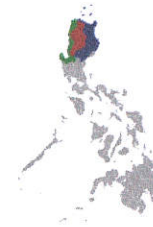




**NORTHERN LUZON  
INTERNATIONAL CAVING EXPEDITION  
PHILIPPINES 2015  
Provinces of Kalinga and Cagayan  
8-27 January 2015**



**PRELIMINARY REPORT**

**The preliminary numbers are in...** In a period of twenty days, a Multinational Cave Exploration Team (MCET) visits more than 55 caves, of which 47 were surveyed for a total surveyed length of 7,738 meters! The caves are situated in the Municipalities of Balbalan, Kalinga and Sta. Teresita, Cagayan.

The twelve-member team consisted of cavers from six countries: Germany (3 pax), U.S.A. (2 pax), Belgium (2 pax), Brazil (2 pax), Lebanon (2 pax), and Switzerland (1 pax). Their three-week expedition was organized and facilitated by the Balincaguin Conservancy (BC), based in Mabini, Pangasinan, and the Sierra Madre Outdoor Club (SMOC), based in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan.

BC and SMOC coordinated with the various Local Government Units (LGUs) in the Provinces of Kalinga and Cagayan for logistical support in the form of accommodation, transportation, foods and personnel. Grants for the expedition were awarded by the European Speleological Federation (FSE) and the National Speleological Society (NSS) of the U.S.A.

An initial synopsis of data has been submitted while maps, and photos are being developed. The final report will be published by the MCET in a few months and will be included in a proposed Atlas of the Great Caves and Karst of the Philippines.

### **Introduction**

Initially, the MCET contacted BC requesting to have an expedition in BC's home area of Mabini, Pangasinan, but the BC's officers felt there were not enough caves in Mabini to warrant a three-week, 12-member exploration team. So, BC contacted SMOC and they agreed to offer the caves of Brgy. San Miguel, Baggao, Cagayan, starting with Duba Cave.

By a stroke of luck, and in less than a month before the arrival of the MCET, BC performed a pilot trip<sup>1</sup> to the Uguid Subterranean River (USR) located in Brgy. Maling, Balbalan, Kalinga, as requested by the Provincial Culture and Tourism Committee, Chaired by Board Member (BM) Camilo T. Lammawin Jr.

BC was very impressed with the mountainous terrain, the cloud forest biome, the stories of the numerous caves in Balbalan, and most importantly, the support given by the LGUs during their pilot trip. So much so, that BC offered bringing the MCET to explore the caves of Balbalan. BM Lammawin readily accepted and planning immediately began for the expedition.

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<sup>1</sup> On 6-9 Dec. 2015.





Landscape of Balbalan by Rafael Camargo.



BC's pilot trip to theUSR.



Planning at Provincial Tourism Office.

After the Kalinga pilot trip, BC and SMOC went to Sta. Teresita, Cagayan<sup>2</sup> to continue surveying caves as requested by Mayor Lolita Garcia. Also, cave maps and photos, from previous surveys, along with Mabini's Municipal Cave Management Plan were submitted to Mayor Garcia. BC reiterated the previous offer to bring the MCET to Sta. Teresita, to which she too readily accepted.



Submissions from last survey.



Planning at Office of the Mayor.

Thus, in agreement among BC, SMOC, and the LGUs of Kalinga and Cagayan, the MCET was offered approximately 2-weeks in Balbalan, Kalinga and 1-week in Sta. Teresita, Cagayan.

The MCET accepted the coverage area and dubbed the project, the "Northern Luzon International Caving Expedition – Philippines (NLICEP) 2015" to reflect the area of coverage by BC and SMOC.

<sup>2</sup> 10-13 Jan 2015.



