

**Batibot : Towards The Development
Of Supplementary Modes Of Education For Filipino Children**

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**BATIBOT: TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPLEMENTARY
MODES OF EDUCATION FOR FILIPINO CHILDREN**

I. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

A. 1. DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE

To improve the national level of education primarily at the elementary and preschool levels with focus on basic skills and the inculcation of Philippine cultural values

2. To create full capabilities within the Philippines to carry out an effective education program for children utilizing appropriate technologies of mass communications and their non-formal approaches to education

B. IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE

1. To develop an effective and economical method of reaching and educating Filipino children by providing them with basic cognitive skills and positive socio-cultural values
2. To strengthen the technical capabilities of the national staff in the development and delivery of supplementary educational materials for Filipino children

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II. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The Philippines is at present facing major problems in almost all areas of national concern. The government has numerous urgent needs to meet but with very limited resources at its disposal.

Philippine education is one such crucial area requiring immediate, multisectoral attention. The 1987 Philippine Constitution mandates free and compulsory education for Filipinos up to the secondary level. Yet the government does not even have enough resources to support the schools now under its responsibility. The Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS) has classified 33% of the country's more than 30,000 public elementary schools as "DDU" (disadvantaged, depressed, and underserved). The schools drop-out rate at the elementary level of 45% underscores the poor shape of our educational services.

The dismal state of Philippine education is made much more alarming by the fact that the Philippine population, which is placed in 1987 at anywhere from 52 million to 57 million is a very young population. Thirty percent (30%) is under ten years of age. The preschool population or those children four years old or younger make up 16% of the total population. Of this, only 2% or 166,400 to 182,400 have

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received formal preschool education (Department of Education, Culture, and Sports Statistical Bulletin and National Economic Development Authority Statistical Yearbook Projections).

The cost of setting up a system that would provide early learning experiences for great numbers of Filipino children would be staggering if taken in the context of the Philippine situation. Sources at the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS) estimate that it would entail more than four billion pesos each year to set up preschools within the public school system (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 15 April 1988).

The implication of this problem can better be understood if we consider the vital importance of early intellectual development among children.

As early as 1968, the report of the International Symposium on Brain Research and Human Behavior held at UNESCO and attended by 78 researchers from 22 countries, including six Nobel Peace Prize winners, made the following point: "At six years of age, the human brain attains 90% of its weight in the adult, the remaining ten percent being gained in next ten years of life."

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The UNICEF Annual Report also stated that 50% of the growth of the human body occurs in the first years of the human life. Beneficial early experience was emphasized as essential not only for cognitive growth but for all aspects of human growth and development as well. Experience, it added, has its most profound effect very early in life during the period of most rapid growth.

Indeed, the need to reach and educate Filipino children as early as possible cannot be over-emphasized.

A possible solution to this problem is to use mass media, particularly television and radio, in an imaginative and educational way. Notwithstanding the fact that no television and/or radio series can adequately replace formal schooling (the personal and special relationship between a teacher and a child can never be duplicated by mass media), educational television and radio programs can help fill the increasing demand for educational opportunities among Filipino children. Not only can they prepare preschool children for more formal learning and teach basic cognitive and affective skills to children unable to attend school, but they can also help promote positive socio-cultural values among children.

The viability of this approach is backed by the fact that 44.5% of Filipino households nationwide own television sets.

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In terms of audience, television reaches 20 million Filipinos which means a potential of almost seven million children aged ten years and below. Radio, because of its lower cost and portability, is even more popular and widespread, reaching an ownership rate of almost 80% nationwide (The Philippine Survey and Research Center Media Factbook). In many rural area, the only contact with the "outside world" is through radio.

A unique advantage of mass media (broadcast, in particular) is its capacity to respond to urgent national needs more rapidly and on a wider scale than most other available means. In an archipelago of approximately 300,000 sq. kms. (116 sq. miles), the role of television and radio in the Philippines must not be overlooked.

Despite these facts, television and radio have remained neglected insofar as educational programming for children is concerned.

