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**Headline: Gotianun heiress sets course for inclusive, digitally deft future**

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Finance and business run deep in the veins of Isabelle Gotianun Yap, a rising executive at EastWest Bank, the banking arm of family-led Filinvest Development Corp.

The 34-year-old Isabelle, recently named among 100 new Young Global Leaders (YGL) of the Switzerland-based World Economic Forum (WEF), is on a mission to make a big impact within the group and potentially beyond.

Mentored by her grandmother, Mercedes Gotianun, the county's first female universal bank president, and her mother, Filinvest Group president Lourdes Josephine Gotianun Yap, Isabelle was never short on role models.

"I was exposed early on to management by my grandmother and mother in our family business," the EastWest executive director and vice president tells Inquirer in an email.

"By having these great role models growing up, I always knew I wanted to be in our family business, to solve big problems and create impact in the world," she adds.

She earned her bachelor's degree in business management, with a double major in finance and marketing from Singapore Management University. She also holds a master of business administration degree from Harvard Business School.

Isabelle is a former consultant at McKinsey, where she honed her critical thinking and problem-solving skills while handling a diverse set of clients across the country.

She was also part of the management associate program of industry giant Singapore Telecommunications, where she gained valuable experience in digital marketing, product development and project management. "While providing impact to other companies globally

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brought me fulfillment, I wanted to bring the impact closer to home. Hence, I went back to the family business,” Isabelle says.

“At EastWest, my work is really focused on building and launching these strategic and transformational initiatives to the organization. I hope to provide lasting impact here, similar to how the strong female role models I have grown up with have achieved in their own times,” she adds.

Part of the family’s next generation, Isabelle brings a fresh and more digital-oriented perspective to the Filinvest Group, which was founded 68 years ago by her grandparents, the late taipan Andrew Gotianun Sr. and wife Mercedes. The \$1-billion group’s portfolio spans real estate, banking, sugar production, energy and infrastructure.

Venture builder

Within the parent firm Filinvest Development, Isabelle is the chair of digital venture builder and transformation arm F(Dev), which she helped establish.

“Our mandate is two-fold: firstly, to serve and empower underserved communities and transform industries through technology-based business models; and secondly, to empower the Filinvest family to be ready for a digitally enabled future,” she says.

Some of the group’s projects might be familiar to businesses today.

Among these is Investree Philippines, the very first registered crowdfunding platform in the Philippines. A venture with Investree Indonesia, the crowdfunding firm aims to fill the fundraising gap to serve the vast number of small to medium-sized businesses.

Isabelle says F(Dev) is also spearheading digital business transformation within the conglomerate.

At EastWest, she is credited for her leading role in the development of Komo, one of the first fully-digital banking services in the country that was launched in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic in August 2020.

“Komo was created to give Filipinos more control and flexibility when it comes to managing their money. Komo stands for kontrol mo (your control). We wanted to simplify the lives of our customers by providing convenient, secure and reliable services,” Isabell says.

Being one of the earliest fully digital services in the market, she says the plan is “really to continue to be at the forefront in creating and upgrading our products and services, along with our processes, for our customers.”

Komo is also successful because of the team of dedicated professionals that helped bring the project to life, Isabelle says.

“The Komo team today comes from broad backgrounds – fintech, banking, telco to name a few but all have a digital background and an attitude to push the boundaries,” she says.

“This diversity in experiences allows us to consistently challenge the status quo for a better product for our customers, the Komcommunity,” she adds.

YGL Class of 2023

Isabelle is one of the two Filipinas to make it to YGL Class of 2023. The other is Natashya Gutierrez, who is based in Australia and is editor-in-chief for Asia Pacific at Vice News.

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The WEF describes Natashya as an “experienced multimedia journalist with a demonstrated history of working in the online media industry.” She is skilled in digital reporting, editing, management, investigative journalism and content strategy, and had previously worked at online news platform Rappler.

She is “particularly knowledgeable on Southeast Asia, covering women’s rights, politics, corruption and breaking news,” the WEF says.

The Forum of YGLs intends to accelerate the impact of a diverse community of responsible leaders across borders and sectors to shape a more inclusive and sustainable future.

Only six new YGLs are based in Southeast Asia, including Isabelle.

“From courageous journalists uncovering the most critical political and human rights issues of our time to savvy entrepreneurs transforming the way we work with technology, this year’s class is packed with brilliant minds and passionate leaders from business, civil society, academia and government,” says the WEF. INQ