The MCET



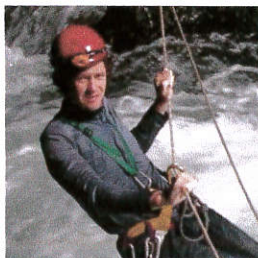
**Michael Laumanns**  
Germany  
Team Leader



**Helmut Steiner**  
Germany  
Biologist



**Dominik Fröhlich**  
Germany



**Matt Oliphant**  
U.S.A.  
Photographer



**Nancy Pistole**  
U.S.A.  
Cartographer



**Livia Cordeiro**  
Brazil  
Biologist



**Marc Vandermeulen**  
Belgium  
Cave diver



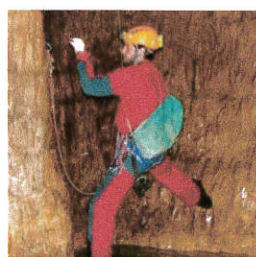
**Chadi Chaker**  
Lebanon



**Rafael Camargo**  
Brazil  
Photographer



**Jean-Pierre Bartholeyns**  
Belgium



**Joey Abou Jaoude**  
Lebanon



**Roman Hapka**  
Switzerland



## Balbalan, Kalinga

On the Day 1 in Kalinga, the NLICEP was greeted by a welcome program and cultural show hosted by Governor Jocel Baac, Vice Governor Allen Jesse Mangaoang, Congressman Manuel Agyao, and BM Camilio Lammawin, Jr.



LGU-Kalinga's welcome program.



Cultural show.

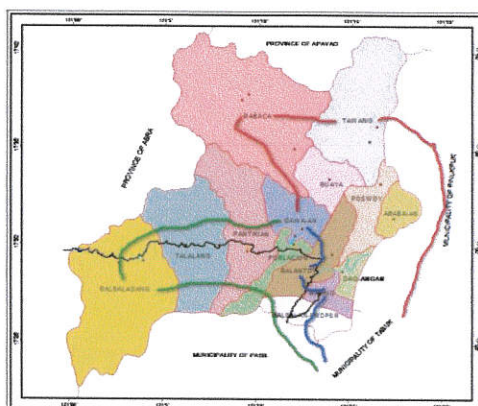
After the welcome program, a briefing and planning meeting was held by all expedition group members to assign tasks. For efficiency and more coverage, the MCET was divided into two teams, Team 1, with seven MCETs, targeting the Northern barangays, and Team 2, with five MCETs targeting the Southern barangays.



Briefing and planning meeting.



Departure photo.



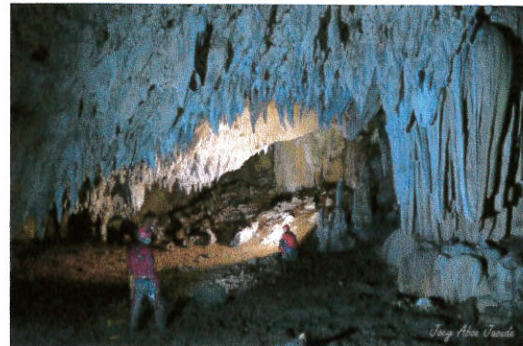
Planned routes for the teams.



Team 1, facilitated by Regino Wacas (Office of the Vice Governor) went to the Barangays of Lawang, Mabaca, Buaya, and Gawa-an. They hiked from village to village and home stayed as near as they could to the caves. The caves they visited that were surveyed to 300 meters or more were: Naanos Cave (500 meters), Dinugdugan Cave (680 meters), Magangab Cave (635 meters), Banig Cave (440 meters), and Maayaayas Cave (360 meters).



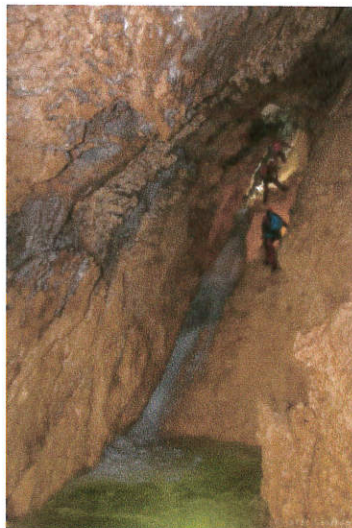
Dinugdugan Cave by Marc Vandermeulen.



