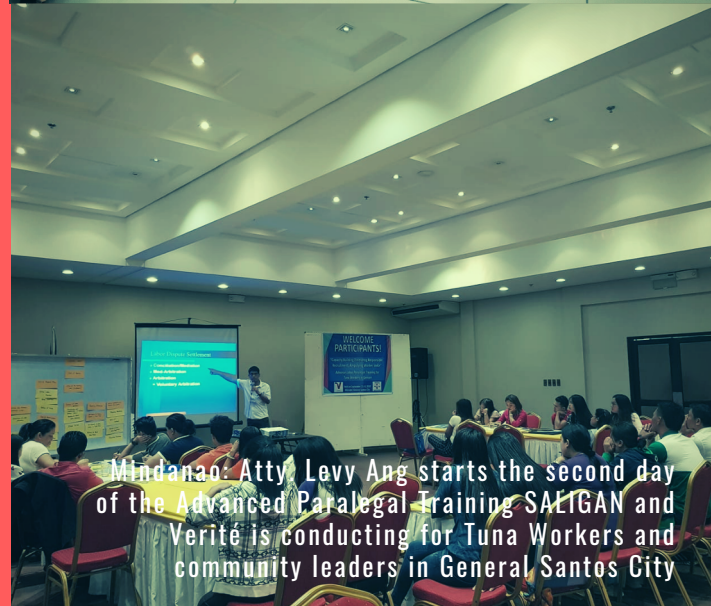
SALIGAN's paralegal formation program is implemented with the goal of capacitating members of the marginalized and disadvantaged sectors, and those working with them, with legal knowledge and skills that they can use for their empowerment with the end goal of attaining social justice. Depending on the needs of the sectors and partner organizations, at the minimum, the paralegals should undergo 3 training sessions: basic, advance and thematic. Thereafter, legal clinics and monitoring conferences are conducted to provide an opportunity to evaluate the paralegals and strategize on future actions.

EDUCATION: PARALEGAL FORMATION

143 individuals, in five groups, completed the paralegal formation program in 2018. They are workers and union members of YBLUEU, TMCEU and Citra Mina in Mindanao, environmental advocates who are members of peoples and non-government organizations in Bicol region, women's rights advocates in Metro Manila and the neighboring provinces of Rizal and Cavite, members of the urban poor sector in Naga City, and Bantay Bukids in Mindanao. The program was in partnership with Misereor, NCUPFI and IDIS. In partnership with Verite SEA, 28 workers, community organizers and support groups completed the program in 2019.



Bicol: A group of participants working on gender dominoes during basic paralegal training.



Mindanao: Atty. Levy Ang starts the second day of the Advanced Paralegal Training SALIGAN and Verite is conducting for Tuna Workers and community leaders in General Santos City



Manila: Paralegal Melani Margallo of SM-ZOTO served as resource person on laws and issues affecting women in their partner communities.

EDUCATION: PARALEGAL FORMATION

The external evaluation conducted in 2018 exhibited that the paralegal formation program contributed to address the needs and issues of the marginalized and disadvantaged groups by the paralegals' capacity to negotiate for workers' benefits, employees' regularization, handling of grievances, participation in GAD processes, and establishment of VAWC Desks.

2 groups of paralegals commenced training in 2019. They are indigenous peoples in Mindanao and Bantay Familia members in Naga City. They are expected to complete the program in 2021. The program is in partnership with Misereor and the Naga City Bantay Familia.



Manila: Barangay officials of the province of Zambales participate in the Basic Legal Education Seminar



Manila: Paralegal Luz Domingo of Community Organizers Multiversity conducted a legal literacy session on principles of human rights and the anti-violence against women law in her community.



Bicol: Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) of the local government of Sipocot attended a seminar on children laws and local legislation to strengthen their roles in the community.



Manila: Participants of GGS while listening to discussions on Anti-Sexual Harassment Laws.

EDUCATION:

LEGAL LITERACY

These sessions are shorter compared to the paralegal program. The goal is to popularize a specific law, remedy or human rights concepts which affect the marginalized and disadvantaged sectors. Aside from civil society organizations, requests for legal literacy sessions were made by government agencies and local government units.

SALIGAN takes this opportunity to influence the government in their appreciation of the law. Since 2019, the program is fully supported by local partners.

