



Changing the game for hundreds of poor Filipinos

**KRISTİYANO-ISLAM PEACE LIBRARY (KRIS)**

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Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila 1127  
<http://krislibrary.com/>

**I. Overview**

The Kristiyano-Islam Peace Library, or KRIS, is a non-profit, non-government organization based in Manila devoted to making education more accessible to Filipino youth living in poor and conflicted communities. Through its libraries, scholarship programs, and learning projects, it has been giving aid to hundreds of students from Zamboanga City, Zamboanga Sibugay, Davao City, Rizal, and Metro Manila since 2001.

**II. Background**

**a. Conflict**

After the shocking tragedy of September 11 in the US, terrorism in the Philippines quickly followed suit through an infamous series of bombings and kidnappings in Mindanao (the Southern peninsula of the Philippines) that continue to this day.

Insurgents have, since then, perpetuated activities that endanger the entire country. Public transportation systems have been threatened and bombed. American, British and other foreign nationals have been kidnapped. Innocent teachers from public schools have been beheaded. Woefully, some groups have even used “child soldiers” as young as seven years old to serve as spies, bodyguards, and front-line men.

Although the government has been aggressively responding through military means, the Mindanao insurgents continue to fight. Along with this all-out war, the population of the area—composed mostly of farmers and fishermen—suffer through extreme poverty and fear.

Furthermore, with the rise of Muslim extremist groups like Abu Sayyaf, the tension between Filipino Muslims and Filipino Christians was exacerbated—leading to an environment riddled with collective and personal hatred.

The World Food Programme and the World Bank reported in December 2011 that 40% of families in Central Mindanao were displaced at least once from 2000 – 2010 due to war, violence, and banditry. Displacement, food insecurity, and poverty have driven 58% of families to borrow money for food.

**b. Poverty**

While war festers in Mindanao, another war prevails upon the entire country: that of poverty. In 2009, the National Statistical Coordination Board reported that 26.5% of Filipinos

were poor—an increase from the 2006 report. The World Bank pegs the average income status of Filipinos in the lower middle status.

Beyond the figures, Filipinos are accustomed to everyday scenes of poverty. We, as a people, sympathize with millions of slum dwellers, street children, out-of-school youth, teenage mothers, and the rural poor. Additionally, basic social services in health care and education continue to be expensive and inaccessible to most Filipinos.

### **c. The Status of Education**

Education is not a dream-come-true for many Filipinos. Many critics have lambasted the poor quality of public education in the Philippines—touching on a massive lack in classrooms, school facilities, teachers, books, and other necessities. Additionally, many Filipino students tend to drop out of school due to financial constraints.

In fact, national statistics show that, in the poorest areas of Mindanao, only one out of every ten elementary students will eventually graduate from college.

## **III. History**

In 2001, Armand Dean N. Nocum—an award-winning journalist from the Philippine Daily Inquirer—sought to help his hometown of Zamboanga by pushing forward his own solution: youth education. Nocum reasoned out that, primarily, peace could only be achieved by understanding and that understanding could only be achieved by education. Secondly, a promotion of youth education will boost morale, give hope, and unlock opportunities to alleviate the status of many.

Starting that year, boxes of books were given out to public schools in hard-to-reach rural areas of Zamboanga (a province in Mindanao). Donations from UniLab, Shell Philippines, and Senator Loren Legarda fuelled the book projects with participating Zamboanga public schools.

In 2008, Nocum and his family set up the first Kristiyano-Islam Peace Library in Manicahan, Zamboanga. This came after the realization that books must come with an effective book program that will promote literacy and learning for the children. The idea of building a buzzing hive for learning in the community was also put into play. KRIS Library Manicahan now boasts of around 10,000 selections of books, a set of computers free of use, established tutorial and mentoring activities, and an average of 100 visitors per day.

Five more KRIS Libraries were put up in 2011 and 2012 (details are discussed under projects).

## **IV. Goals**

### **Mission**

KRIS Library aims to change the game. It will provide libraries, scholarships, and other educational necessities either directly or indirectly to Filipino children in poor, conflicted communities. It will guide its beneficiaries in every step of the way by establishing mutual

learning, tutorial, and literacy programs tailor-fit to suit the needs of the community's youth.

### **Vision**

KRIS Library sees an empowered Filipino youth—enlightened individuals who have improved their status on life by studying hard and working hard. By harnessing the tools of education, they will not only help themselves but also help others. KRIS Library's highest dream is to spark a cycle of empowerment, poverty alleviation, peace, and service in the Filipino youth.

## **V. Projects**

Because of the generosity of the following primary donors and associates, KRIS Library's projects have been made possible: Rotary International, Quota International, Zonta International, the Claret Urban Poor Apostolate, Kapatirang Claretiano Inc., Beautiful Heart Foundation, MC Home Depot, K.I.D.S. Foundation, AHON Foundation, former Senate President Jovito Salonga, Congressman Irwin Tieng, and many more kind souls.