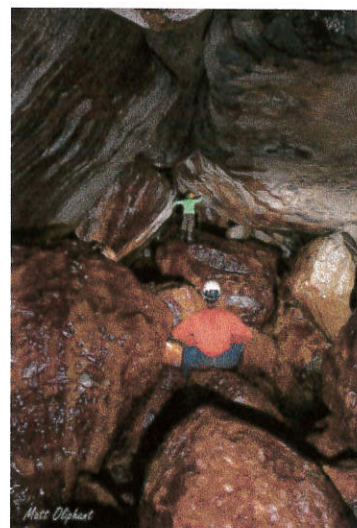
Banig Cave by Joey Abou Jawdeh.



Maayaayas Cave by Rafael Camargo.



Maayaayas Cave by Rafael Camargo.



Uguid Sub. River by Matt Oliphant.



Waypoints and tracks of Team 1 submitted by Rafael Camargo.



Team 2, facilitated by Jerry Rendon (BC) and Nida Dela Cruz (SMOC), made its base camp near the entrance of Uguid Subterranean River (USR) in Brgy. Maling and explored caves of Brgy. Maling, Balantoy, and Gawa-an.



Team 2's USR mud basecamp in Brgy. Maling.

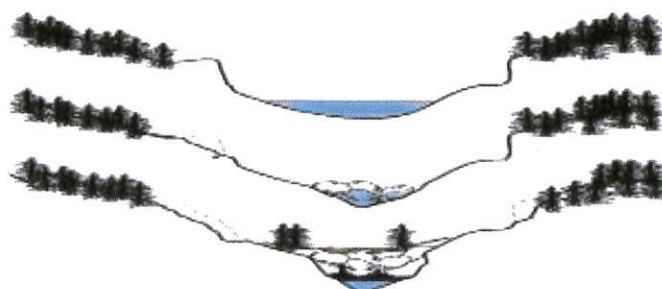


Team 2 surveying in USR.

The USR is significant because development has begun towards opening it to tourism and there are few "Talus Caves" worldwide and most are short in length. The surveyed length of USR is 724 meters, making it the longest surveyed cave in Balbalan. The cave begins in Brgy. Maling and continues into Brgy. Balantoy. The team was able to explore portions that have not yet been explored and needs more exploration and mapping.

A Talus Cave can be defined as:

*"Rockslides and rockfalls produce piles of debris. The rocks of the collapse - called talus - are large boulders with irregular shapes, which don't fit nicely together. Hence, spacious chambers may form in the talus piles producing a cave-like configuration. Rocks may also fall or slide into narrow fractures or canyons, which confine the rock piles, forming caves through which streams may flow. Talus caves are also referred to as breakdown caves."*<sup>3</sup>



Formation of Talus Cave<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www2.nature.nps.gov/views/KCs/CaveKarst/HTML/ET\\_Intro.htm](http://www2.nature.nps.gov/views/KCs/CaveKarst/HTML/ET_Intro.htm)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unm.edu/~rheggen/UndergroundRivers.html>



Both teams converged in Brgy. Gawa-an and moved to Balbalan's Municipal Hostel. They spent a couple of days resting and toured Balbalasang National Park.

At the end of the Balbalan exploration, the NLICEP was treated to an exit program hosted by Balbalan Acting Mayor Gowayon, Vice Governor Mangaoang, and BM Lammawin. The program consisted of songs and dances by the Balbalan students and residents, and closing remarks by the local officials. The NLICEP members also gave a slide presentation of the caves they went to, recommendations for tourism, and impressions of their experiences in Balbalan.

