

## A birthday party with meaning

What do you do when you reach a life milestone like your 30<sup>th</sup> birthday ? Splurge money on the latest fashion craze ? Feast on excessive foods and debilitating drinks ?

After Yeye from the Philippines discovered Action Learning through a Foundations program, she decided to celebrate her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday in a different way. Fueled by events happening in Philippines and inspired by Fr. Bienvenido Nebres's and DILG Usec Austere Panadero's call to help others at a conference she attended, she



wanted to make her birthday celebration a meaningful one. Yeye leveraged her competencies and network to make a positive impact on some of the government/non-government/non-profit organizations in her home country of the Philippines.

Yeye's first contact with Action Learning was through a workshop she attended. She immediately realized how useful and powerful a tool Action Learning is. Through listening and asking questions, participants in the workshop helped one another have a better understanding of their problems and think of new ways to solve them. She saw the value of Action Learning as an avenue to help some groups in need, so she reached out to her network of Action Learning coaches to garner their support for her birthday project.

Six WIAL-certified Action Learning Coaches answered the call to be part of this unique birthday bash: Benjie Leogardo, Maita Beltran, Dax Cobarrubias, Bel Pacheco, Joi Natividad and Goody Directo.



Yeye then persuaded and invited 6 organizations to be the beneficiaries of the event. Two representatives from each of these organizations came in to share their problems. These organizations were City of Malabon, Philippines (Human Resource and Planning Division), Town of Nagcarlan, Laguna, Philippines (through the Office of the Vice Mayor), He Cares Mission (street children NGO), Aleron (non-profit all male choir), Kaya Natin Movement (NGO on good governance) and Jesse Robredo Foundation (NGO on good governance). The problems brought up by these organizations were around the areas of talent acquisition and management, more effective mobilization of resources and volunteers, sustainability of programs and good governance.

Now that Yeye had the key players for her birthday party on board, she then invited the usual birthday party participants: relatives, friends from school, ex-colleagues, teachers and artists. All would become team members to join as participants in the Action Learning sessions. A Facebook event page was also created to explain about the event and about Action Learning.



The birthday party was held on 21 October 2017. In that half-day session, participants and beneficiaries got to experience first hand what Action Learning is all about, and appreciate the power it has. It was an eye-opener for them. The Action Learning sessions allowed all participants to open up their minds to other perspectives and mindsets, bring meaningful insights into and appreciation for issues around the Philippines and ... to make new friends.

It was a meaningful and well-spent afternoon for Yeye, her network of Action Learning coaches, her family and friends and the 6 organizations that participated. As the late President Ronald Reagan said “We can’t help everyone, but everyone can help someone.” Yeye was thankful that she could make a difference to these 6 organizations through Action Learning, thereby giving more meaning to her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration.

Written by Lyn Wong, CALC, Singapore based on an interview with Yeye