THE PHILIPPINE BROADCAST INDUSTRY

Television and radio in the Philippines are largely commercial undertakings. They rely heavily on advertising for their survival. This means, on the whole, that the program must earn audience approval in order to remain on the air for any significant length of time. There are a few

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programs that are subsidized for special reasons but these do not last long if they do not attract an audience.

Some critics complain that this is an unhealthy situation because it supports only programs which appeal to the common tastes and does not encourage experimentation or artistic risk-taking. On the other hand, with the very limited resources at their disposal, producers contend that since television and radio are mass media, they do not have the luxury of providing venues for messages of limited appeal.

Where does this leave producers who want to use television and radio for more than just selling commercial products? What is in store for those who want to use the broadcast media to provide educational experiences for their audience? They have no other recourse but to compete with whatever else is available on TV (mostly soap operas, variety/musical shows, and expensively produced imported cartoons and other programs) and radio (mostly adult-oriented dramas, commentaries, and American Top 40's). Educational programs for children are no exception.

In an effort to support children's programs, the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas (Association of Filipino Broadcasters), the self-regulating body of TV and radio station owners which is responsible for what is broadcast on the public airwaves, drew up a television/radio code that

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requires stations to air "an aggregate of one hour a week" of programs "suitable for children". However, this means only less than nine minutes of children's programs everyday. Still, their definition of programs "suitable for children" includes anything from educational to cultural to entertainment shows whether locally-produced or imported cartoons, robot animation or whatever else the stations choose to identify as programs "suitable for children."

To their credit, most of the station owners made some attempt at broadcasting more than nine minutes a day for children's programs required of them. Being business-minded, the TV stations probably bear in mind the figures that show that Filipino children watch an average of four hours of television a day (in those houses that have television). Radio listenership among children is certainly much higher. Unfortunately, the majority of Philippine television and radio airtime is still dominated by the sort of programs that an Asian Institute of Journalism Study of Today's Top Rating Shows described as :

"(Containing) negative values like rudeness, disrespect for teachers and the old, illiterates pictured as ridiculously stupid, the use of broken English, preference for mestizo, ribald humor, and stale jokes."

Today, because of economic constraints and other realities governing Philippine broadcasting media, we have a situation

where the broadcast industry is growing at a pace unhampered by any long-term commitment to the general public it is supposed to serve. The industry which earns nearly two billion pesos a year in advertising revenue is still dominated by programs that are largely adult-oriented, escapist in nature, present distorted values and depict extremes in lifestyles from the glossy Western (American)-dominated canned shows and music to the top-rating, highly commercial variety shows to violent or melodramatic serials.

III. BATIBOT, AN EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION PROGRAM FOR FILIPINO CHILDREN

SESAAME, the forerunner of BATIBOT, entered the scene in 1983. Co-produced by the Philippine government through the Philippine Sesame Street Project (PSSP) and the Children's Television Workshop (CTW) of New York, U.S.A., the program was a mix of US-produced materials (50%) and Philippine produced segments (50%).

After only one year, the government decided to cut off the co-production and pack up the project due to budgetary constraints (the prohibitive cost of the dollar-based licensing fee it had to pay CTW). The Philippine production staff decided to go on their own and set up the Philippine Children's Television Foundation, Inc. (PCTVF), a non-stock non-profit, private organization, to replace PSSP. Thus was

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born BATIBOT, an all-Filipino-produced educational television program for children.

BATIBOT was primarily developed to respond to the growing need to supplement the early education of Filipino children. The program is based on an "educational blueprint" that focuses on socio-cultural goals, specifically defining appropriate values and "what is Filipino" in ways understandable to young Filipino children.