The program has reached 4,668 individuals with 78 legal literacy sessions on various subjects. The Barangay Legal Education Seminar (BLES), which was originally conceptualized by SALIGAN Bicol and launched in Naga City in 2010, was replicated in partnership with the Province of Zambales. The design was aimed to address the confusion of barangay officials in the implementation of the Katarungang Pambarangay Law and R.A. 9262.

This time, the program was further enhanced to discuss barangay roles to address the issues of the vulnerable sectors. Conducted in clusters, it reached all the 230 barangays of the province.

SALIGAN and its team was engaged by the International Labour Organization in the development of modules and training sessions on Labor Inspection and Freedom of Association.

EDUCATION: MULTI-MEDIA PLATFORMS

SALIGAN used various platforms to popularize legal knowledge and to reach wider audience. National and local radio interviews on Juvenile Justice Law and the proposal to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR), Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act and the issuance of Barangay Protection Orders, Workers' Security of Tenure, Expanded Maternity Leave Law and Women Social Protection, and Safe Spaces Law were granted. SALIGAN's insights on the new Safe Spaces Act were featured in TV and print.



Bicol: SALIGAN sits with Radyo Natin to discuss women programs, advocacies and activities during women's month celebration.



SALIGAN's Hazel Lavitoria with Constitutionalist Christian Monsod and AHRC's Arpee Santiago and JP Passion of the AHRC, during the Oral Arguments before the Supreme Court for the Petition assailing the factual basis for the further extension of Martial Law in Mindanao.



Bicol: SALIGAN met the Banasi farmers in Bula, Cam Sur to inform them of the good news that they won the case. The decision of the Supreme Court to deny the Petition attained finality, validating the farmers as the rightful owners and possessors of the agricultural land.

Litigation: Case Handling

SALIGAN's legal assistance program follows a strict criteria for case acceptance. The program's goal is legal empowerment, hence, SALIGAN works with partners and not simply clients. The expensive and tedious litigation process has limited SALIGAN's capacity to handle more cases. Hence, the enhancement of the government's justice sector's capacity to handle cases affecting the vulnerable sectors was a welcome development, along with other groups providing legal assistance.

On an average, 50 cases were handled. In both years, SALIGAN joined other advocates in Petitions questioning the extensions of the declaration of martial law in Mindanao. Both were dismissed. In 2019, after more than a decade since they intervened, the case of the Banasi farmers of Sitio Pawili in Bula, Camarines Sur was finally decided by the Supreme Court, which validated the farmer-beneficiaries' ownership of the land they till.

LITIGATION: CASE CONSULTATIONS AND LEGAL JAMMING SESSIONS

Access to legal advice by members of the marginalized and disadvantaged groups are ensured through office-based legal consultations and legal jamming sessions. While online legal consultations were made available in 2019, SALIGAN is still in the process of establishing a mechanism that complies with the ethical standards of legal practice and data privacy and protection.



On average, the office facilitated 4 office-base consultations per month, with Manila office having the most number. To guarantee the availability of a lawyer or legal staff, SALIGAN encouraged individuals to set an appointment. Mobile numbers were put up because these are easily accessible. They can also set an appointment through FB messenger app.

¹Bicol: SALIGAN with the IBP Gam Sur facilitated a legal jamming session with the Agta tribe (IP community in Buhi Camarines Sur), issues and concerns were properly addressed by conducting individual consultation and short orientation of human rights.

²Mindanao: Waiting for the events to start: Set up of free legal consultation during the annual fisherfolks day at the Queen Tuna Park, General Santos.

³Manila: Representatives of Aksyon sa Kahandaan sa Kalamidad at Klima (AKKMA) and residents of Romblon met with Alternative Law Groups, Inc. , Tanggol Kalikasan and SALIGAN to discuss the issues and strategies to be taken on the ongoing quarrying in the province of Romblon that has affected the health of the residents, their livelihood and the environment.

Manila: SALIGAN was part in the drafting of the implementing rules and regulations of the Safe Spaces act.



Manila: Senator Risa Hontiveros and members of the Housing Rights Advocacy Team in the filing of Senate Bill 1081 or the Just and Humane Resettlement Act.

National advocacy teams with partner peoples and non-government organizations were convened by SALIGAN. The idea is to focus on sectoral agenda after series of consultation-sessions rather than specific policy proposals that affect the right to adequate housing, workers' right to security of tenure, social protection and living wage, and freedom from all forms of violence and exploitation of women and children.

