- Upcycling / Fashion shows

Quezon City takes fabric scraps and uses them for clothing — again

QC follows up sustainable fashion show with kiddy sequel

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LAST YEAR Quezon City's (QC) Earth Month offering, Retashow: QC's Walk to Sustainability, was successful in promoting one of the city's sustainability initiatives, the Kilo/s Kyusi Store within the city hall complex. There, secondhand clothes are sold by the kilogram, inspired by a business model seen in Paris thrift stores. Since last year, the initiative has earned P2 million. The proceeds are going on to fund the city's Learning Recovery program, which pays for tutors for public school students underperforming in reading and math.



This was according to Quezon City mayor Josefina "Joy" Belmonte, who opened this year's Retashow: Kidswear Edition, held at Gateway Mall 2 at the Araneta City in Cubao. She added that the initiative diverted four tons of textile waste from landfills, while 700 kilograms worth of textiles have been upcycled by community artisans.

Some of these community artisans were at the show on April 23. Last year, they chose one winner and two runners-up; this year, they awarded six winners with P50,000 each: included in the criteria were design, originality, wearability and feasibility, as well as the condition that the clothes must be made with at least 70% recycled textiles.

The six winners were Nard Patrick Redoble, Nichole Samson, Katherine Añonuevo, Ma. Joy Pauline Castillano, Hazel Roldan, and Neil Bryan Capistrano.

Mr. Redoble showed off an outfit with neon shades that reminded us of watermelons and other fruits; while Ms. Samson's child model took off his patchwork hat and unfolded it into a bag. Ms. Añonuevo's creation used indigenous fabric, whose design and color were inspired by a bottle of Mountain Dew soda (according to a voiceover).

Ms. Castillano's creation involved one of our favorite things from this competition, a vest made from discarded neckties, while Ms. Roldan used flour sacks for a preppy outfit worn by the child model on the runway. Finally, Mr. Capistrano made a chic jacket out of woven denim strips.

On a personal note, in her speech, Ms. Belmonte spoke about her own experiences with sustainability before it even became a buzzword. She would receive handme-downs from all

three of her brothers (who include BusinessWorld Chief Executive Officer Miguel Belmonte). "Kaya po medyo tomboyish ako noong lumalaki ako (That's why I was a bit of a tomboy growing up)," she said. "But that is an example of reuse, and sustainable action."

The mayor still retains a bit of the girl who wore her brothers' old clothes: during her speech, she showed pictures of herself wearing the same outfit on different occasions. "I am a very proud outfit repeater. By choice, by practice. Wearing the same clothes to different events isn't an accident. It is a statement that practicality is powerful. Repeating outfits is smart, sustainable, and should be normalized."

The mayor, who was named 2023 Champion of the Earth by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), went on to say that "Walang masama sa kagustuhang maging presentable o fashionable. Pero may mga tanong tayong kailangang itanong: saan galing ang damit na ito? Sino ang gumawa? Ano ang epekto nito sa kalikasan (There is nothing wrong with wanting to be presentable or fashionable. But there are questions we need to ask: where are these clothes from? Who made them? What is their effect on the environment)?

"Behind every shirt, every pair of jeans, is a story. Not just of creativity or commerce, but of labor, waste, and environmental cost." —