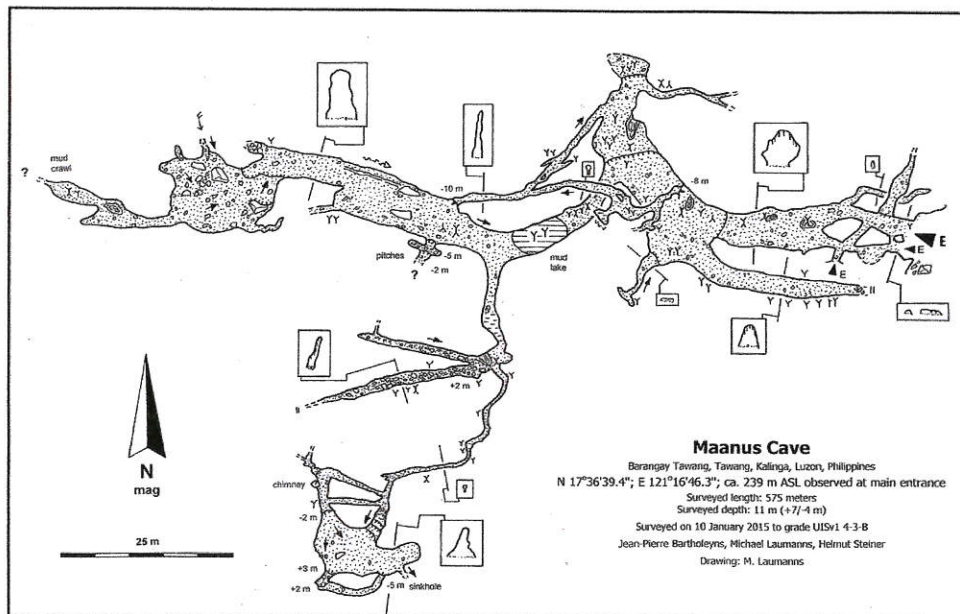


Exit program by LGU-Balbalan.



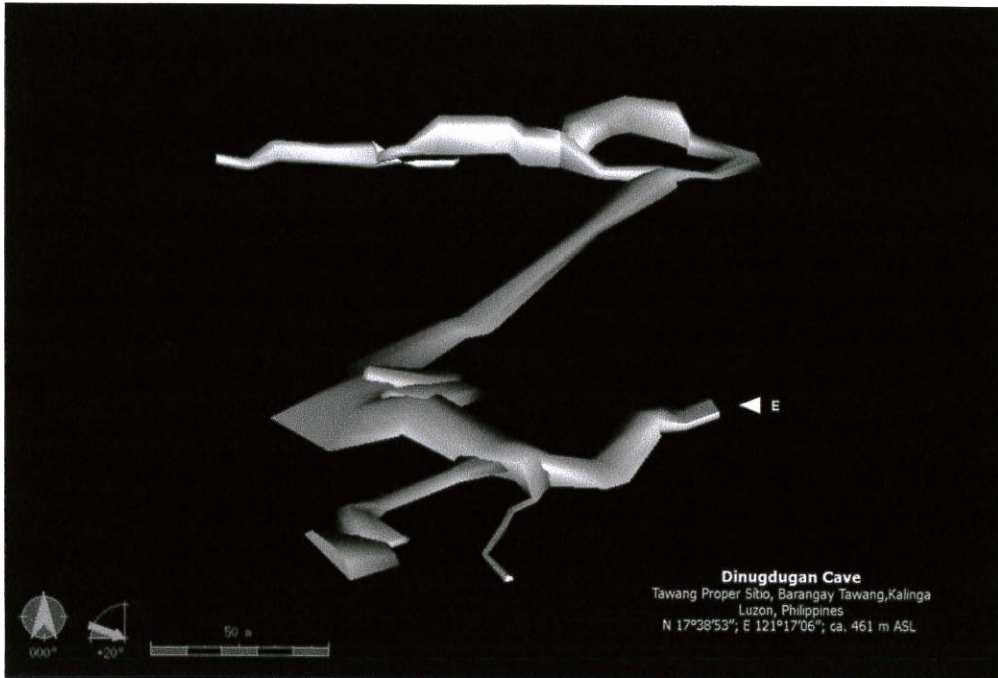
Exploration report by Team Leader Michael Laumanns.

The NLICEP covered six barangays of Balbalan, visited 12 caves, surveying 10 of those caves for a total of 4,001 meters.



1st survey map submitted by Michael Laumanns.





