



Bendum News

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Bendum News is a quarterly newsletter of the Apu Palamguwan Cultural Education Center (APC).

For more information, or to request for printed copies of this newsletter, please email: admin@apc.essc.org.ph



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During the academic year 2021–22, K-12 culture-based education continued through modular approaches, and teachers tasked to deploy a new mode of learning adapted quickly. The Dalēpaan continued for the youth who wanted to stay in Bendum and study for grades 10 to 12. The Forest, Farm, and Leadership in the Margins (FFLM) unit continued to work with interested and willing local youth while ensuring all the safety and health precautions.

Life in the community was moving slowly as the year began, and the rains of the early months continued during the summer, first preventing an easy drying of corn and rice during the minor harvest of April-May and then allowing only a poor preparation of the land for the second crop. Given many of the farmers in the surrounding area are tied with the tabon “all is covered” lending system of the traders for animal feed, the farmers would now have to absorb the losses. Along with the impacts of COVID-19 in terms of restricted mobility and multiple uncertainties, these combined events have heightened people’s exposure to shortages of different kinds and, ultimately, fewer meals in a day.

The school year ended during the last days of March without a graduation event, but our six graduates certainly deserved a celebration. The graduates who stayed in the Dalēpaan for months studying their modules anticipated a great sense of change in their lives. And also in the lives of the communities around them due to a drop in the severity of COVID-19 cases.

Jovielyn shared as she left grade 12, "I hope that peace and that people will unite, especially in taking care of water, land resources, and the environment as a whole. Even if the school year is about to end, I will continue caring for the environment."



A night of song and music with *chicharron* and chili vinegar during the Youth Camp

Ate Lalang, one of the teachers, also shared her hopes: "My hope as the 2022 school year ends is for peace and unity to continue in Bendum. I fervently hope that all students and youth will continue their studies despite the many trials in their lives. I hope that that joy and hope will always be in their minds. Let's unite and work together for continuity of life and service in Apu Palamguwan Cultural Education Center (APC)."

As with self-entertainment and group cooking, you have to do a lot for yourself if anything is going to happen; the opportunity has to be seen in the void, and suddenly the darkness breaks open. Similarly, with peace, we have to take the uncertainties of barrio life and find inner joy, and this is what "the poor" and the humble teach us all. The world does not give us that joy, that peace, but simply accepting the reality yet finding an occasion to be joyful brings a deeper meaning and acceptance of the challenges, moving along where we can tomorrow. The importance of being able to do this as some form of community, for however long, is to change the world from below. And this perhaps has been the simple path through COVID-19.

The road grading by the Malaybalay City government is always deeply appreciated. However, the road could not withstand the rains and the corn trucks traversing it after two months. Our own APC vehicle was rendered useless for deliveries. During this time, APC's continued presence and operations strengthened the Pulangiyan community in Bendum during the pandemic as its services continued.

What this crisis affirmed is that there is great value in sustaining APC with a renewed cultural and scientific vision and commitment. To move forward, the current process of overseeing and managing the various activities and relations with the community, local government, regional government agencies, the military, and the Jesuit Bukidnon Mission District needs to grow. The cultural and social complications, the shifting context of Bendum (landscape and people), and therefore, its social analysis and administration of its operations have broadened over the years and need to change.

The year is rolling on. There are new initiatives at every corner. We are already starting face-to-face classes in Bendum for our academic new year as we must keep time with the seasons, planting, and harvest where the youth are still involved. We are not shifting to the schedule of public schools.



Daily activities and programs around food production

Creative paths toward Laudato Si' Goals

Pedro Walpole SJ

When the encyclical letter Laudato Si' came out, the youth leaders of Balay Laudato Si' (BLS) were surprised to find themselves able to identify deeply with the message of Pope Francis. Recognizing the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in making a difference in the world is a great consolation and affirmation, especially for the indigenous youth who are not always heard.

For the BLS youth, part of the synodal experience in 2022 is the opportunity to express their concerns, fears, and dreams creatively. These artistic reflections of the Laudato Si' goals convey their sense of relationships with others, the *gaup*, and their culture. These also reflect their dreams and journeys to engage and take action in greater solidarity with other youth and indigenous communities. Gino has been planting trees; and enjoying the arts in the Dalēpaan for the last decade and has accompanied many youth here.