The curriculum that the program follows works very much like the lesson plan that teachers use to guide their day-to-day activities. It has instructional goals addressing five areas of a child's development. Those are: 1) the physical and/or biological self (focusing on health and hygiene, proper nutrition, body awareness and movement); 2) the moral and/or emotional self (focusing on positive attitude and values like friendship, sharing, patience, and fair play); 3) the social and/or cultural self (developing a social identity in relation to his family and his community as well as helping the child develop a sense of being Filipino along with an awareness of human and cultural diversity; 4) the intellectual self (focusing on basic thinking skills); and 5) the physical environment (teaching the child to understand his natural and man-made environment).

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BATIBOT follows the basic SESAME STREET principle of combining innovative and advanced production techniques with educational goals to come up with enjoyable learning materials on television. Yet, PCTVF makes sure that it injects innovations into the program to give BATIBOT a distinct Filipino character, using the national language, music, and familiar situations child viewers can easily relate to.

For example: When the concept of a candle is introduced to American preschoolers watching SESAME STREET, chances are it is by having a birthday party. In BATIBOT, the situation presented was that of a brownout (a power failure common in the Philippines) with one character expressing the feelings of fear of a normal five-year old child and another character assuaging his feelings by teaching him to appreciate lovely things seen in the dark - like the moon and the stars - so he could forget his fear. Somewhere in the middle of the segment, the candle as a source of light was introduced.

Innovations like these, which have been proven to elicit rapt attention and add new dimensions to the education of the child, are credited for the unprecedented success of BATIBOT. The New York Times wrote of BATIBOT: "The show

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entirely in the Philippine vernacular, Tagalog, has proven more popular than the American version which had been shown here since 1970."

Others have the following to say about BATIBOT:

"Today, BATIBOT is the most widely viewed children's television program in the Philippines, reaching an estimated daily audience of 460,000 children."

- The Wall Street Journal

"BATIBOT ... is filled with Filipino language, scenes, and symbols ... it has higher ratings than either the co-produced show (KUSANE) or the American SESAME STREET and ranks among the top 10 daytime shows in the country.

- International Herald Tribune

"BATIBOT is a first grade educational children's programme in an exclusively commercial TV scene."

- Sueddeutsche Zeitung

"Many Filipino parents agree that no other locally produced educational TV show has had such an impact on children. In letters to the show's producers, they say their children are learning from BATIBOT while being entertained. BATIBOT uses the Filipino language, and scenes, props, and symbols native to Filipino children. The scenery reflects the everyday experiences of children in the lower and middle income classes."

- The Christian
Science Monitor

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"In today's cacophony of local children's programming that overflows with robots and other heroes, BATIBOT is holding its own. The show has come up with innovations that reflect Filipino traits and customs. One of these is BATIBOT's story-telling portion (about) local legends and other tales."

- The Far Eastern Economic
Review

Since it was launched in January 1985 and throughout its five seasons (five years) of broadcast, BATIBOT consistently ranks in the top five multi-weekly daytime television programs in the Philippines, according to independent viewership surveys conducted by the Philippine Survey and Research Center (PSRC) and PULSITRON.

Likewise, it has time and again been hailed as a "milestone" as far as television programming is concerned by different sectors of Philippine society. Among the awards BATIBOT has received are: 1) the Hall of Fame of the Catholic Mass Media Awards in 1988 for being the Best Children's Show on Television for three consecutive years; 2) the Gawad CCP from the Cultural Center of the Philippines for being one of the Ten Best Television Programs in the country in 1987 and 1988; 3) the Best Children's Television Show in 1987 from the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas; 4) a citation for the program's major contribution to the propagation of the national language from the Kalinangan ng Wikang Pambansa

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(Institute of National Language) in 1987; and 5) the Best Children's TV Show Award from the Philippine Movie Press Club during their First TV Awards Ceremony in 1987.

International recognition has also been given to BATIBOT by being invited to participate in a number of television festivals, among them: the Japan Prize; Prix Jeunesse (Germany) which favorably commended the program for successfully reflecting Philippine culture; the Third Los Angeles International Animation Competition; and, the Central China Television's (CCTV) Children's Screening in Beijing.

