

Epilogue: Lantapan, circa 2010

Is Lantapan treading the path to sustainability? A glimpse at the 2010 data showed that economic growth is still triggered by agriculture, such as expanded yellow corn and vegetable lands. Farmer cooperatives now produce high valued vegetables which they themselves market to institutional buyers. As members of the Landcare group, these farmers use land-conserving technologies. While it is observed that water pollution may not have subsided, this could be due to factors other than the total suspended solids that the project had documented earlier. The planting of trees along the river banks as initiated by the local government, the agroforestry farms, and the adoption of the natural vegetative strips have certainly reduced soil erosion and sedimentation from agriculture. Most of the water pollution was perceived to be due to population increase and agro-industries.

What has the local government done to balance the tension between economic growth and environmental integrity? For one, some current high-level municipal government officials were previously trained in policy analysis and are aware of the goals of SANREM CRSP SEA. It is because of this awareness, that they have been particularly receptive of current research undertakings by the other outfits, such as Trees in Multi use Landscape in Southeast Asia (TULSEA). Lantapan was the pilot area of the research where five tools were tested: Participatory Landscape Approach

(PLA), Rapid Tenure Appraisal (RTA), Rapid Market Appraisal (RMA), Rapid Carbon Stock Appraisal (RACSA), Rapid Biodiversity Appraisal (RABA), and Rapid Hydrological Appraisal (RHA). The abundance of data from these research projects and the political will of the officials currently in power can surely place Lantapan in its sustainable development pathway.

Beyond Lantapan municipality, it was also observed that the PAMB, together with the Council of Elders of the IPs, is still very much active in policing the resource use in the buffer zones around Mt. Kitanglad. Many programs are being pursued so that the forest will not be encroached upon.

Indeed, sustainable communities will need to grow, not just in the economic and environmental sense but especially in the political and cultural sense. Lantapan is still in the process of growing up—an upland community in transition.