SALIGAN was a member of the technical working group that worked on the Security of Tenure Bill. Both Houses of Congress passed the measure: HOR in 2017 and Senate in 2019. Though the version of the Senate was watered-down, advocates hoped that after many years of advocacy, finally a law the job's security, will be approved.

However, despite his prior commitment to this advocacy, the President vetoed the bill. Congress did not attempt to override the veto. When the 18th congress was convened after the May 2019 elections, the bill was again filed. The Labor Advocacy Team (LAT) continues to work on the measure.

The Housing Rights Advocacy Team (HRAT) influenced the implementing rules and regulations of the law creating the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development. They continued to lobby in Congress for the passage of the Just and Humane Resettlement Act (JAHRA) and the Least Displacement of Informal Settlers Act (LISA). HRAT also opposed the inhumane implementation of DILG MC No. 2019-121, directing local governments to clear public roads.

POLICY ADVOCACY

SALIGAN was also part of the technical drafting committee of the implementing rules and regulations of the Safe Spaces Act. The IRR was signed in November 2019. The Women and Children Advocacy Team has yet to be convened but consultation and agenda formulation were already conducted.

The Organic Law on the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (OLBARM) was signed into law in July 2018. SALIGAN provided legal assistance in the conduct of plebis cite in 2019.



Manila: Consultation sessions with civil society organizations and people's organizations under the Safer Child Project with Save the Children Philippines



Mindanao: Community consultation and legal jamming with San Luis Foundation



Mindanao: Consultation on the Magna Carta of Children in BARMM with members of the Security Sector, LGU reps and adult children's rights advocates

Local consultation sessions and agenda formulation were conducted on among gender advocates in Naga City, children's rights advocates in Legaspi City and Manito in Albay, indigenous peoples in CARAGA region, and partners working on issues of the EPIRA in Davao region. Three advocacy teams were convened: the Gender and Development Advocacy Team in Naga City composed of representatives of the Naga City Council for Women (NCCW), Bantay Familia (BF) and Lakas ng Kababaihan, most of whom are paralegals, the Children Advocacy Team in Albay composed of members of the Local Council for the Protection of Children in Legaspi City and Municipality of Manito, and the EPIRA Advocacy Team in Davao Region composed of representatives from MINLAND, MAGI, YAMOG, MMAID Consortium and the PMP-DRC. The advocacy teams were valuable in working on several policy reforms: Naga City Gender and Development Code, Legaspi City Children's Code IRR, and Manito Children's Code IRR.



Bicol: Meeting with Alternative Law Groups, Integrated Bar of the Philippines (Cam Sur Chapter) and Law Schools in Naga City on Human Rights Defense Program. The Program is designed as a response to the need for protection of human rights of vulnerable communities.



Bicol: SALIGAN-Bicol facilitates the consultation of the proposed Naga City Gender and Development Code. The session was participated by heads of departments and offices of the Naga City Government and stakeholders.

MEMBERSHIP IN NETWORKS AND PARTICIPATORY MECHANISMS IN GOVERNANCE

SALIGAN maintained its membership in its networks, such as the Alternative Law Groups, Inc., the Philippine Misereor Partners, Inc., and the Partnership of Philippine Support Agencies. SALIGAN continued to participate in fora, consultations and meetings relevant to its work and the issues of its target sectors

SALIGAN also participated in an international conference of the Extraterritorial Obligations (ETO) Consortium members in Uganda in May 2019. Through ALG, SALIGAN was a part of the Transitional Justice Asia Network (TJAN). SALIGAN was a panelist in the Women’s Access to Justice Symposium organized by UNDP Myanmar in Rakhine State in 2019.

SALIGAN continued to be a member of the Regional Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (RTIPC) of the National Capital Region as a representative of the women sector. SALIGAN was also an NGO representative to the Quezon City Local Housing Board until the 2019 elections. It renewed its accreditation in the new administration. SALIGAN Bicol continued to be a member and officer of the Naga City People’s Council (NCPC) and the Naga City Council for Women (NCCW).

It also remained to be a member of the Naga City Urban Development and Housing Board (NCUDHB). SALIGAN Mindanaw remained as a co-secretariat of the Mindanaw Peaceweavers (MPV), and continued to be a member of the Davao City Council for the Welfare of Children (DCCWC).

