

**Column for Manila Bulletin**  
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**Of Trees and Forest**

### **Think Big and Aim High**

I'm truly happy to be writing again for the Manila Bulletin. As the oldest and one of the most widely read daily newspapers in the country, it gives me the privilege to "talk" to most of our people.

I am also grateful to the Manila Bulletin for giving me this space every week to write about my advocacies, which are close to my heart because these concern the things I do and want to do for the benefit of our country and people, including the future generations of Filipinos.

Let me start with corporate social responsibility or CSR, the current term for corporate charity. We are not lacking in CSR, in terms of participating companies, because there are a lot of them, each undertaking projects to help people in certain segments of society or in certain communities.

Corporate charity has been going on for many years, but we still have to see the significant impact that will really make a difference on the lives of Filipinos.

Based on my experience in business, I think the problem is that the resources for corporate charity work are scattered. So the implementation is lacking in direction and the results are piecemeal. Only a few people are provided with jobs or livelihood, a few hundred children are able to attend school.

Just a very small drop in the bucket when we consider that we now have more than 90 million people (and nearing 100 million), and at least half of them are poor, who should be the target of corporate charity.

The government alone cannot solve or substantially reduce poverty, and CSR is meant to help the government achieve that goal.

I view the poverty as a problem that requires the highest priority and the most immediate action. Many of our people have been impoverished for so long. Generations of Filipinos have been born under the most depressing and inhuman conditions.

In business our slogan is "Think big, aim high." It should also be our slogan in undertaking humanitarian activities, in advocacies, in philanthropic activities.

We have to think big and aim not just in terms of increasing donations but in creating magnitudes of scale in the shortest time possible. For instance, projects that generate employment must not aim at providing jobs to a few people, but to whole communities.

If we go into greening, let's think about greening the whole country. If we aim for zero waste, let's do it nationwide so that we shall really make a difference. A lot of companies and non-government organizations regularly conduct medical or dental missions. Why not do it in a coordinated, massive scale so that we create a healthcare revolution?

We can do it. The top 1000 corporations alone generated P6.2 trillion in combined revenues in 2009. That's more than 80 percent of the country's total output of P7.7 trillion in the same year.

What I'm trying to point out is harnessing entrepreneurial work and business management to raise the scale and impact of humanitarian work.

Let's think big, aim high, for the sake of our people!

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