2<sup>nd</sup> survey map (in 3D) submitted by Rafael Camargo

### Sta. Teresita, Cagayan

ON 19 Jan. 2015, LGU-Kalinga used its vehicles to transport the NLICEP from Babalan, Kalinga to Tugugarao City, Cagayan where they transferred to LGU-Sta. Teresita’s vehicles for the trip to Sta. Teresita. Upon arriving to Sta. Teresita, they were given hand-crafted leis made of seashells and were treated to a welcome program and dinner hosted by Mayor Lolita Garcia and LGU staff.



Welcome dinner and program by LGU-Sta. Teresita.



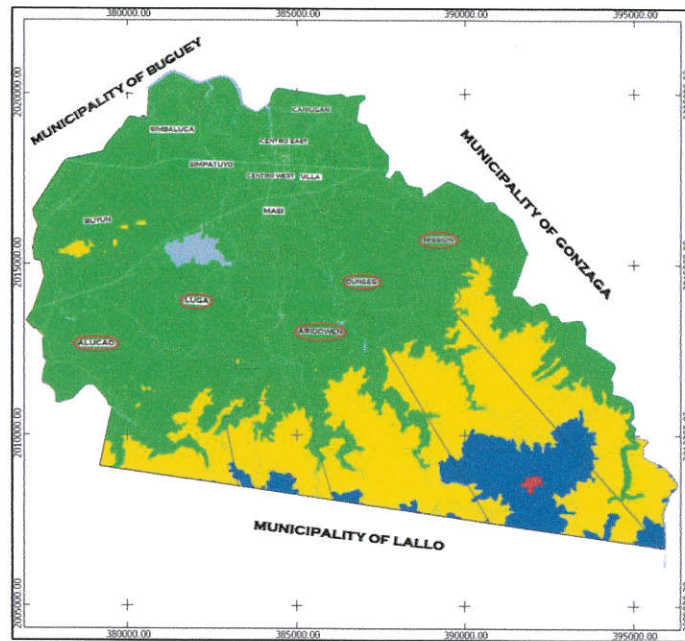
NLICEP dances Dayang Dayang with Mayor Garcia.

Immediately afterwards, the NLICEP made plans for their next days of exploration.

BC & SMOC gave to MCET a list of known caves that included information the surveys that have been done and that are ongoing in Brgys. Mission, Luga, and Aridowen. Based on the list the MCET divided into four teams to cover as many caves as they can.

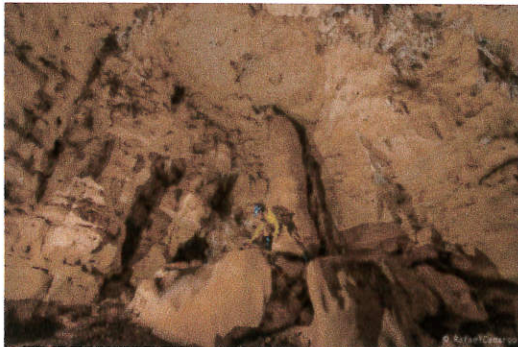




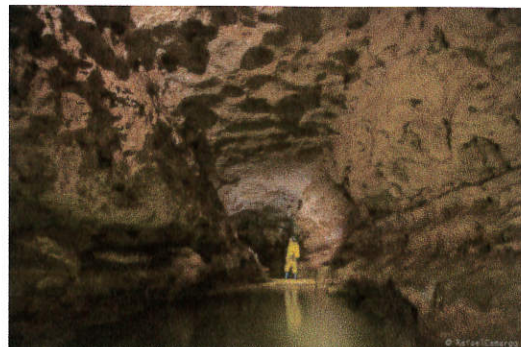


Exploration areas mostly at 0-100 meter elevation (green)

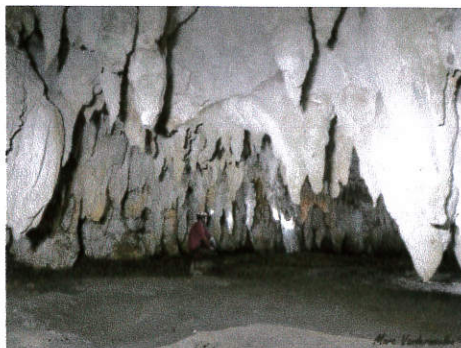
Mayor Garcia also added two new barangays, Brgys. Dungeg and Aluca, to the list for exploration that have not been explored by BC and SMOC



Ari-0 Cave by Rafael Camargo.



