

# An exemplar of meaningful CSR communications

*SM Foundation, Inc. bags Stevie award for 'Spreading Social Good' campaign*



*SMFI provides students with venues where they can hone their knowledge through its School Building Program. (Pre-pandemic photo)*



*SM School Building in Olongapo (Pre-pandemic photo)*

**By Adrian Paul B. Conoza**

WHAT DOES a meaningful fulfillment of corporate social responsibility (CSR) entail? One can say that effective implementation of an organization's programs will suffice, but communicating those programs and the progress of each to stakeholders is likewise essential. In fact, such efforts would even be more meaningful if stakeholders get inspired to support or emulate what the organization has done.

One notable Filipino organization that highly values these is SM Foundation (SMFI), the CSR arm of the SM group, which was recognized in the globally-known Stevie Awards this year.

In particular, SMFI wins the Silver Stevie® Award in the Innovation in Community Relations or Public Service Communications category in the ninth annual Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards, the only business awards program to recognize innovation in the workplace in all 29 nations of the Asia-Pacific region.

SMFI celebrated this recognition with other winners on a virtual awards ceremony last June 29.

SMFI's Stevie Award specifically recognized the "Spreading Social Good" campaign, through which the foundation communicates its "social good" programs in education, health and wellness, sustainable agriculture, and disaster relief for their stakeholders.

For the foundation, "Spreading Social Good" drives SMFI's intention not just to create meaningful benefits on the communities and individuals it reaches, but also to inspire other people to bring positive impact, specially to the people and communities around them.

"Now, that smartphones and social media are transforming how we communicate, it is now easier for us to bring communities together to do good. That's the reason why it is important for us at SMFI to share our social good stories since we believe that if your development communication is well contextualized and authentic, your social good program can unite various institutions in spreading social good — which in turn multiplies impact," said Debbie Sy, the Executive Director of SMFI.

The executive director finds that communicating digitally largely demonstrates how they have been innovating their reach to stakeholders. Recognizing that communication continuously evolves, SMFI has been driven to keep at pace with a more digitalized landscape, highlighted by the younger generation becoming more tech-savvy.

For instance, for its scholarship awarding and presentation of scholar-graduates, SMFI transitioned from bringing scholars to SM Mall of Asia to holding such events virtually, which in fact has expanded the foundation's imminent reach.

Digitalization's impact on SMFI can also be seen on how it has launched its health and wellness centers, school buildings, and sustainable agri-trainings — where on-site and online components come together.

"Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is one area in which digitalization has helped companies to advance. Implementing new technologies not only adds business value — it can also enable non-profits to take their operations, management, and reporting for CSR online," Ms. Sy explained.

"Taking your CSR online does not mean that changes in the very concept, values and principles

are happening. It is an innovation in the implementation of socially responsible projects that involves organizations and their stakeholders using relevant tools, like social media, and the development of new models of collaboration through engagement and implementation of activities in the digital space," Ms. Sy added.

With the latest prestigious award it received, SMFI is driven further to continue realizing social development in the communities and sectors it serves — and to bring communities together to do good through purposeful storytelling.

Follow SMFI on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube: @SMFoundationInc to know more about its social good stories.



*Bringing hope in times of need. SMFI ensures to be one of the first responders during calamities and crises.*



*Highlighting the importance of health in nation-building, SMFI upgrades community health centers, complimented by its medical caravans across the country.*



*Development Communication as part of its operations: SMFI ensures to strategically communicate its CSR programs which enabled it to bag a Silver Award in the ninth annual Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards.*



*An active partner and supporter of Filipino farmers, SMFI provides farmers with modern farming skills and tools through its Kabalikat Sa Kabuhasan on Sustainable Agriculture. (Pre-pandemic photo)*