



Master's Degree in Women's and Gender Studies

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I am truly grateful for the wonderful and enriching experience GEMMA has given me. It could not be that insightful and in-depth without your support and guidance so thank you.

I am currently back in my country to put in practise everything that I have learned, theoretical and experiential, and already been working for the most interesting project I can imagine. Tita Ellen, the former Executive Director of San Pablo City Women, Family and Overseas Filipino Center where I also volunteered full-time for six months has asked me to join her in putting up **a foundation that will bring in international volunteers to our country**, specifically to my native locality, San Pablo City. The volunteers' programme that we are creating is beyond cultural exchange since both of us are into gender and development. Our programme includes a theoretical module on community organising and social development specifically developed by Dean Angelito Manalili of the College of Social Work and Community Development of the University of the Philippines. We designed it to be issue-specific from disaster management to maternal and health care to agriculture as our response to the UN's MDGs through volunteerism and leadership training. This is my personal involvement in bridging the gap between theory and practise and my way of giving back the scholarship that was awarded to me.

What I learned from GEMMA? My European scholarship brought me to a higher place, that is, higher consciousness. I have become more culturally sensitive and at the same time more independent. It taught me humility because there are things that I still do not know. Best of all, it confirms everything that I want to do: to give back what I have been given. I am lucky and blessed enough to experience GEMMA and it is my task to bring my education into practise starting from my own small community. As much as I love theories, I also want to be personally involved in grassroots organising. To make an impact I have to go back to the basic. Poverty and hunger, health care and child mortality are gender issues. To eradicate these issues, we need to empower the stakeholders or the people themselves. And so I am using my privileged position to empower more people especially the young and the women through sustainable developmental programmes in our foundation which I co-

founded.

If you happen to visit our country, please don't forget to visit our centre. I am attaching some photos of it (ppt).