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Xavier University
ATENEO DE CAGAYAN



BACKGROUND OF VEST

In December 2011, Typhoon Sendong (Washi) ravaged Cagayan de Oro City. The wrath of Sendong was a painful eye-opener implanted in the memory of the city but an eye-opener is an empty lesson when we do nothing to prevent it from happening again.

Environmental degradation being a major factor in disasters propelled us to develop sustainable and long-term solutions, which include forest management and a behavioral shift to the "new normal."

The simple truth is what happens at the top trickles down to the lowlands. However, protecting the watershed needs the cooperation of the upland communities and of the low-lying urban city. With this idea in mind, the Payment for Ecological Services (PES) program was born together with Valuing Ecosystem Services Together (VEST), an offshoot campaign aimed at engaging different sectors in the region to take part in this venture.

PES is a multi-sectoral strategy designed to protect our forest in the highlands of Mindanao so that when it rains, the water will not be devastating by the time it reaches the low-lying, urbanized areas. Various institutions in CDO will reward the indigenous people as forest managers to ensure that watersheds along the region develop high water infiltration capacity, continuous supply of potable water, cleaner air and reduce disaster risk in the region.

In Northern Mindanao, it has been piloted within the ancestral domain of the Miarayon-Lapok-Lirongan-Tinaytayan Tribal Association (MILALITTRA), one of the lumad communities in the protected area of Talakag, Bukidnon.

Mainstreaming this project, VEST is an environmental movement filled with a slew of activities and awareness-raising interventions to encourage the communities in showing their support and stewardship for Mother Earth.



Roel R Ravanera
Executive Director, Xavier Science Foundation

"This is really a community engagement with our brothers and sisters in the indigenous people community in Mt Kalatungan. We will not allow another Typhoon Sendong to happen in Cagayan de Oro City and we will contribute in our own ways to make that a reality."



Lordlie Enjambre
Development Management Officer
Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) Region X

"PES is a strategy designed to protect our forests in the highlands of Mindanao so that when it rains, the water will not be devastating by the time it reaches urbanized areas like Cagayan de Oro."



Datu Dungkoan "Rio" Besto
MILALITTRA Chairman

"We live here. Our ancestors lived here. All our actions will affect the future generations. That is why we need to take care of our forest. This is our culture. What is there to life when the forests will be taken away from us."



Dr. Hilly Ann Roa-Quiaoit
Vice President for Research and Social Outreach, Xavier University

"This rehabilitation will provide the ecological service of preventing further flooding in the city that is why it is important that we bring in the communities from the downstream and upland to this landscape restoration."



Anne B Mejares
PES Technical Officer

"We can balance economic growth and environmental protection by operationalizing sustainability in any development. The principles of sustainable development can guide us in achieving this balance."



Evans Yonson
VEST Project Supervisor

"Our main objective is to reach everyone in Cagayan de Oro City that they become our partners. We want a paradigm shift to a responsible and environment-conscious citizenry."



Marlon Dejadina
NMIF-Shell Petroleum Corporation Project Manager

"As we grow as a company, we also take with us the development of our neighbors and the community around us."



Atty. Rene K. Burdeos, CESO III
DILG Regional Director

"Providers for ecological services are vital in the survival and the economic development of communities downstream."



#inVESTinNATURE

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Affiliations: _____

Amount: _____

Signature: _____

