



DANILO SONGCO, 1999 PHILIPPINES

CEO, PinoyME Foundation

When Dan Songco embarked on his Eisenhower Fellowship in 1999, he was serving with the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO). He was traveling to the United States to establish relationships and gather detailed information in the field of NGO social policy advocacy as it related to impacting national policy and developing collaboration with government sectors. Here is what Songco said of his position: “When I took my fellowship in '99, I was feeling burned out with my job as executive director of CODE-NGO, the biggest coalition of NGOs in the Philippines. By then I had served in this position for six years and I was already preparing to tender my resignation. The fellowship perked me up as I picked up a lot of ideas about advocacy and capacity building and was inspired by the passion and dedication of the people whom I met.”



Having felt a sense of renewed enthusiasm after his fellowship, Songco used the insights to develop the next generation of NGO leaders in the Philippines, and the organization continues to do so today. Songco said “When I returned to the Philippines, I was able to share my learning towards the successor generation leadership project that was meant to develop the next generation of CODE-NGO leaders. More than half of the people we trained are now taking on the reins of leadership of the organization which just celebrated its 20th anniversary in December, 2012.” But this was just the beginning for Songco.

The year after his fellowship, there was a nationwide uprising to unseat the president because of widespread corruption. CODE-NGO served as the secretariat of one of the big coalitions that successfully removed Pres. Estrada in the second people power revolution in the country. Songco was appointed by the new president as a director/board member in one of the biggest state-owned banks where he served for 3 years. Songco said “I learned a lot about banking and finance in that position. I brought this new inspiration with me when I took up my master’s degree at the Harvard Kennedy School. There, I decided to shift gears and pursue development finance as a way of reinventing myself after spending more than 20 years in development work and social advocacy. I returned to the country with fresh ideas of how to scale up microfinance and micro entrepreneurship in the Philippines and how social enterprise can become a vehicle to this end. Former Pres. Cory Aquino took on my ideas and established PinoyME in 2006.” Songco says that the ability to reinvent himself was a result of the renewed vigor in social development that came from his Eisenhower Fellowship by opening him up to a bigger world of possibilities in his field. “The Fellowship reinvigorates the passion for your field of interest and challenges you to imagine what you can do beyond your current sphere of reality.”

PinoyME provides microfinance institutions (MFI) and micro entrepreneurs with access to funding especially those operating in underserved areas. Additionally, they provide MFIs with financial advice and create a market for microenterprises by promoting collaboration and business partnerships among private companies, MFIs, and business development service providers.

Leaders bettering the world around them.