

SHARING TEE IN THE PHILIPPINES

There have been exciting developments in the use of TEE in a number of places in the Philippines recently. One of these is the opportunity that Bethany Fellowship in Cauayan, Isabela Province, has had to share their experience with churches of other denominations.

Bethany Fellowship has been using TEE for around thirty years. They use Ilokano language translations of basic, practical and foundational training courses for workers and leaders developed by Study by Extension for All Nations (SEAN).

From just one centre in the early 1980s, there are now over twenty-five local church plants

in the province. Bethany Fellowship has been encouraged by just how open and active in ministry those who had finished SEAN courses have been, and realised that other churches could benefit from this.

“All our active members – those who are willing to be part of the ministry – studied Abundant Life and Abundant Light,” explains Rosana Longgat. “We don’t need to push them, to encourage them towards ministry – the TEE courses themselves generate their desire to work in ministry.”

Other churches in their immediate area expressed interest in using TEE courses, and Bethany Fellowship wanted to help. In January, rather than offering training under their own name, Bethany Fellowship decided in faith to launch the non-denominational ‘Institute of Theological Education by Extension in the Philippines’ (ITEEP) with a view to offering training more widely.

Rosana is the Coordinator for ITEEP. “Now we have at least three partner churches that are using Abundant Life (the first basic level TEE course); we are hoping and praying for more partners from other churches so that they too can take advantage of TEE.”

Rosana has also seen how individuals in Bethany Fellowship church plants have benefited from doing TEE courses. One of their elders, who came from a village near

Many younger Filipinos prefer to use the national language, Tagalog.

Cauayan, didn’t know how to read or write before doing TEE, but they helped him learn to read while he was doing the course.

“He was about 33 years old when we taught him. Now he is 68 and one of our licensed elders.”

Rosana and her ITEEP team are also in the process of translating the Abundant Life and Abundant Light courses into Tagalog, the national language of the Philippines.

“The younger generations in the Philippines, especially in our city, prefer to use Tagalog instead of the local language. So although our elders still prefer to use Ilokano, we feel it is also important to meet the needs of the younger generations.”

The ITEEP team is praying for more partners in the next five years so that SEAN TEE courses are used not only in their province of Isabela but in at least three of the neighbouring provinces as well.

Funds are, of course, a problem, as is convincing church leaders to try their programme if they already have discipling materials. However, at their last graduation in April 2014 they had 120 students from Bethany alone, so they are hoping the numbers and the witness of those involved will speak for themselves.

For more information on ITEEP contact Rosana at rosana_longgat@yahoo.com ☎

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