IV. RADYO BATIBOT, EXPANDING THE REACH OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

The success of BATIBOT as well as PCTVF's desire to reach out to children in far-flung rural areas of the country propelled the production of BATIBOT's counterpart version on radio. RADYO BATIBOT, a thirty-minute educational radio program for children is heard nationwide, Mondays to Fridays, 4:00 to 4:30 p.m., over the following AM stations of the Nation Broadcasting Corporation:

STATION	LOCATION	ESTIMATED RADIO HOMES
1) DZAM	Metro Manila	1,227,000
2) DZYT	Tuguegarao, Cagayan	12,100
3) DZYL	Ilagan, Isabela	12,400
4) DWSJ	Santiago, Isabela	10,800
5) DZRC	Dagupan	15,400

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STATION	LOCATION	ESTIMATED RADIO HOMES
6) DWRI	Laoag	10,200
7) DYCB	Cebu	127,900
8) DYRB	Butuan	26,100
9) DXCI	Cagayan de Oro	42,000
10) DXRB	Davao	108,000
11) DXRO	Cotabato	12,800
12) DXRE	Gen. Santos	26,200
13) DXYZ	Zamboanga	54,300
14) DZSP	San Pablo City	-
15) DXBL	Bislig, Surigao del Sur	-
16) DWAY	Cabanatuan City	-

Like its television counterpart, RADYO BATIBOT is research-based and follows a definite set of curriculum objectives formulated by leading child development experts. The program teaches children useful skills, develops positive values and attitudes among its young listeners, and helps give Filipino children a sense of national identity amidst cultural diversity.

A significant role of RADYO BATIBOT is its attempt at correcting the gross imbalance in the use of the country's public airwaves. Radio in the Philippines today mainly serves the adult sector of the population and provides mostly commercial, dramatic, and other adult-oriented programs. The 22 AM stations in Metro Manila broadcast an average of 18 hours of radio programs daily. Of the nearly 400 hours of radio programs broadcast per week, practically non-existent is airtime purely devoted to children. By transmitting well-

produced, curriculum-based, educational programs for half an hour a day, five days a week, nationwide, PCTV, therefore, is trying to create an awareness among the population of the need to use radio for responsible programming, particularly for broadcasting educational programs for young Filipino children.

A concrete manifestation of this awareness is the recognition given to RADYO BATIBOT by the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS) as an effective learning tool for Filipino children. In a memorandum circulated to all Bureau and Regional Directors, School Superintendents and heads of public and private schools, the Department endorsed the radio program as one of its official learning resources for elementary students, especially for preschool and primary pupils.

Equally positive is the result of a study conducted by the Nation Broadcasting Corporation in early 1988. Among other things, it reports that:

"Based on phone calls and letters received by the different network stations, RADYO BATIBOT is widely accepted, not only by children but parents and teachers as well, most especially in Tagalog-speaking areas.

"Most notable among these reports is that of our DZYT Station Manager in Tuguegarao where Dr. Dominador Cabasal, Area Superintendent of a teacher's association in Cagayan Valley, requested if they could tape the program for demonstration during seminars for teachers in his area."

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Another study by the independent Media Pulse in January 1989 reveals that "RADYO BATIBOT ... has continued to enjoy favorable ratings in 1988 in virtually all areas." And as a further measure of its social acceptance, the program received the Best Children's Program on Radio Award from the Catholic Mass Media Awards (CMMA) in February 1989. The CMMA citation reads:

"The most effective way to impart values to children is by entertaining them. RADYO BATIBOT does this with flair, verve, and imagination. Production is technically competent; script is amusing; acting is superb."

PCTVF responds to these encouraging results by taking measures which further expand the reach of RADYO BATIBOT. It has, for instance, produced RADYO BATIBOT programs in the Cebuano and Ilokano dialects. The airing of the programs in Cebuano- and Ilokano-speaking areas, where children have difficulty comprehending Filipino, the national language is PCTVF's actualization of its commitment to reach out to as many Filipino children as possible.

V. REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITIES

An outreach program designed to promote parental and community awareness of the need for early child development among low-income communities was launched by BATIBOT in the areas of Olandes (Marikina), Santolan (Pasig), and Bagumbayan (Quezon City) all in Metro Manila in 1985.

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BATIBOT's Outreach Program assists and trains community members identify their own needs and implement their own projects concerning the relatively unexplored field of early child development. To do this, BATIBOT field workers, together with existing local groups of PCTVF's Community Extension Services-organized groups in the communities, design and conduct training seminars-workshops. Residents are given the opportunity to interact with professionals from different fields of specialization and discuss with them diverse topics related to early child development (e.g., curriculum development for early child education programs, development of educational toys from discarded materials which are readily available within their immediate environment, health care, herbal medicine, nutrition, day care management, leadership training, organization development, etc.) right at the communities.

The result is a community-based early learning centers managed and run by organized parents and adults in the community with assistance from BATIBOT field workers who visit them on a regular basis.

Traditionally, Filipino children below the age of seven are termed "walang isip" (or mindless) and not given the experimental learning and mental stimulation they so require in order to make maximum use of what experts call

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"peak learning years." Through BATIBOT's Outreach Program, it is hoped that this mistaken notion of children having no learning capabilities can be discarded. It is only then that lessons learned about early child growth and development can be internalized by adults for the benefit of young children.

VI. PCTVF, A CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

Since BATIBOT was launched in 1985, Philippine Children's Television Foundation, Inc. (PCTVF) has become the leading independent organization in the country which specializes in providing educational inputs and materials for children through mass media and other non-formal (non-traditional) approaches.

PCTVF's objective is to develop, prepare, publish, distribute, institute, and engage in informational, instructional, and teaching materials, and programs for use in support of, ancillary to, or otherwise connected with educational broadcasting and other educational activities.

The Foundation has an unpaid Board of Trustees composed of: Mr. Peter Garrucho, chairman; Mr. Arsenio Bartolone; Sr. Bellarmine Bernas; Dr. Doreen Fernandez; Ms. Neni Sta. Romana-Cruz; Ms. Feny de los Angeles-Bautista; Ms. Patricia L. Monzon; and Ms. Lydia Benitez-Brown who is also the Foundation's Executive Director.

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Aside from producing BATIBOT and RADYO BATIBOT, PCTVF is involved in other child development activities which include community outreach work on early child education among parents and other adults in three low-income communities in Metro Manila and publication of books (AKLAT BATIBOT) for children ten years old and younger.

PCTVF's operations are principally financed by advertising revenues (60%) generated from BATIBOT programs and income from other projects (40%), e.g., live show presentations and production of documentaries, educational tapes, training videos, TV coverages and the like.

Notwithstanding the fact that BATIBOT is the leading educational program (on television and radio) for children in the Philippines today, its funding is heavily affected by a variety of factors: the economic situation, the political situation (in times of political crisis and instability, advertisers freeze spending), not to mention the fact that most advertisers prefer to spend their money on more commercial type of programs, and other variables.

The Philippine government, while recognizing the benefits that BATIBOT programs provide to countless Filipino children, is not in a position to give direct financial support to the project because it has limited resources which must be utilized to meet constitutional obligations (e.g., free elementary and secondary education).

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Thus, PCTVF is in constant search for fund sources to be able to upgrade and expand its capabilities in reaching out to the country's most precious resource - the Filipino child.

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FACT SHEET: BATIBOT

PRODUCER:

The Philippine Children's Television Foundation, Inc., a private, non-stock, non-profit organization incorporated in the Philippine under the Securities and Exchange Commission and granted DONEE institution status by the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

BASIC GOAL:

To reach and educate Filipino children belonging to the preschool age group through the responsible use of television. BATIBOT is completely in Filipino and is based on an educational blueprint that focuses on socio-cultural goals, specifically defining values and "what is Filipino" in ways understandable to Filipino children.

BROADCAST SCHEDULE:

BATIBOT is telecast twice a day from Monday to Friday (11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on RPN-9 and 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on PTV-4).