Ari-0 Cave by Rafael Camargo.



Ari-9 Cave by Marc Vandermeulen.



Sinangraban Cave by Marc Vandermeulen.





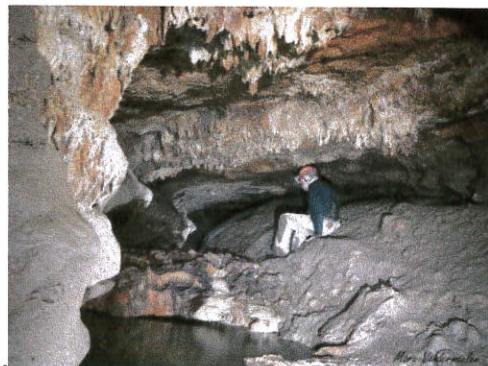
Karkarato Cave by Marc Vandermeulen.



Edca Cave by Marc Vandermeulen.



Awan Nagan Cave by Marc Vandermeulen.



Ninisi Cave by Marc Vandermeulen.

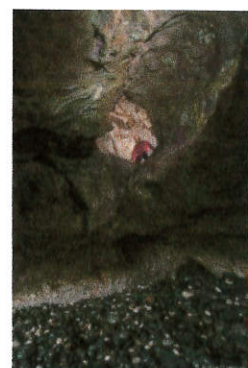
One team went to the neighboring town of Gonzaga, after doing the mandatory courtesy call to the Municipal Government, to visit a beach cave that was spotted on Google Earth. It turned out to be Tallag Cave in Brgy. Cabanbanan Norte with a survey length of 35 meters.



Google Earth map.



Tallag Beach by Rafael Camargo.



Tallag Cave Rafael Camargo.



At the end of the Sta. Teresita exploration, the NLICEP member held an exit conference with Mayor Garcia to report their results and Mayor Garcia treated them to a farewell dinner at Chelsea's Diner in Aparri, Cagayan.



Exit conference.



Farewell dinner.

The NLICEP covered six barangays of Sta. Teresita, visited 42 caves, surveying 36 of those caves for a total of 3,702 meters.

### Future Expeditions

The MCET accepted the invitations of both Balbalan and Sta. Teresita to return for further explorations. They plan to complete any unfinished survey and to look for new caves to explore. They are planning to return during the drier months to avoid the mud on the trails and high waters in the caves.



## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all who took part with the NLICEP 2015, all the way down to the cultural dancers, guides, porters, cooks, communities, tribal elders and public officials, whose participation was essential toward its success. Special thanks are given to the following:

<p><b>MCET members:</b></p> <p>Michael Laumanns (Germany) Team Leader          Helmut Steiner (Germany)          Dominik Fröhlich (Germany)          Matt Oliphant (U.S.A.) for photos          Nancy Pistole(U.S.A.)          Jean-Pierre Bartholeyns (Belgium)          Marc Vandermeulen (Belgium) for photos          Lívia Cordeiro (Brazil)          Rafael Camargo (Brazil) for photos          Chadi Chaker (Lebanon)          Joey Abou Jaoude (Lebanon) for photos          Roman Hapka (Switzerland)</p> <p><b>BC Advisor</b> Guillermo "Jerry" Rendon          for BC photos</p> <p><b>LGU-Sta. Teresita officials:</b></p> <p>Municipal Mayor Lolita Garcia          Tourism Officer Jocelyn Bumatay          Staff Valerie T. Calegan</p>	<p><b>SMOC members:</b></p> <p>President Nida Dela Cruz          Vice President Paul Valdepenas          Board Chairman Francisco Battung          Board Member Eduardo Santos          Board Member Michael Gaspar          Nelson Pingay          Dante Jr. Santos          Arvin Quinto          Ranger Marquez</p> <p><b>LGU-Kalinga officials:</b></p> <p>Governor Jocel Baac          Vice Governor Allen Jesse Mangaoang          Board Member Camilo Lammawin, Jr.          Acting Balbalan Mayor (VM) Eric Gowayon          Regino Wacas (Office of the Vice Governor)          Lorraine Ngao-I (Provincil Tourism Officer)</p>
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Submitted on 8 Feb 2015 by:

