

NGO, city gov't plan for children in conflict

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Virlanie Foundation, a non-government organization that takes care of disadvantaged children, is planning to work with Bacolod City for the establishment of a youth home for children in conflict with the law (CICL), Gina Castro, head of the Social Development Center, said yesterday.

Castro said Virlanie has been helping key cities in the Philippines and their representatives visited the SDC last year to see how they could help.

Virlanie, founded by French social worker, Dominique Lemay and his Filipino friends, will celebrate its 20th anniversary this year.

Sara Vial, Virlanie program manager, said they will be working with Bacolod since it was chosen as a pilot city for the Democratic Local Governance in Southeast Asia (DELGOSEA) program.

Bacolod City is the lone city in the Philippines which is a beneficiary of the DELGOSEA grant funded by the European Union involving a transfer of a best practice of Toul Sangke Sangkat in Cambodia's in the area of people's participation in planning and decision making.

The DELGOSEA in Bacolod City has identified the construction of a "Youth Home" for children in conflict with the law as one of the possible projects to adopt.

Vial said they are working hand in hand with Councilor Emegaspi-Ang for the establish-

ment of a youth home for Bacolod City.

The Bacolod Sangguniang Panlungsod had passed an ordinance last year establishing the Bacolod City Youth Home and creating a technical committee for its construction, authored by Ang.

Castro said that right now they are working on plans to provide capability building and skills training to the CICL's.

She said they are hoping to go into a partnership with Virlanie since it has positively agreed to help Bacolod in any way it can. "Hopefully, we will be partners in the operation and establishment of a Bacolod City Youth Home which will become the rehabilitation center for CICL's," she added.

Castro said the existing SDC will become the processing center so children who have committed offenses will pass through the SDC where they will be assessed by the social workers who will determine if they have to be transferred to the youth home.

She said the Bacolod Youth center will become like the Balay Pag-asa.

Ton-Trong Ho, also a Virlanie program manager, said that if the problem concerning the CICL's will be addressed, the living condition in Bacolod will improve and this will be good for business and tourism.

He said that with the help of the media, people will know that they are working with Bacolod and the city could become very famous in the future for the success of the project.*