



Project *Modernong Ebanghelyo*:

Leadership Through Storytelling

Quezon City, Philippines

January 2020

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Abstract

Project *Modernong Ebanghelyo* is an initiative that aims to assist educational efforts around the Philippines by producing low-cost children's storybooks that foster positive values and social awareness to be distributed to various outreach programs around the nation. Since *Modernong Ebanghelyo* means "Modern Gospel" in English, our aim is to be instruments of change in the society we have today. Given that there are numerous volunteer efforts around the country, but a lack of affordable materials and resources to enable volunteers to teach effectively, Project *Modernong Ebanghelyo* aims to address this problem by producing low-cost storybooks that children will find educational and at the same time enjoyable.

Context


We have observed that there are many well-meaning volunteer efforts around the Philippines which aim to educate children to read, write, and learn Catechism. We ourselves have been involved in such volunteer efforts, and we have recognized that the problem is not a lack of volunteers or a lack of educational initiatives of which there are plenty. The problem is that, though there are plenty of volunteer efforts, these volunteer efforts are not always effective, and the educational approach of these volunteer efforts need to be improved. From our own experience in teaching Catechism in our parish, we have noticed that the children are very eager to learn but are not being taught in a fun and effective way. It is the same case in other parishes we have also heard of or had experience volunteering in. Thus, our objective for this social project is not to create a new service initiative -- but rather, to empower the many existing ones by replacing the "lecture approach" of education to a "storytelling approach."

Objectives

1. To produce low-cost children's storybooks that will teach children about the faith as well as relevant social issues in a fun and effective way
2. To improve existing educational efforts around the Philippines to adapt a "storytelling approach" for children rather than a "lecture approach"
3. To provide educational leadership by introducing this new "storytelling approach" through the provision of the said materials
4. To empower both children and volunteers -- that children may learn effectively through storytelling, and that volunteers may be transformed by the work that they do.

Significance of the Project

In our day and age, we believe it is extremely important to address the problem of apathy among young people. Millennials and Gen Zs are notoriously known as the "Me Generation," a generation excessively preoccupied with one's self and increasingly detached from others, engrossed in his/her own gadgets and indifferent to the rest of the world. We think that the best way to solve this problem is to start with the children. Children are trainable, receptive, and eager to learn. If, from a young age, they are educated about the faith and about relevant social issues (such as world hunger, world peace, climate change, etc.) through the fun and effective power of storytelling -- we think that it will go a long way in inculcating in them a sense of social awareness and responsibility from a young age. Many children nowadays are also not able to understand or feel connected to the faith. According to the Pew Research Center (2016), young people are now feeling increasingly disconnected and detached from God. We thus believe that there is a need for a more creative approach for young people to learn about the faith and understand the love of Christ, versus merely lecturing them about the topic. We



think that storytelling will be the effective means for this purpose. We aim to be the Next Generation Leaders by introducing a new educational approach to volunteer efforts and outreaches around the country -- by using the power of storytelling -- to empower volunteers and children in different educational initiatives around the Philippines. Our goal is to provide Educational Leadership by producing and distributing the necessary materials that will make education more fun and effective. Through Project *Modernong Ebanghelyo*, we aim to solve two main issues through the power of education and storytelling: the indifference of young people regarding social issues, and the increasing disconnect of young people from the faith.

People Involved

Beneficiaries

Project *Modernong Ebanghelyo* has two main beneficiaries: children and volunteers from different educational outreaches around the country. It aims to provide the necessary materials that will make education more fun and effective for children, as well as assist volunteers in teaching universally essential topics about the faith and relevant social issues through storytelling. The Storytelling Approach the project aims to promulgate will be mutually beneficial for both children and volunteers. While children learn through the storybooks, volunteers will also learn about the topics in the process of teaching them. As more volunteers and more children benefit, and more educational initiatives are empowered to take on this new approach, we think that this project will greatly contribute in making educational efforts around the Philippines more effective. Aside from the main beneficiaries, if we were to view these efforts from a long term perspective, the community will also reap the benefits of the promulgation of proper moral literacy to these children, which is after all, the end goal -- for growth to take place on a national level through seemingly modest endeavors.

Agents of Change

Each one of us here at Project *Modernong Ebanghelyo* will be an agent of change for the project. We have divided our roles depending on our respective talents and skills. We each will have different responsibilities from (1) planning the essential topics necessary to be taught to Filipino children, (2) writing the storybooks proper, (3) testing and teaching with the materials through a pilot project, and (4) actual distribution to different outreaches on the grassroots level.