### **a. Libraries**

- i. Zamboanga City - This two-story KRIS library was completed in April 2011. It boasts of 10,000+ selections of novels, textbooks, magazines, and references in its first floor. It also has a photocopier machine and a printer whose minimal service fees help subsidize expenses of the library. The second floor of the library boasts of eight computers available for free use for the children. Very soon, these computers will be hooked to the internet. The second floor also has two washrooms for the girls and boys. About 100 children from nearby locations visit KRIS Library everyday during the schoolyear; it has now become a hub of activity, learning, and peace in chaotic Zamboanga.
- ii. Quezon City - This library was primarily built to cater to the educational needs of the poor children of some 150,000 slum settlers in Barangay Holy Spirit, one of the country's top five biggest and most violent communities. The library held its soft opening in May 2011 with a selection of about 1000+ children's books, novels, textbooks, references, and magazines. As the library is situated in a part of the Nocum residence in QC, it has yet to offer longer opening hours. However, when more funds come in, construction and expansion will be commenced to accommodate more books and a set of computers.
- iii. Rodriguez, Rizal - Through the support of Fr. Eduardo Apungan CMF, head of the Claret Urban Poor Apostolate and the Kapatirang Claretiano Inc. (KCI)—an organization of former Claretian priests and seminarians—the CUPA-KRIS-KCI Library was opened at the CUPA Day Care Center on July 15, 2011 in the resettlement area for victims of Typhoon Ondoy and families affected by fires and the demolition of informal settler communities in Guadalupe-Laperal Compound in Makati, North Triangle, Botanical Garden, New Manila, Agham Road in Quezon City; and San Juan, Pasig, Navotas, Taguig and other places in Metro Manila. With no light, efficient water works, or good road system within

the community, the CUPA-KCI-Kris Library is the only place where kids converge to read, research and use their time productively.

- iv. Tungawan, Zamboanga Sibugay – The Claret Kindergarten School of Tungawan became the recipient of our reference books, textbooks, and school supplies. These were given by the *Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran* Foundation, the *Kabataang Inyong Dapat Suportahan* (KIDS) Foundation of actor-businessman Diether Ocampo and other donors from the US last August 5, 2011. This CUPA-KCI-Kris Library in Tungawan is still a work in progress.
- v. Bangkal, Zamboanga Sibugay - In partnership with the Claret Urban Poor Apostolate, the Kristiyano-Islam Peace Library (Kris) has managed to establish on August 5, 2011 a library in the mountain village of Sitio Bangkal. It also doubles as a kindergarten school.
- vi. Davao City - Thanks to the partnership of Mr. Anacleto Belleza Millendez of the Ang Batang Musmos (ABM) Foundation, KRIS Library finds a new beginning in Davao City. In February 2012, the soft opening of the initial stages of the library was held with a landmark book-reading from ABM members.

b. Scholarships

KRIS Libraries' Scholarship Program offers full scholarship grants to public elementary and high school students who simultaneously stand out in their class academically and are clearly in need of financial assistance (i.e. their family's average monthly income must not exceed P10,000). For school years 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011-2012, the KRIS Library in Manicahan, Zamboanga City had supported a total of 101 elementary and high school scholars who go to the nearby public schools. Through their scholarship and their frequent visits to the KRIS Library, many of them had graduated with recognitions and honors.

c. Book Donations

Aside from the flow of donated books and computers to the KRIS Libraries, some donations also proceed directly to public schools, government offices, and other notable book-giving projects. Beneficiaries of the KRIS Library donations of books and computers include the Manicahan Elementary School, the Tetuan Elementary School, the Layag-Layag community in Zamboanga, and the GMA News TV's Aklat Para Sa Lahat project. KRIS Library is looking into more extensive solicitation of computer donations so more public schools and institutions can be reached.

d. Medical Missions

KRIS Libraries vouch that education is the key—but not the only—ingredient to ensure a good future for our young beneficiaries. For this, we also secure medicine and food donations to be given to needy frequenters of the KRIS Libraries. We also facilitate free medical and dental check-ups in areas around Zamboanga and Quezon City. In

partnership with Diether Ocampo's K.I.D.S Foundation, volunteers have also been sent out to the Philippine Children's Medical Center to participate in programs concerning young cancer patients.

## **VI. Recognitions and Media Coverage**

### **2012**

- Guest Speakership in Rotary International District 3850's District Conference
  - Featured in MindaNews.com
  - Featured in the Zamboanga Times

### **2011**

- Zonta International's Young Women for Public Affairs Award for Arizza Ann S. Nocum
- Soroptimist International's Violet Richardson Award (2<sup>nd</sup> Place – District) for Ms. Nocum
- Recognition from the National Library of the Philippines and the National Committee for Culture and the Arts for Ms. Nocum for her administrative work
- Recognition from the UP College of Engineering for Ms. Nocum's administrative work
  - Philippine Senate Resolution No. 590 in Recognition of Ms. Nocum's work
    - Featured in GMA 7's "24 Oras"
    - Featured in ABS-CBN's "Bandila"
    - Featured in TV5's "Ako Mismo"
    - Featured in the Philippine Star
      - Featured in Malaya
  - Featured in the Philippine Daily Inquirer

### **2010-2008**

- Mindanao Winner, Smart Communications' Tipid-Sulit Idol Search
  - Featured in Manila Bulletin
  - Featured in the Zamboanga Times
  - Featured in The Daily Tribune
  - Featured in Manila Bulletin
  - Featured in the Manila Times

## **VII. People**

Administrator:	Arizza Ann S. Nocum
Founders:	Armand Dean N. Nocum, Annora Sahi-Nocum
Corporate Sponsorship Head:	Emmanuel L. Cabauatan
Publicity Head:	Anton Duane N. Nocum
Libraries Head:	Aida Natividad-Nocum
Scholarships Head:	Charmine T. De Leon
Staff:	Querobin Clemente, Mary Rose Magcamit