FORMAT AND SETTING:

One hour, magazine format using a company of actors and puppets in an urban community setting. Variety, humor, original Filipino music, animation, short features and special electronic techniques and effects are basic to BATIBOT'S format.

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BATIBOT CAST:

Pong Pagong	Deo Noveno
Kiko Matsing	Toots Javellana
Kuya Bodjie	Bodjie Pascua
Ate Sienna	Sienna Olaso
Kuya Mario	Junix Inocian
Ate Isay	Isay Alvarez
Ate Betty Mae	Betty Mae Piccio
Kuya Ching	Ching Arellano

PUPPETEERS:

Rodelia Legaspi	Arnaldo Dee
Sandy Tarrazona	Cris Gonzalez
Rose Nalundasan	Key Binalia
Marconi de Leon	

BATIBOT PRODUCTION STAFF:

Executive Producer	Lydia B. Brown
TV Director	Kokoy Jimenez
Line Producer	Ma. Consuelo Tordesillas
Headwriter	Rene O. Villanueva
Staffwriter	Mariposa Clemente Tadeo Culla
Music Director	Louie Ocampo

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LAF/Animation Producer	Josephine Atienza
Producer	Ma. Teresa Kchiverri
Art Director	Jose Mari Panintuan
Costume Designer	Samuel Esquillon
Associate Producer	Gina Dy
Production Assistant	Raymond Salcedo
Animator	Joseph Topacio
Staff Artists	Marcelino Sanchez Gerald Garcia Alexander Espina Ana Leonisa Ocampo
Art Supervisor	Melo Sta. Maria
Production Asst. Art/ Secretary	Luz Cera
Carpenters	Ricardo Aguilar Reynaldo Garcia
Set Dresser	Renato Delina Antonio Ilagan
Chief Engineer/ Tech. Manager	Ely Nanquil
Technical Supervisor	Boying Oasin
Lighting Director	Rodolfo Erbito
Asst. Lights Director	Anito Suello
Post-production/ Audio Supervisor	Jose Mari Delgado
Music Coordinator/ Sound Effects	Carmel Osmena
Make-up Artist	Lucita Murania
Camerasmen	Joey Legaspi Rhino Vidanes

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CCU Technician

Rustico Gregorio
Archilles Garchitorina

Audio Person

Joel Angeles

BATIBOT RESEARCH STAFF:

Research Director

Feny de los Angeles-Bautista
(on leave)

Senior Researcher

Tessa Baja

Junior Researcher

Ruth Abenojar

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT:

External Affairs
Director

Marites Vitug

Grants/P.I. Manager

Larry Zurita

Technical Writer

Frances Solidum

Batang Batibot
Coordinators

Sienna Olaso
Mitchy Saturay

COMMUNITY EXTENSION SERVICES:

Director

Divinia Lacanilao

SPECIAL PROJECTS:

Production Manager

Lena Lubi

Producer/Director

Randolf Concepcion

Production Assistant

Zenaida Mendoza

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ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCE:

Director	Divinia Lacanilao
Accountant	Edith Creer
Personnel	Carmen Ilagan
Bookkeeper	Gina Velena
Acting Cashier	Nancy de Leon
Secretaries	Marilou Velena Chona Bulanhaqui Anabelle Papa Leoncia Balatbat
Script Typists	Viki Fernandez Marissa Adobas
Script Assistant	Arnel Egido
Purchasing Officer	Jepte Hechanova
Property Staff	Renato Hentoloro
Messenger	Edilberto Adobas
Driver	Zenon Aceron Antonio Samillano Ernesto Angel
Housekeepers	Milagros Vega Nenita Rstopito
Utility Men	Rliseo Arce Danilo Jaudines

PCTVF MANAGEMENT STAFF:

Executive Director	Lydia B. Brown
Deputy Director	Patricia L. Monzon

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Ms. Patricia Monzon	Deputy Director, PCTVF
Ms. Lydia B. Brown	Executive Director, PCTVF

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