

Pandawat, Dalupaan ha Gaup

By: Pedro Walpole

Pedro Walpole at the start of the new year of study welcomed the new school manager to Apu Palamguwan Cultural Education Center along with the Tribal Council. It was an occasion of much anticipation and hope for the coming years .

A *pandawat* is when we welcome a stranger as a friend; it is when we share food, life experiences and our hopes. So great is our hope and aspiration we ask our loved ones, ancestors, all life on the land (*tanghaga*) and *Migtanghaga* (Creator) to join us in this celebration of and gratitude for life.

At the same time as we welcome Ruben from Sultan Kudarat, our new manager and remember his family; we share our experiences of over twenty years of organized education in Bendum and the long process of developing the *gaup* or ancestral domain. After twenty more years of learning in community, of basic education and cultural knowledge, we are now sharing that knowledge formally in our integrated program of grade seven. This bridging of our bimonthly youth program (*hulas*) and the new level in our integrated cultural education is a further beginning. We are proud of our four young foresters already assisting in natural regeneration, our carpenters and masons.



Pedro reviewing the work of the youth in forest activities that can be made into management plan.

We are also proud of our many students, twenty or so, who have come back to teach in communities around so they become community of practice in responding to the local challenges. Natural Resource Management is at the core of our education as the *gaup* is focus of our communities and the core of our life here in Pulangi. It now becomes a recognized course in basic education and we hope our graduates become of much service in the years to come.

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Jason and Israel, two of the young foresters in Bendum, doing resource mapping.

It's Summer Workshop Once More

By: Maura Lipanda

This summer's workshop is different from the ones I had before because we are now a bigger APC family. We welcomed the teachers from other APC extension schools – Nabawang, Nabago and even Kalasungay. We were really glad that the teachers from Kalasungay, the village that requires more than a day of travel on foot, made it. It was sad that the teachers from Sitio Mindagulus was not able to join us because they were still having classes.

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It incorporates the work of many of our partners over the years of the Asia Forest Network and Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations.

We not only learn of the policies and institutions affecting our social and cultural inclusion in society like the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, but we struggle to learn how to negotiate a pathway in the larger world between exploitation of forest, land, water and wildlife and that of conservation to the exclusion of people, to a new and hopeful reality of culturally sustainable resource management.



Youth doing gardening as part of the Agroforestry program.

The reality that we work for is that of peace and sustainability. We may contribute no wood as in logs, but carbon as in living forests, water and air as in ecological services to the extending communities beyond in Mindanao. We seek to do this while producing the food and having the economic inclusion through a local agriculture that sustains the relations of the land. We feel fortunate that the waves of intensive agriculture, with the high chemical input on the plateau outside, have not yet affected our land and water and the health of our community. We seek to find ways that our children will have a good life contributing to society and benefiting from greater national sustainable development.

We now clearly contribute to the ideal of the United Nations Education for Sustainability in a very real way and on the other hand test the Sustainable Development Goals of the next fifteen years for their integrity and inclusion.

Another part of that reality is that the life of the forest has shared its diversity with us. While we have nurtured over 2,000 seedlings in critical areas we have cut trees from our farms to build many homes and a sturdy and safe learning *dalupaan* (longhouse). This *dalupaan* is another dimension to our learning. We can eat and rest here daily and in the evenings relate to one another, forming relations that sustain a lifelong learning and community.

We are grateful to the Tribal Council and the community in all the problems faced for not selling out the resources for much needed money. We recognize the short term gain would only leave us with less in the long run. We struggle to find adaptive options that sustain the opportunity for future generations that they can find a sense of belonging and future home here in Bendum. We are reminded by the Gospel parable of the weekend where the Kingdom of God "is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land and would sleep and rise night and day and through it all the seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how..." Or it is like a mustard seed... (Mark 4: 26-34).



The *dalupaan* in Bendum where students from far villages stay.

Higher Education in the Uplands

By: Cherrydyn Miguel

In collaboration with Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins (JC:HEM), we concluded a 3-month Online English course participated by different indigenous youth from various villages in Upper Pulangi.

Last April, 15 youth finished the English as Foreign Language (EFL) course with Pre-Intermediate level. This course was designed in response to the need expressed by the youth to further develop their English skills. English is the most widely spoken language globally. The indigenous youth recognizes the importance of English skills in widening their engagement in greater society and involvement in global development efforts.



The youth during their computer class.

This was intentionally an online course but due to the challenges encountered in having internet connection, it was not made possible at the moment. However, this did not stop the initiative from moving forward. Contents were downloaded from the city and brought to Bendum.



The youth learning about Bendum *gaup*.

Preparations in Bendum were also made in relation to the course. The new computer building and chairs were built by the youth. There is also a micro-hydro generator that provides the needed electricity.

With this new initiative, we hope to open other possibilities and opportunities where the youth can further develop their capacities, acquire new skills, share their knowledge and skills, and continue strengthening their cultural identity in the face of external values, education, consumerism and urban attractions.



The participants with Datu Nestor and their facilitators.