SALIGAN consistently released statements and positions on matters affecting the basic sectors, such as labor contractualization, housing and resettlement, and children’s protection. It reviewed and approved statements and positions of its networks.



Manila: Forum with the media, CSOs and POs on the advocacy on housing rights.

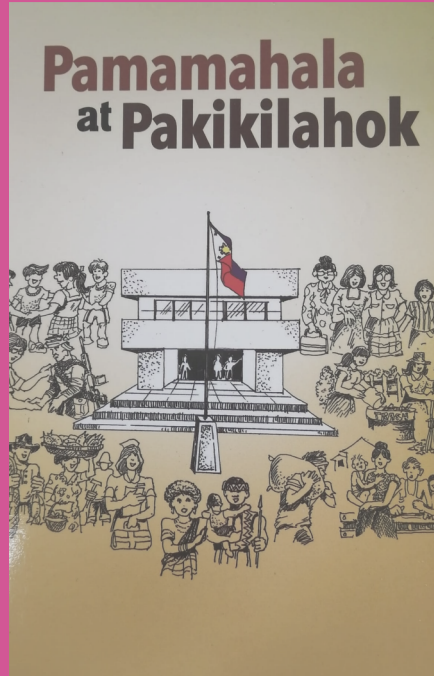
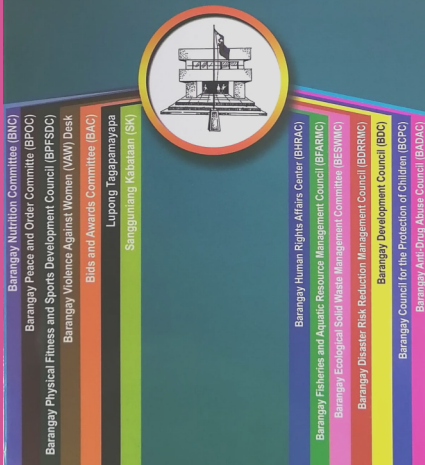


Bicol: The consultation session with children is part of the Safer Child Project which aimed to promote, protect, and fulfill children’s rights by incorporating them in relevant provisions of housing resettlement policies. Proposals were gathered through consultation with children groups from communities affected and soon to be affected by relocation.



Mindanao: Community consultation and research with fisherfolks and advocates in General Santos

