

Magsipag Para sa Liwanag: Lumitiles

A Reflective Essay by Annika Topacio

One of the subjects required in our Grade 11 and 12 subject is Research wherein we will make a project and cultivate it to the end of our senior life so that we can help out a community in need which is Sitio Makabuhay. Back then I thought of it as something we just need to accomplish for our grades but as days become weeks and weeks become months, I began to see that this project is something worth working hard for which would help out the community a lot. As my Grade 12 year is coming to an end, It also became a rewarding experience that will enrich my skills I need to use throughout my life.

When we had our immersion, we got to see and experience how difficult the lives of the people from Sitio Makabuhay are. Something easily covered by us like water is scarce to them and it really showed how big our gap is from them. That was actually my first time experiencing an outreach where we “live” with the people we are serving to. Me and my partner, Gelo Limcangco, had fun from the experience though and we learned a lot from the family we were with. I asked a lot of questions about their status and life in the area for our Research 1 project proposals since we need to come up with a project that would help the community and that’s how we came up with Eco-bricks which will soon be merged with another project another group made in Grade 12. That project will become our capstone project which we worked hard for.

This year, our projects were presented again and this time, my group merged with another group, Kate Mercado’s group, that specializes in glow in the dark sealant. With our knowledge of eco-bricks, we provided data for the sturdy body of the bricks to be used where the sealant will be slathered on. The process for our project was not an easy journey. I personally know this feeling because I was part of the original group and our project was the one that got approved for the whole class to do. We had to interview experts and prepare questions for them that suits their field of profession. We also had to construct the blocks and sealant manually since we are the only ones who knew the process. It was all tiring, mentally and physically. On days when I want to give up, I look back on why I want to work hard in the first place which is helping the community. As a Lasallian student, this is one of the things we should work on with because we serve the marginalized with all our heart through the grace of the Lord.

Once our project was chosen, we needed to regroup for the committees in class. Through this, I became co-leader of the HR committee where my sub group’s task is to accomplish relevant documents for the project. I was inspired to work harder on my part for the project as the co-leader of the HR committee because every little ounce of work we do is all for them and that’s what makes the project all the more rewarding. I also feel like my leadership skills are improving as I steered my sub group to accomplish a lot of the letters and forms. The best part for me, being in the HR committee, is working with my group mates who are always there to assist and support everyone.

Now that the school year is coming to an end, I can say that the fruits of our labor are starting to grow and drop from the tree into our arms. Previously, we thought it was impossible to reach 100 blocks but we managed to make them all! We're ready to implement our project to the community before Grade 12 ends. This wouldn't have happened without the class' cooperation and unity. I feel like we have grown closer throughout the days because of our project. 5 years from now, I think this will contribute to the emergence of alternative construction where we don't necessarily have to use materials that are harmful to the environment and instead, we can reuse other easily obtainable materials to do so. Of course, I am also looking forward to the future Lasallians who will be inspired by our project and hold it as an inspiration to help and serve others.