Gino identified with the Cry of the Earth and expounded his drawing as managing the

conflicts and finding a way of life to get things in balance. People prepare the land in traditional ways, but they are surrounded by others using chemicals and polluting the waters, shooting the wildlife, cutting the trees, and using bulldozers for the roads. Yet, in the painting of the bright valley ahead, there is still the community of forest vegetation, freshwater, and wildlife to be cared for.

Cry of the Earth, 2022
Artist: Gino



Gino, a Balay Laudato Si' youth, expresses the anguish of his land and people through art. An art activity was held as part of the youth synodal experience in Bendum.



In early May, ten representatives of Malaybalay's Public Employment Service Office (PESO) came to Bendum for the Department of Labor and Employment's (DOLE) TUPAD or Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers program implementation. TUPAD is a community-based assistance package that provides emergency employment for displaced workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The 30 beneficiaries from the community were the out-of-school youth and the currently unemployed, who are 17 years old and above.



Ate Maura of APC welcomes the PESO-TUPAD team to Bendum

Working with the support of local government

Liza San Mateo

The program, conducted underneath the junior high school building, ended around noon. A cultural exchange followed with the PESO staff sharing the clothes and school supplies they brought with them. In return, the community gave local crops and handicrafts. The food for the program - pre-packed snacks and lunches - was provided by PESO. All the used food packaging was then brought out by the guests when they departed.

The 30 beneficiaries also joined the APC-FFLM teams (forest and farm). Each beneficiary met the 40-hour work requirement where FFLM staff explained the DTR (daily time record).

The community beneficiaries and guests from DOLE also learned first-hand what APC-FFLM is doing for forest and water management and appreciated their efforts to sustain the broader community.

The APC was happy to host the guests in Balay Laudato Si' overnight as they enjoyed the sense of culture and landscape the next day for their planning and assessment session.



Women participants of the PESO-TUPAD program of the Department of Labor and Employment



The program required the beneficiaries to work for ten days (4-hour work days to a total of 40 hours). The beneficiaries joined the APC-FFLM team's work in the forest and farms.





Liza San Mateo

Denise Celdran, an expert in alternative and complementary healing arts and science, led a series of workshops in Bendum on soap-making, balm-making, and homeopathy from May 19-21, 2022.

Twenty-three Bendum community members (22 women and one man) had the opportunity to learn to make organic soaps and balms using all-natural ingredients during the first two days. At the end of each workshop session, participants proudly took home the soaps and balms they made.

On the third and final day, a basic homeopathy class was held with 27 community members (22 women and five men). The class was also attended by three community healthcare providers.

Participants in the class learned about homeopathy and homeopathic remedies. Following this introduction, Denise held a one-on-one consultation with each participant, during which they described their ailments and what they would like medicine prescribed for. Their issues ranged from hearing loss to diabetes, urinary tract infections, arthritis, gastritis, and even dull hair. Homeopathic medicines for the participants were then prepared with the help of healthcare providers.

For the workshops, Denise brought 250 undiluted doses of animal, plant, mineral, and synthetic substances to make homeopathic remedies for a variety of ailments. These substances, with a master list of which



ailments they treat, were given to the Bendum community.

It was a huge success, with participants showing a lot of enthusiasm for another round of trainings in soap-making, balm-making, and homeopathy. Denise happily obliged, sharing that she would like to return in August for more advanced training workshops.