BARANGAY-BASED MECHANISMS



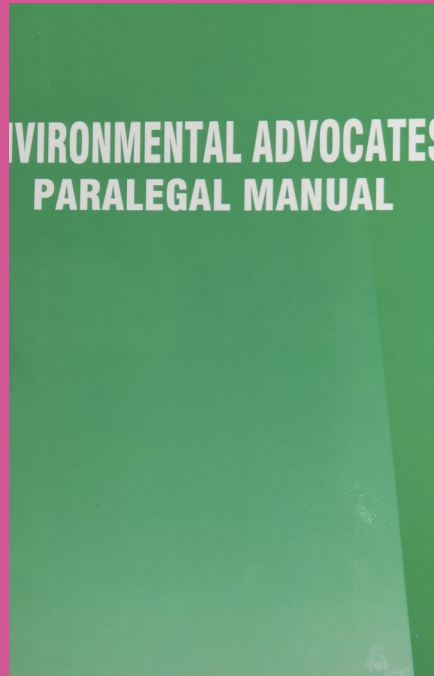
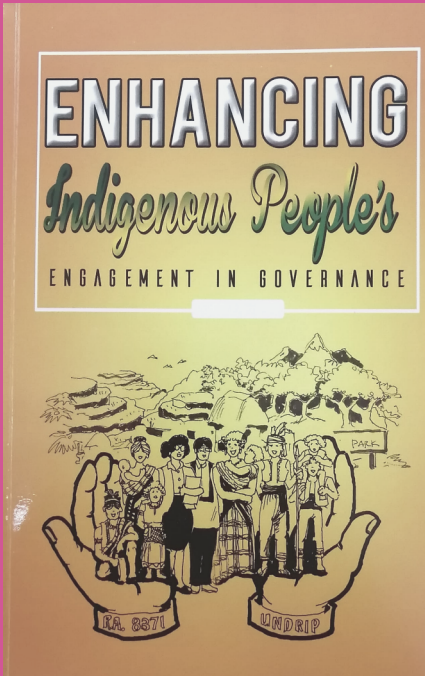
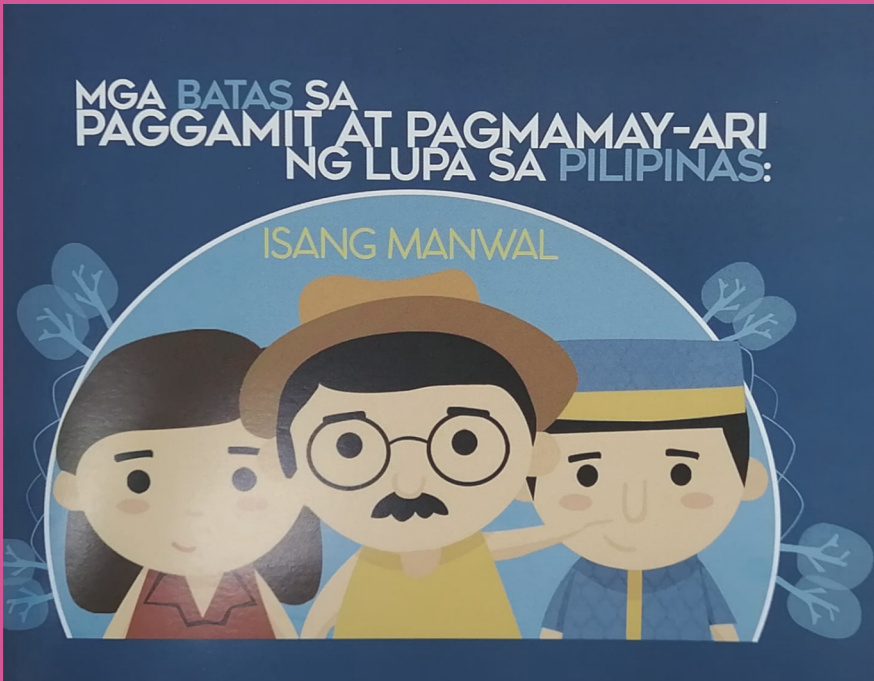
RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

SALIGAN continued to publish popular legal material through manuals and primers. The program aims to complement its training program and increase the access of basic sectors to legal knowledge.

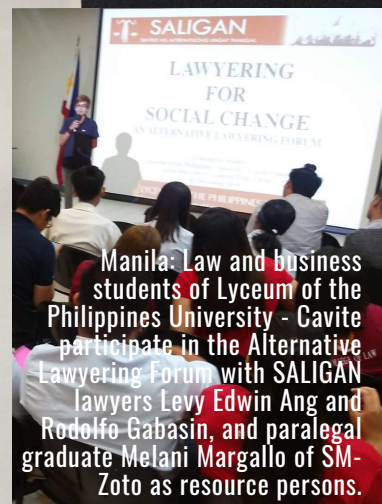
SALIGAN published manuals on land laws, environmental protection and participation in local governance. The manual "Mga Batas sa Paggamit at Pagmamay-ari ng Lupa sa Pilipinas" is written in Filipino and has seven chapters: (1) The Law and Legal System; (2) The Mindanao Context; (3) Basic Land Laws; (4) Land Classification; (5) Land Ownership; (6) Land Titling; and (7) IPRA. The "Environmental Advocates' Paralegal Manual" consists of four chapters: (1) Law and the Philippine Legal System; (2) Paralegalism; (3) Prohibited Acts in the Philippine Environmental Laws; and (4) Rules of Procedure for Environmental Cases. The third edition of "Pamamahala and Pakikilahok", also written in Filipino, adds an entire chapter on barangay mechanisms. Primers on environmental impact system, indigenous peoples' participation in local governance, and barangay mechanisms were also published.

SALIGAN wrote "Claiming Workers' Rights to Freedom of Association in Philippine Jurisprudence: A Study of Supreme Court Decisions on the Principles of ILO Convention No. 87 from 2010 to 2017" as part of ALG's publication on thematic and judicial cases under the Hustisya Natin Project. It was presented at a national conference on July 24, 2019. SALIGAN also contributed Verite SEA's research on responsible recruitment of workers in the tuna industry. A roundtable discussion was held in Taiwan in 2019.

