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Bendum News

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



Ten graduates of the APC, school year 2010-2011. With great confidence and pride of identity, together, they looked forward to high school life.

“Aldaw hu Kalampusan”

Graduation Day, Congratulations!

When we started in Bendum, about 7% of the community had finished grade school. In a recent review we found that 70% in the community have finished grade school. This is a great achievement, with 30 students in high school and a number of the youths in college. As we have said through the years, this is an education that is for the community and not simply individual excellence. The community, in a variety of ways is highly involved in the education program not only from the cultural concepts and natural resource use, but also in terms of strengthening community and adapting to the challenges that faced us. On another level, it is an education that allows us to engage with a greater degree of equity in the society and the understanding of market forces.

The students today not only deal with the learning competencies of the DepEd education program, but also the knowledge of landuse change in Mindanao, assisted natural regeneration (ANR) and agro-forestry as well as the need for ecological services payments (PES) and the new Mindanao 2030 development plan. We need to engage as citizens with local and national governments.

Visiting Coastal Dapitan

For youth living in the uplands far from city centers, going on a "field trip" is a rare opportunity. The cross visit 14 Upper Pulangi youth to Dapitan City in Zamboanga del Norte, 200 kilometers away was a rare learning experience that deepened their understanding of Philippine history and science lessons and allowed them engage with local Subanen indigenous youth.



George Asinero of Dapitan explains to the high school scholars the work of Dr. Jose Rizal in the town plaza where he constructed a topographically accurate 3-dimensional map of Mindanao. The group then went on to visit many other works of our national hero.

On the first week of April 2011, 21 young Pulangiye of various elementary and high school levels went on a *Bentela daw Sayuda*¹ in Dapitan City, which Rizal considered his home during 4 years of exile.

In Dapitan, the youth looked into Rizal's ways of working with people. He was kind and welcoming, which showed his greatness in terms of care for people's needs. They saw a Rizal who used his knowledge, skills and contacts for the benefit of local community, that is an inspiration to a whole nation. He was more than just a writer; he was a doctor to all, a teacher, engineer and most importantly, a civil worker. Pulangiye students understood how they must work to maintain the systems they have in Upper Pulangi and their responsibility for relationships of service.

Their engagement with the local youth, both the Subanen and the young political leaders of Dapitan became a rich source of learning as well. An appreciation of difference in orientation and in some circumstances in life was most evident, coupled with the realization of the importance respect and openness to new people and new friendships. No matter where they were, all the youth groups (Pulangiye, Subanen and Dapitan City youth) carry the same challenge of helping build a better society and sustainable environment.

Related articles to the visit:

Upland IP visit coastal Dapitan, <http://www.esscnews.org.ph/2011/05/24/upland-ip-youth-visit-coastal-dapitan/>.

Dapitan, most beautiful, <http://www.esscnews.org.ph/2011/05/10/dapitan-most-beautiful/>.

¹*Bentela daw Sayuda: A Pulangiye mechanism of visiting (bentel) and sharing (sayud).*

Knowledge Beyond the Classroom

Last May 28th, the third Hulas (training) batch had their graduation in Bendum. An excerpt of Pedro's talk to the graduates follows. The youth are encouraged to bring forth their knowledge and learnings into their own personal vision and mission in life thus, having the confidence and skills that would help sustain their own families as well as to the broader community in Upper Pulangi.

Over the last year, I have worked with you on the concepts of *gaup* (ancestral domain), *kalandang* (peace), *kagena* (culture), and *pulang* (process of resolution through dialogue). These and many others are concepts of deep value and experience in our way of life in the Upper Pulangi.

Today, we are celebrating your graduation on the level of skills – skills that we need to sustain our activities, to help others and also to remain flexible so that our learning is not simply academic. We hope in having these experiences, it will also strengthen your high school engagement.

On this basis, as you start your new term in high school, we need to give thanks for having this opportunity. First, we give thanks to *Magbabaya*, our creator who has given us life and resources to live by. Second, we ask that



A young Hulas participant is learning sewing his own shorts with Nay Nene assisting.

we have the strength to engage in the studies and other work that we need to undertake as students. And third, we must go out from these experiences and share with others our resources and our talents. On a further level, we also thank our parents, who are with us today, for their support to this effort; for our forests and environment that has provided all the resources needed; and for the peace that has been sustain over the summer – peace that had allowed you to continue your studies without disruption.

You have produced many products, including metal cooking stands, shorts, mats and even *pulala* (bamboo flute). We have also noticed in your singing a much greater coordination. We trust that this gives you a greater preparation for the future and most of all a greater basis to your hopes and visions of where we are going.

Related article about the youth training is shared through:

<http://www.esscnews.org.ph/2011/05/03/a-practical-skills-approach-to-engaging-with-upland-indigenous-youth/>.



Without exception, women are also learning plaster work for construction.

Learning Partnership with Ateneo de Davao University (AdDU)

Ateneo de Davao University (AdDU) furthers its partnership with APC this summer by holding an exploratory visit with 17 of its faculty and staff in Bendum. The visit had a multifaceted objective, looking at various areas of collaborative engagement in areas of culture-based education, renewable energy, hydrological instrumentation for watershed modeling, geomatics applications and migration. Some of these convergence areas are under the Belgian CUD-funded EPaM (Establishing Strategic Partnerships In Research To Strengthen Local Governance In Land And Water Management Towards Greater Human Security In Mindanao) project of which AdDU is an active local partner university.

The opportunity to visit Bendum allowed the AdDU community to explore other areas of work where there can be meaningful collaboration such as culture-based education and school management through the establishment of a distance-learning program for BS Education for teachers in APC. The engineering contingent of the group expressed interest in the newly established renewable energy system in Bendum, focusing on sustainability measures, which is a great need for many community-scale hydroelectric installations in Mindanao. ESSC will be installing a network of telemetric weather and stream gauging stations in the Upper Pulangi Watershed and it is getting from the AdDU College of Engineering the need instrumentation, which has a working prototype installed in the Davao River Basin.

Finally, the AdDU Migration Center also sent its own participants who were able to identify further areas of research, looking at monitoring the whereabouts of children who had graduated from the APC since its early beginnings, as well as tracing movements of upland indigenous family groups in the Pantaron Range from where the Pulangi begins. There are also other emerging engagements with current Belgian partners in the field of migration where the Center can be engaged.



Over 50 landslides of this nature occurred just south of Bendum causing a lost of 20% or more in the production and blockage along the roads. This form of slumpage is widespread in upland Mindanao where the forests have been cut for maize production. Bendum, though suffering similar rainfall events does not show such scars on the landscape. This in part is a justification in its right to receive ecological service payments for good environmental management. These relational dynamics are part of the discussion with our partners from AdDU.