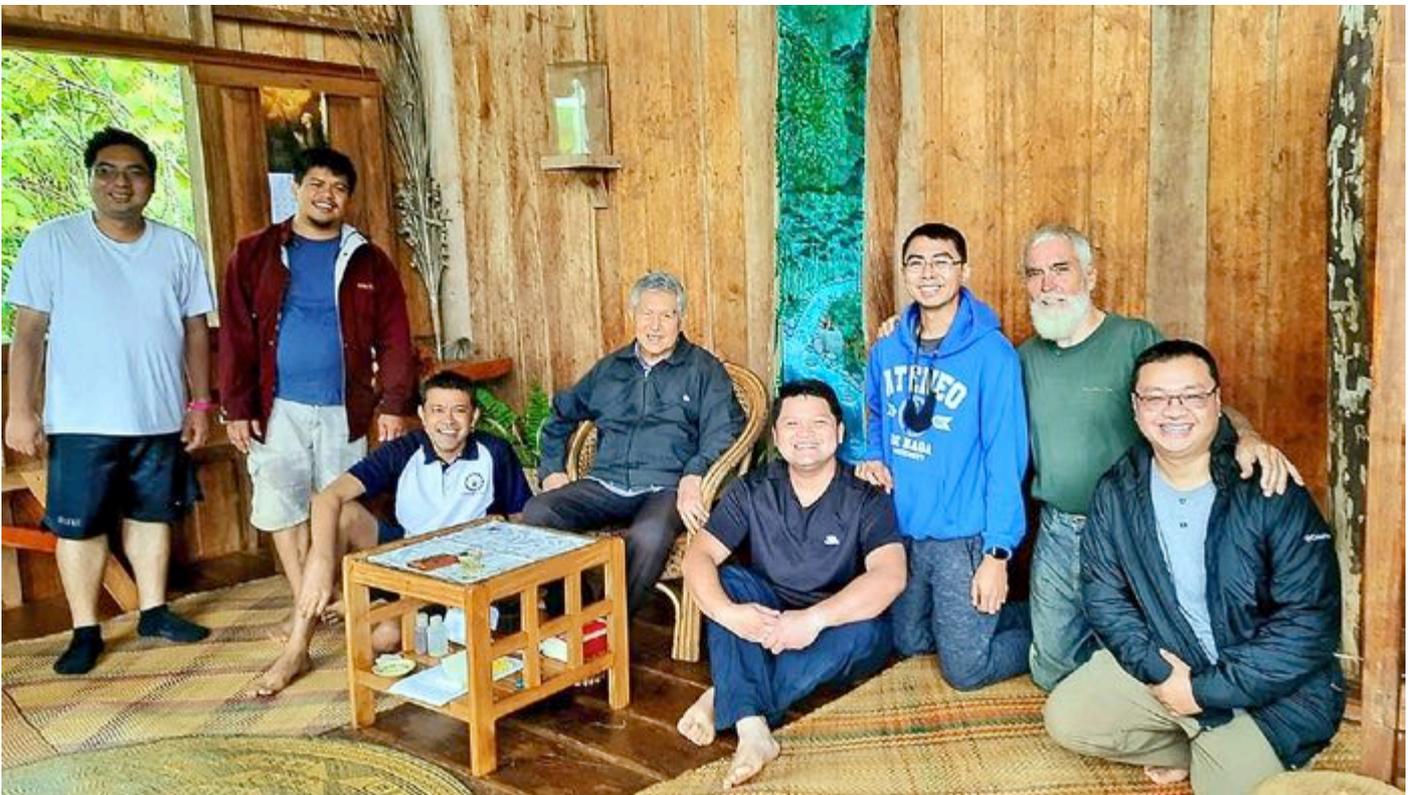
Visitors from neighboring activities, past involvement, and with adventurous interests always bring a good attitude, new ideas, and a renewed joy in life. We have had many visitors, people who accompany us in their prayers, thoughts, and actions over the years and continue to contribute insights as to how we might work better with what we have and how to engage others with hope.



Fr. Madz Tumbal calls the Jesuit Community to gather for lunch. The visit was an occasion for my community in Malaybalay Retreat House to enjoy a few days in Balay Laudato Si' also known as the "Jesuit Residence".

Visitors sharing activities

Pedro Walpole SJ



Fr. Matt Sanchez accompanied Pedro for 40 years being his novice master in 1981 in Novaliches and it was deeply rewarding to welcome him and reflect on the years past from Campo Uno Farm where he practiced his agriculture to the challenges faced by the youth of tomorrow.