In addition, developments in law, legal remedies and jurisprudence affecting the target sectors were published online regarding the HIV Law, OL-BARMM, Quezon City Comprehensive Socialized Housing Code and Safe Spaces Act. Digests of jurisprudence which have an impact on the basic sectors are also regularly published. A representative of SALIGAN continued to be an expert respondent to World Bank's annual Women, Business and Law. SALIGAN also responds to various academic and policy studies conducted by experts like the Philippine Institute for Development Studies.



Bicol: Law students from Ateneo de Naga University were able to understand the concept of alternative or developmental lawyering as one way of promoting and achieving social justice in a forum facilitated by SALIGAN-Bicol in partnership with the College of Law, Ateneo de Naga University.



Manila: Law and business students of Lyceum of the Philippines University - Cavite participate in the Alternative Lawyering Forum with SALIGAN lawyers Levy Edwin Ang and Rodolfo Gabasin, and paralegal graduate Melani Margallo of SM-Zoto as resource persons.



Bicol: Seven (7) law students of University of Nueva Caceres in Naga City satisfactorily completed the internship program. Two of them recently passed the bar examinations.

ALTERNATIVE LAWYERING AND INTERNSHIP

SALIGAN reached out to law schools and law students to popularize alternative lawyering. Several fora were conducted in law schools in Bicol, Mindanao, Manila, Cavite and Zambales. 7 law students from University of Nueva Caceres complete the two-year internship program in 2018.

SALIGAN also hosted interns and fellows from partner organizations.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND PARTNERS

SALIGAN's legal empowerment and assistance program with Misereor continued with a fresh three-year cycle in 2019. An external evaluation of the project which ended in 2018 was conducted. The report showed that the project was both relevant and effective. Moreover, SALIGAN's strategies proved to be efficient and sustainable.

The 2019-2021 legal empowerment and assistance program continue to support SALIGAN's operations, programs and strategies.

SALIGAN's partnership with Save the Children Philippines "Towards Safe and Resilient Communities for Children: Building and Strengthening Civil Society Participation, Children's Rights, and Child-Centered Disaster Risk Reduction in Urban Development and Housing Partners and Networks" or Safer Child concluded in 2019.

The external evaluation report proposed to sustain the gains of the project, such that a continuation and expansion will be implemented beginning 2020.

Programs were also implemented with the International Labour Organization, Alternative Law Groups, Inc., and Verite SEA.



Misereor's Steffen Ulrich had a meeting with the Management Team



Save the Children Team meets SALIGAN Team



SALIGAN TEAM

SALIGAN programs were implemented by Hazel Lavitoria, Karlo Silva*, Sol Victorioso**, Arfine Ingusan*, JC Tejano**, Levy Ang, Fred Villones*, JP Bombales**, Dave Abogado, Alex Tejerero, Shyla Dumasala, Cel Erlano, Kix Sarenas, Marc Majadas, Ian Genciano, Ray Apat*, Lani Cabanig**, and Olyn Ramos.

*Those who left SALIGAN between 2018-2019

**Those who joined SALIGAN between 2018-2019





Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal



2018 - 2019

SALIGAN TEAM

The elected Board of Trustees are: Gettie Sandoval* (President), Joy Casis (Vice-President and Treasurer, and Nandy Aldaba, Tony Salvador and Marlon Manuel* (Members). Hazel Lavitoria, as Executive Director, is an ex-officio member and Corporate Secretary.



SALIGAN
SENTRO NG ALTERNATIBONG

LOOKING FORWARD

SENTRO NG ALTERNATIBONG LINGAP PANLEGAL

SALIGAN conducted its strategic assessment and planning (SAP) in December 2019. It has amended its By-Laws and approved the Manual of Operations. Based on its assessment, project external evaluations conducted, consultation with the target sectors and analysis of the broader political and socio-economic context, it has enhanced its overall goal, thus: Improved legal environment that addresses the needs of the marginalized, disadvantaged and exploited in the Philippines. It has the following strategic directions for 2020-2022:

(1) Basic sectors have enhanced access to law and legal processes; (2) Communities have increased awareness of mechanisms of participation in decision-making and governance processes; (3) More members of basic sectors and local communities have meaningfully participated in local and national governance; and (4) Partners have adopted internal mechanisms that promote gender equality, the rights of workers and children, and environmental protection.

SALIGAN also elected its new Board of Directors, who will serve until 2022.

SALIGAN

Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panlegal (SALIGAN)

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