**(Sgd.) Regino Wacas**  
 Team 1 coordinator  
 Office of the Vice Governor

**(Sgd.) Guillermo "Jerry" Rendon**  
 Team 2 coordinator  
 Balincaguin Conservancy

**(Sgd.) Nida Dela Cruz**  
 Cagayan coordinator  
 Sierra Madre Outdoor Club





The ESP 2014-15 expedition team together with local authorities staff from Santa Teresita (Cagayan province) and several members of the Sierra Madre Outdoor Club (SMOC). Numbers: 1 Marc Vandermeulen (Belgium), 2 Joey Abou Jaoude (Lebanon), 3 Dominik Fröhlich (Germany), 4 Chadi Chaker (Lebanon), 5 Michael Laumanns (Germany), 6 Jean-Pierre Bartholeyns (Belgium), 7 Rafael Camaro, (Brazil), 8 Roman Hapka (Switzerland), 9 Livia Cordeiro (Brazil), 10 Matt Oliphant (USA), 11 Helmut Steiner (Germany), 12 Nancy Pistole (USA) (photo: Joey Abou Jaoude).



**Project Budget Northern Luzon International Cave Exploration Philippines 2015 (NLIIEP) (in EUR)**



<b>Participants:</b> 12 people	<b>Duration:</b> 22 days
<b>Travel:</b>	
International Flights	1,200 € x 12 persons 14,400 €
Transport in Manila (taxi)	30 € x 12 persons 360 €
Transport (bus ride Manila-Tabuk)	30 € x 12 persons 360 €
(all other transport was unexpectedly provided for free by the provincial authorities)	
<b>Guides (including daily allowance of 800 Peso (=15 €) for the local caving club members*):</b>	
Team 1 (Kalinga)	20 € x 6 days 120 €
Team 2 (Kalinga)	20 € x 6 days 120 €
Team 1 (Sta. Teresita)	20 € x 7 days 140 €
Team 2 (Sta. Teresita)	20 € x 7 days 140 €
Team 3 (Sta. Teresita)	20 € x 7 days 140 €
Team 4 (Sta. Teresita)	20 € x 7 days 140 €
*These club members have done all preparations and saved significant money for the project	
<b>Accommodation:</b>	
Hotel in Manila on arrival/departure	12 persons x 5 nights x 15 €* 900 €
*an average was taken as some people stayed several nights and others just for two nights (all other accommodation was unexpectedly provided for free by the provincial authorities)	
<b>Food:</b>	
Mainly in Manila and during travel	12 persons x 8 days x 15 € 1,440 €
Purchases for Kalinga homestays	80 €
Other group related food expenses (snacks, beverages)	80 €
(all other food was unexpectedly provided for free by the provincial authorities)	
<b>Cookers:</b> We were due 300 Peso (6 €) per day for the ladies who prepared our daily food	
3 cooks (2 teams) in Kalinga	3 x 2 teams x 5 days x 6 EUR 300 €
3 cooks for whole team in Sta. Teresita	3 x 1 team x 6 days x 6 EUR 108 €
<b>Other expenses (tips etc)</b>	50 €
<b>Print/postage of maps and reports for local organizations:</b>	120 €
<b>Total expenses:</b>	<b>18,998 €</b>
<i>Estimated total expenses (according to application)</i>	<i>22,866 €</i>

**Income statement:** Beside the FSE financial and equipment sponsoring the expedition was awarded a financial grant of 1,000 USD (833 EUR) from the US National Speleological Society Expedition Fund.