Intermediaries

In line with our goal to produce and distribute low-cost storytelling materials about relevant social issues and the faith, we will be availing of the services of Raintree Trading & Publishing, Inc., UP Village, QC, Philippines which will aid us in mass producing such storybooks at an economical value.

Plan of Action (Phases of Implementation)

I. Planning

The members of the team will plan the necessary topics that are essential for Filipino children to learn. Team members will discuss which social issues and topics about the faith will be prioritized. This will determine the kind of storybooks the team will write and publish.

II. Writing the Storybook

From the list of topics planned, the team will start by first writing one storybook to be pilot tested in our partner outreaches.

III. Pilot Testing

The team will pilot test the children's reception to the storytelling approach by teaching with the written material at different Catechism outreaches of our parish.

IV. Publishing

If after multiple pilot tests, the storytelling approach is received well by the children and proves to be a fun and effective means for their learning, the team will avail the services of Raintree Trading & Publishing to publish the storybooks for mass distribution.


V. Growth

As the project progresses, the team aims to churn out and produce more storybooks for different volunteer efforts around the country. The goal is to produce enough so that educational initiatives around the Philippines will have a new and essential topic related to the faith/social responsibility to teach every week for one year.

Project Evaluation

I. Planning

The planning will be heavily monitored by the team's supervisor, Ms. Imelda Areola. The aforementioned assistance is needed to ensure that all ideas pitched are relevant and age appropriate. Moreover, this is done to guide the team in narrowing down the ideas to more important topics that correlate to significant teachings of the church. Planning will be done by the core members of the team



and further disseminate the information to those involved in making the project possible. For instance, these are the writers, illustrators, catechists, and fellow volunteers. Once the plan is structured, it is then ready to commence.


II. Writing the Storybook

The storybook writing will be evaluated in the process of coordinating with the writers and by having the social realities verified by professors, educators, and teachers. Given that our target audience are children, ages ranging from 7 to 12, the overall product should be age appropriate and should stimulate strong developmental values. In this regard, the storyline will be assessed depending on the ability of the children to comprehend such issues. Moreover, the evaluation for the illustrations will be based on its relation to the storyline in order to guide the children throughout the story and further understand the themes presented. The pilot book aims to deal with a social issue more known through a global perspective (e.g. climate change) before venturing out into social issues more commonly attributed to the country. We realise the importance of the first book because it will set the tone for what this publishing house seeks to promote.

III. Pilot Testing

With all the details in place, the pilot testing will commence during catechism classes. The first trial will be done with the children from the Pentecost parish due to its close proximity from the area where the members of the group are. Since sufficient access to these children are readily available, it is much easier to introduce the project to them. The testing will go as follows: (1) Introduction of the catechism lesson, (2) reading of the published book by the group, (3) debriefing for further clarity to the children, and (4) discussion of the correlation of the social issue in line with the Church's goals. It is highlighted that debriefing is of utmost importance to guide the children shape their views amidst the apprehensive reality.

IV. Publishing



Once the topics are approved, the materials will immediately be implemented during the session. The team alongside our supervisor will monitor the printing process. This is to ensure that the storybooks are printed in high quality and with no errors. The starting books will only comprise of two and the rest will follow with the writers' and illustrators' output. It is to be noted that writing a book can be done by anyone as they submit their entries via email to any member of the team.

V. Growth

Immediately after implementation, monitoring shall be administered once a month to track its progress and identify areas for improvement. As the goal of the group is to distribute these storybooks to a larger audience nationwide, point persons from different areas are to be assigned to evaluate the progress of the project. Moreover, as the areas for improvement of the project are identified, the group shall address such by collaborating with the artists, writers, publishers, and educators to fill in the necessary gaps found.

Results and Impact

Given the situation in the Philippines where there is indeed rampant cases of poverty, inequality, and crimes, this endeavor will leave a colossal impact on the children as they are both exposed to the realities of the world while discovering these adversities through the lens of the Church. As the project commences, surveys will be handed out to ensure the quality of the project. The survey to be conducted will entail (1) the efficiency of printed materials, (2) effectiveness of incorporating social realities to heighten awareness, and (3) enjoyment factor of the children. To validate the results gathered, interviews from catechists shall be administered to gain insights and opinions about the project for further improvement. This project will aid the Philippines in improving its literacy rate while propagating Catholic social values to the children of the future generation.

Storytelling is a powerful tool in creating change, it is through stories where we learn to view things in a different perspective. Every leader has a story, it is high time we hone leaders who are aware of society's dilemmas coupled with Catholic teachings to solve them.

Photographs

