

DRY MONTHS OF 2010

the

# Bendum News

Apu Palamguwan Cultural Education Center,  
Sitio Bendum, Barangay Busdi, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon



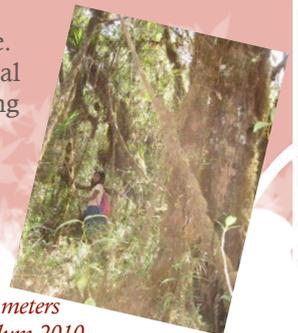
## Graduation: hope springs

Classes started early in January and ran until late March, we had only a few dropouts out of over 100 students as there were no major armed movements in the area and the children were comfortable. This year fifteen children graduated from grade school, it is a wonderful occasion when parents came from villages around to enjoy the occasion that had its tears and much celebration, dance and drama. Dante Sinayhan our previous facilitator and cultural documenter gave the main address. Of the twenty children we support in high school, five children graduated this year; we hope that some of them will teach for a year in the grade school before going to further studies.

## Still without rain!

It has been dry since January. Much forest has been burning in recent weeks all around Bukidnon, but not in our area. The rains have just come and broken the hold of a dry El Niño. Our water in the Ki-asu never failed us though the dam at Maramag further down the Pulangi River has been low and the cities have suffered brownouts due to lack of hydro power. Our own micro hydro is behind schedule but we do hope to have power by June and this will save us using the kerosene in medicine bottles with a strand of a mop head for a wick that we have used for the last 20 years as the means of night study.

Forest cover is still being lost with these fires in the very dry times and in cases burns the mossy forest at the mountain ridges that has little chance of ever returning, usually a bracken or grass takes over and these otherwise very slow growing ecosystems that are our water towers are lost for ever. Ironically government persists with figures of 30 percent increased forest cover, but this only because it now counts trees of ten meters or more and densities of 10 percent, which negates the meaning of tropical forest as a natural ecosystem of greatest sustainability of biodiversity and water, with a microclimate critical in resisting climate change. This is all part of a global trend to say we are doing something for our forests, a disappointing response to climate change.



*Forest of moss 1,400 meters  
Kumagingking Bendum 2010.*

*Grass and forest fires Kulaman Upper Pulangi, El Nino March 2010.*



## New beginnings

Now Easter is over and the teachers have had a short break we are back to work and a series of workshops for the teachers to improve the curriculum. We have assistance from some of the Jesuit grade and high school faculty from the cities so this will be a real time of learning for all.

We have had much assistance in the last year, many of our past teachers and friends locally support us and we have had major support from particularly a few personal sponsors who have come to visit us. We are also learning to tap corporate support in specific areas that is much valued: Philippine Airlines continues at no cost to take cargo of critical materials from Manila to CDO for us and Abbot Laboratories gives us a major supply of milk that we could not otherwise afford. The outgoing Mayor of Malaybalay gave us support for teachers.

In this way we become a support for others and many come to learn and understand what can be done in basic education for all that retains the cultural integrity of a people. Much of the struggle is in developing livelihood and this year we had a group of students and young professionals from Australia Magis program stay with upland and coastal framers in Bohol to understand the challenges of such a life on the economic edge.

We already have a kinder year before the six grades but as much as to help the mothers free up their mornings as get the children use to new surroundings and school relations of learning we are starting a further kinder year. The

## Moving on

This month Mercy Almahan moves on the Manila with her husband. Mercy was one of the first children who hung around the house and started class in 1993, continuing on to high school and then midwifery and attending many other training programs. Mercy has taught the kinder and first grade for several years and now her kind and engaging ways will be deeply missed. We wish her well and welcome her return visit at any time.



*Magis group Bohol January 2010.*

neighbouring sitio across the river that is very closely related to Bendum by marriage and practice, Nabawang continues to ask for assistance and as we receive many children from this village.

Most noticeable this school year has been the sustained peace, nobody has been killed in the last year and we seek to do all we can to maintain this situation. Your hope and prayers needed.



*Filipino and Chinese scholastics with Fernando Azpiroz and Julie Edwards and APC staff discussing social apostolate in the Region.*

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