

Integrity Initiative

Manila Bulletin

By: Mon Abrea

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A few weeks before the deadline of filing income tax returns, the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) released the top individual taxpayers for taxable year 2013, following the top corporate taxpayers for the same year. So, did everyone get the message of BIR?

I can't help but look at the list like a BIR examiner. How come celebrities are always ahead of most businessmen? Are they not consulting with the best tax experts in the country to be saved from taxes? Or maybe we should ask instead: where are our professionals, like Atty. Estelito Mendoza, who consistently ranked third top individual taxpayer?

Rank	Name	BIR Individual Top Taxpayers 2013	2013 Income Tax Due	BIR Individual Top Taxpayers 2012	Richest People in the Philippines 2013
1	Pacquiao, Emmanuel Dapidran	1	163,841,863.00	36	
2	Alcantara, Juanito Pornuevo	2	99,612,000.00		
3	Mendoza, Estelito P	3	73,185,375.00	3	
4	Chico, Reynaldo Jr Benoza	4	67,340,888.00		
5	Tan, Andrew Lim	5	67,184,002.00	12	4
6	Tan, Lorenzo Villanueva	6	60,894,276.00	18	
7	Alvarez, Jose Chavez	7	55,627,417.00		
8	Azcona, Vivian Que	8	51,617,174.69	1	18
9	Reyes, Oscar Sison	9	51,440,314.00		
10	Ayllon, Vicente Rafael Munoz	10	50,088,841.00	4	
11	Soliman, Ronaldo Romero	11	46,636,876.00	7	
12	Ang, Ramon See	12	46,471,324.00	160	32
13	Baja Jr., Lauro Liboon	13	45,194,110.60		
14	Pascual, Piolo Jose Nonato	14	42,533,158.00	34	
15	Cruz, John Lloyd Espidol	15	41,976,592.00	8	
16	Aquino, Kristina Bernadette Cojuangco	16	40,481,146.00	6	
17	Lopez, Federico Rufino	17	39,899,018.00	25	
18	Angeles, Victor Manguera	18	39,762,021.00	15	
19	Pangilinan, Sharon Cuneta	19	39,049,235.00	9	
20	Revillame, Wilfredo Buendia	20	38,305,824.00	2	

Source: www.bir.gov.ph



I still wonder how come some politicians are able to flaunt their luxury cars, trips abroad and mansions in exclusive subdivisions in Manila, even hosting extravagant parties in five-star hotels or exclusive islands and not be in the top taxpayer list. What is the BIR doing? All it has to do is audit their Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN) and Income Tax Return (ITR), and see if they paid their taxes correctly, including their generous contributors during elections.

What's in it anyway to be a top taxpayer in the Philippines? In the case of Manny Pacquiao, who ranked first in the list of top taxpayers, he still has a pending tax case with BIR to

settle. According to Commissioner Kim Henares, “being a top taxpayer does not mean he paid the correct taxes. They are not synonymous.”



The author, with ECCP's Nonette Climaco and AIM's Dr. Francisco Roman, pose with the participants of the Anti-Corruption Workshop organized by ECCP in Cebu.

INTEGRITY FORUM

In partnership with Integrity Initiative, CSR Philippines continues to promote tax awareness among our businessmen and professionals. This is in line with the vision of promoting integrity and honesty in doing business in our country by encouraging companies to sign the Integrity Pledge and to take the Citizen Tax Planning (CTP) Certification Program.

The Integrity Pledge is a formal and concrete expression of commitment by companies to abide by ethical business practices and to support a national campaign against corruption. The pledge should be signed only by CEOs, COOs, managing directors, country representatives, or other senior company officials to set the “Tone from the Top” and oblige all members of the organization to likewise behave with integrity and carry on their responsibilities ethically.

The CTP Certification Program functions as an ISO certification both for individuals and companies. It has seven steps to be implemented for two to three years to help taxpayers improve their tax compliance and declare true profit to pay the right taxes, without the burden of unnecessary penalties and compromises.

By promoting the CTP Certification program to individuals and companies, we can help the government collect the right taxes. The certification program aims to bridge the gap

between the country's growing businesses, both in sophistication and in numbers, and the tax administration in hitting its increasing revenue goal. It offers a palatable solution to the endless problem of corruption in the tax collection by implementing a game-changing tax strategy that will help taxpayers declare true profit and pay the right taxes. Rather than rely on the regular audit which is highly discretionary on the part of the BIR examiner, the program aims to promote honesty by encouraging individuals and businesses to increase voluntary compliance instead of paying penalties and compromises.

Just recently, I had the privilege to share the stage with Dr. Francisco Roman of the Asian Institute of Management Research and Development who facilitated the Anti-Corruption Workshop in Cebu, organized by the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP). As part of the partnership with Integrity Initiative, my role is to share our advocacy for genuine tax reform putting emphasis on the value of honesty in paying taxes.

LEADERSHIP INTEGRITY AWARD

On its second year, the Abrea Consulting Group (ACG) "Leadership Integrity Award" is given to a Bedan Accountancy student for exhibiting the highest moral integrity and finest leadership capabilities; thus, serving as an example for the young generation to perform creditably well in their academic pursuits and be a source of pride and inspiration for the accountancy students and the entire Bedan community.

The recipient of the special award is no less than the class valedictorian of Accountancy Batch 2015, Regino Jesus. E. Eslao (fondly called RJ by his classmates). RJ is an exemplary leader and an outstanding accounting student.

He epitomizes the virtue of Ora et Labora (prayer and work), and serves as a role model to his fellow accounting students in exhibiting discipline, hard work and honesty in all his academic and non-academic involvements.

Awardees are entitled to a full scholarship grant in their chosen CPA Review School and a one-year Strategic Tax Management Training in our company. This is our way of promoting integrity, honesty and excellence among the future leaders of our country.

Let us do our share in promoting a culture of honesty for our country and the next generation of Filipinos.

Mon Abrea is the founding president of the Center for Strategic Reforms of the Philippines (CSR Philippines), a non-profit organization that champions and consolidates initiatives to empower MSMEs. He is also the Chief Strategy Officer of the country's first social consulting enterprise, the Abrea Consulting Group (ACG), which offers strategic finance and tax advisory services to businesses, professionals and individuals. Feedback is welcome at consult@acg.ph.

ONLINE LINK:

<http://www.mb.com.ph/integrity-initiative-2/#h60d3QUppApAztXj.99>