The government created Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care as mandated by the Republic Act 8423 “to improve the quality and delivery of health care services to the Filipino people through the development of traditional and alternative health care and its integration into the national health care delivery system”. Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care, or PITAHC, is working under the Department of Health towards this mandated goal. PITAHC envisions itself to lead research, development, promotion and development of standards on traditional and complementary medicines to ensure its accessibility, availability, sustainability and integration into the national health care system.

The project members have interviewed Ms. Ma. Teresa M. Torres, a Science Research Specialist II for PITAHC. According to her, the greatest hindrance towards their goal is the lack of awareness and knowledge regarding traditional and complementary medicine. It is also difficult for PITAHC to advocate use of medicinal plants because some Filipinos can’t recognize them. During the interview, Ms. Torres has explained various physical characteristics of the plants that the general public more often misidentify or how some of these beneficial plants are treated like weeds despite its medicinal benefits. In addition, PITAHC has performed numerous studies proving their effectivity and safety but this information hasn’t reached the general public.

PITAHC also performs regular surveying in various locations at the Philippines to manually keep track of traditional and complementary medicinal plant abundance. They perform this by sending representatives to these areas who manually search and survey the land.

These problems cripple the operation of PITAHC. The team addresses these problems in support of PITAHC towards their mandated function through Lyf.