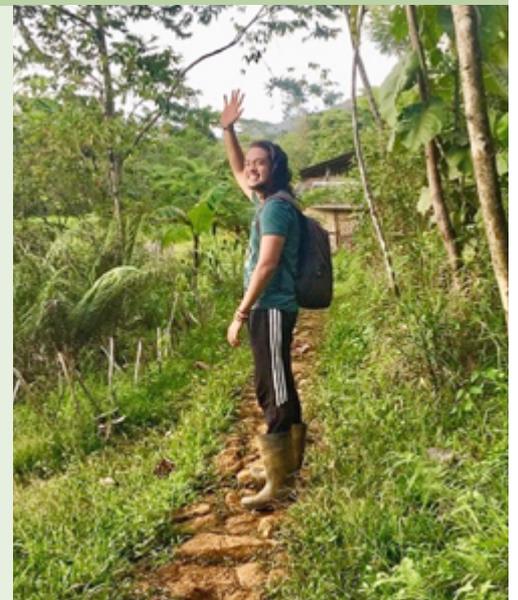
JRS Asia Pacific visits the Upper Pulangi forest

Louie Bacomo, Regional Director at Jesuit Refugee Services, who served in Bendum in the early 2000s at the log deck of Campus 1, came with his team. They reviewed the forest regeneration work of the last year and want to see how further training with others might be possible.



Department of Education Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service visits the APC Bamboo Processing and Fabrication Center *Roni Co, Director of the Department of Education (DepEd) Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service, also a previous staff of ESSC and wife of Louie Bacomo came on a separate visit to review the bamboo center for treatment storage, processing and fabrication of the bamboo frames. The team got some time to enjoy the fresh air and play music in the loft.*

We have also had several departures, people who have given themselves in the best way they can and created occasions for partnership in learning and life. Miguel Ignacio spent a year working with the Global English Language program of Jesuit Worldwide Learning, enabling the teachers and students to improve their use of the language; and to research more widely while also finishing some professional courses. His work continues as with Hexam Bactong, Albert Cudal, and Gel Malibunas, who sought to open up the communications activities, the networking and synodality reflections, and the accompaniment of 90 youth who seek to finish their grade 6 or grade 10 under the Alternative Learning System of DepEd. We are grateful for the seeds you all have sown.





The garden continues to be productive with the different training sessions for the youth that run for eight weeks. Sometimes, there is five-day support from local government programs for which we are grateful.



Samy has a good tuber harvest from the gabi.



Seeds donated by Arnel, our agricultural specialist of "old" and also from the Archdiocese of Manila's Ministry of Ecology

Cooking, of course, is always an opportunity to experiment and play so Grace and the team made puto in the barrel oven for a youth reflection day, where we also had some games.





Taliwada hu Kasamukan

In the Midst of Troubles

Many years ago, a former APC teacher, James Cardie Timbangan, composed a song called, Taliwada hu Kasamukan, meaning 'in the midst of troubles. This song seeks to encourage children and youth to hold on to the value of education amid the uncertainties of their lives and to continue to learn no matter what troubles come their way.

(Pinulangiyan)

Malipayun ha mga bata
Yanda panganduy sa pagtungha
Makasulat daw makabasa
Hu migdakel ha mga litra

Din ta malandang ha banuwa
Nakatuen sidan pagkwinta
Maugahud ha mga bata
Ta panganduy su inaha

Chorus:

Taliwada hu kasamukan
Padayun sa pagkinanau
Madakel man sa kasamukan
Manigudu magkinanau
Umuma man sa kahaldekanan
Iling hu linug daw bagyu
Taliwada hu kasamukan
Manigudu magkinanau

'Di en ngaay sagulangen
Hu bisan inu ha bulunganen
Ta ima day asem
Ha sabel sidan makatuen

Ta malugay asem
Ayuwa en malegen
Sin-u ay man sa peghangadun
Ku hadi sidan makatuen

The song has long been a favorite of APC students and now rings with greater truth and relevance as we come to the end of two years of instability in the Philippine education system. *Taliwada hu Kasamukan* reminds us to keep our eyes on the goal and never allow troubles to make us stray from our path. It buoys us even now as we share with you our hopes as the school year closes:

(English)

Happy children
Whose dream is to go to school
To be able to read and write
A multitude of letters

In this peaceful place
They learn how to compute
Hardworking children
Keeping their dreams in sight

Chorus:

In the midst of troubles
Continue to study
Even when there are many difficulties
Still, strive to study
Even if what you fear comes about
Such as a quake or a storm
In the midst of troubles
Still, strive to study

We hope there will be no more disruption
Or any kind of tribulation
For our dream is that some day
All children can attain an education

Because in the coming days
More hardships will come
Who else can they depend on
If they are not able to attain an education?



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