

KFI board member joins the Darwin Scholarship Programme

Deborah Villafuerte, Board Member and Secretary of the Katala Foundation (KFI), a Philippine-based NGO, was selected among 100 aspirants to join the Darwin Scholarship Programme held in Shrewsbury, United Kingdom on 8-18 August 2008.

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PRLog (Press Release) – Aug 29, 2008 – “Monitoring and Communicating Biodiversity” was the general concept of the 10-day program that brought in 28 scholars from 21 different countries. In the spirit of Darwin’s love of nature, the young scholars were exposed to becoming “better naturalists” through a threefold focus skill areas – skills of observation and identification, skills of recording biodiversity and skills of communicating biodiversity to different target groups.



Debbie doing invertebrate species identification, Darwin Scholarship Programme

“As a young scientist, we know that Ms. Villafuerte benefits from the course. More importantly, she has a strong support of her organization and so is in a position to implement her learning from the scholarship programme and influence the development of biodiversity understanding in her country”, stated James Hindson, Head of the FSC Environmental Education and Co-Scholarship Director.

Debbie, as she is fondly called, conducts conservation education campaigns in the Philippines under the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Program (PCCP) implemented by the Katala Foundation Inc. (KFI). The PCCP aims to protect and conserve the critically endangered Philippine cockatoo *Cacatua haematuropygia* from extinction through participatory and ecosystemic approach. Her participation was made possible through the Alumni Grant from the Conservation Leadership Programme and the contributions from the Vogel Park Avifauna Nederland and support from Indira and Peter Widmann of Katala Foundation and Dr. Roger Wilkinson of Chester Zoo.

The prestigious scholarship programme was organized and led by the Field Studies Council (FSC), one of the leading environmental education organizations in the United Kingdom. The FSC offered this scholarship programme as part of the year-long celebration of the 200th anniversary of Darwin’s birth. Darwin, an English Naturalist developed the theory of natural selection and authored the famous book “On the Origin of the Species”.