



STATEMENT ON THE RED-TAGGING OF THE ISEA PRESIDENT

We view with grave concern the baseless inclusion of Dr. Marie Lisa Dacanay in a list of “Some of the UP Students who became NPA (Dead or Captured)” by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) through official posts in their social media sites on January 22, 2021. Such did not only malign Dr. Dacanay’s person and integrity, but also put her life and the organizations she leads at risk.

As an economist and as Dean of the John Gokongwei School of Management of the Ateneo de Manila University (A-JGSOM), I have known Dr. Dacanay as President of the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA). ISEA is a regional network of scholars, practitioners and resource institutions spanning 10 countries in Asia-Pacific promoting social entrepreneurship as a peaceful pathway towards poverty reduction and sustainable development.

I have had the privilege of working closely with Dr. Dacanay since I became ISEA Chairperson in 2017. We know Dr. Dacanay as a pioneering scholar, author, teacher and mentor of social entrepreneurship. Under Dr. Dacanay’s leadership, ISEA has been in the forefront of stakeholders’ consultations and the advocacy of the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Bill since 2012. She led an ISEA action research on the impact of COVID-19 that came up with useful recommendations on how social enterprises could be supported as vehicles for the recovery of the poor towards building back fairer. Dr. Dacanay became the first Asian to be awarded as Outstanding Social Innovation Thought Leader of the Year in 2019 by the World Economic Forum and the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship in recognition of her “visionary, pragmatic and courageous contributions to significantly improve the state of the world”.

Responding to a public outcry, DND Secretary Lorenzana called the red-tagging incident of the former U.P. student leaders including Dr. Dacanay “an unpardonable gaffe”. The list has since been taken down, an apology has been issued, the intelligence chief of the AFP has been sacked and the chief for civilian-military operations has taken a leave of absence. While these are welcome developments, we are worried for Dr. Dacanay’s safety because of the senseless killing of citizens similarly red-tagged in recent months. We are also worried that the Anti-Terror Law allows detention of individuals and freezing of individual and organizational bank accounts on mere suspicion of being part of a group identified as terrorist by the state. Specially in the context of Ateneo de Manila University’s inclusion in the list of 38 universities wrongly accused of serving as a haven of the NPA, we need to prevent the irresponsible inclusion of our former and current students in a similar list by the AFP.

As chair of ISEA, I call on our community to be vigilant in ensuring the protection of an enabling environment to work without fear with partners like ISEA towards fulfilling our mission of educating the youth to contribute to nation building as men and women for others.

Dr. Luis F. Dumlao

Chairperson, Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA)