

PROJECT SI LONG SI LONG



WE CAN
MAKE SHOES



EMPOWERING FROM THE GROUND UP

Acknowledging the current economic status of local communities, it can be said that there is a need to ensure equal access to empowerment opportunities in terms of livelihood. Marikina-based creative hub for footwear design and development, Zapateria, introduced the concept of building a potentially sustainable community development program entitled Silong Silong.

Project Silong Silong is a transformational livelihood learning program. Taking a leaping point from the city's identity as the Philippine Shoe Capital, the program started off with an experiential learning workshop that imparted foundational knowledge of footwear making to the women leaders of chosen communities in Marikina City.

Getting inspiration from the history of the shoe industry wherein most households would be its own family factory, Project Silong Silong encourages communities to develop their own sense of entrepreneurship from their own backyards. The first Silong Silong program is named "We Can Make Shoes", a collaborative effort between Zapateria and I Can Make Shoes made possible by the British Council Philippines.

Silong Silong: We Can Make Shoes was held on December 13, 2019 at the DTI-NCRO CITE

The program would develop and distribute the initial batch of Creators' Kit for Complete Beginners with a set of materials and tools as well as guidelines one can use to start making their own sandals as a home-based business.



WOMEN, FROM LONDON TO MARIKINA

Silong Silong is a passion project of technopreneur Unyx Sta. Ana who is also a co-founder of the Philippines' first co-creation hub for shoes. She and her father, Rico, with 5 generations of shoemaking, started Zapateria with the hopes of continuing the shoemaking heritage that has always played a great role for their family. Zapateria aims to be a workstation and playground for creatives who share the same love for shoes. The creative hub also connects aspiring shoemakers with experienced artisans to serve as their mentors.

North of the globe, I Can Make Shoes founder and shoemaker Amanda Overs has been educating more individuals of the craft of shoemaking. I Can Make Shoes is a private shoemaking school based in London that attracts students from all over the world. Specializing in making shoes without having to use heavy machinery, I Can Make Shoes teaches their students how to make shoes from home through a program that is well-fitted for beginners and footwear enthusiasts. The process in which the students go through in learning the craft is designed to ignite a passionate outlook about shoemaking that is neither too complex or intimidating.

The British Council had ensued a fellowship program that aims to develop creative communities for social impact by building a network of community leaders and respective hubs. It was during the time while Unyx was taking the study tour with British Council in London that she met Amanda Overs, the founder of I Can Make Shoes. From founding their own hubs to carrying the drive of imparting knowledge about shoemaking, both women had found themselves a common ground not only in shoes but in their shared values as well.

PROJECT SILONG SILONG SUPPORTED BY THE DTI-NCRO

Supported by the Department of Trade and Industry - National Capital Region Office (DTI-NCRO), Project Silong Silong was provided with a facility that best caters to its nature. The participants along with the rest of the team of facilitators were given a warm accommodation by DTI-NCRO at their Center for Innovation and Technology for Enterprises (CITE).

DTI-NCRO CITE is a compound that houses the various facilities and projects of the organization. The Shared Service Facility (SSF) located in the compound serves as one of DTI's flagship programs in addressing the gaps and bottlenecks in the value chain of the priority industry clusters. Negosyo Center, a business center that assists MSMEs in their business application and development, also resides within the same compound.

As a focal point for business needs, the DTI-NCRO CITE also offers workshops and classes for product development and enterprise building. These facilities serve great assistance to local industries such as furniture, gifts, housewares and crafts including footwear, opening its doors for forums and learning opportunities to aspiring makers, designers and entrepreneurs.

DTI-NCRO CITE is located at 36 Russet St. SSS Village, Baranggay Concepcion Dos, Marikina City.



FOOTWEAR MAKING BUSINESS FROM HOME



The workshop was set to accommodate select young women from Barangay Tumana, a community partner of the Marikina Polytechnic College's (MPC) Extension Services. The Silong Silong Project: We Can Make Shoes aimed to potentially equip the participants with the skills they would need to start making simple footwear. They were provided with training sessions for making a pair of slip-on sandals, possible design variations they can try, and basic entrepreneurial tips they can practice.



The end goal for the initial release of the Silong Silong Project: We Can Make Shoes is to encourage these women to pursue a creative means to support themselves, their families and their communities via the shared love for shoes.

Through this simple social responsibility effort, empowering women and developing a gender balanced industry can be a means to provide a sustainable livelihood for local communities while advocating the craft that shaped the Philippine Shoe Capital, Marikina City.



The workshop was participated by young ladies from the community, Ms. Aurora Tirad-Olgario from MPC, and a DTI Representative Ms. Bertillo. All participants deemed the activity quite insightful and hopes to see the project progress and tap more communities in the future.