

LAHUTAY

A Path to Sustainability



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*In honor of **Dionel Campos, Bello Sinzo and Emerito Samarca; Darwin Tejero, Randell Gallego and Emel Tejero; Willy Rodriguez, Lenie Rivas, and Angel Rivas; Jessie Bacasmas and Henry Alameda** who as community folk, leaders and teachers, contributed significantly to the formation and evolution of ALCADEV into the cradle of knowledge, environmental sustainable development that the school is today.*



INTRODUCTION

What is education? Education is a socializing institution where we learn to be socially responsible, to contribute for the good of society. It helps mold our social awareness and poses the particular challenge to work for the good of everyone.

But before all of these, education is all about learning. Through education we are able to cultivate our capacities to learn by using our senses — listening, observing, watching — developing our ability to understand intuitively and developing skills.

For the Lumad, education means ensuring the collective knowledge of the tribe is passed on to the next generation — be it in the homes, on the fields — on a daily basis, living their roles in the community as stewards and developers.

Making arrowheads — ensuring its length, sharp point and curves for the *pangayam* (hunting) is a response to the need for food, and with the added intent of teaching the younger ones the patterns and methods of its creation for them to learn.

For the longest time, in the passing of the centuries, there has been no written record for this vast compendium of collective knowledge. More often, the next generation learns this passed-on knowledge as they

live each day in the community. Learnings are assimilated naturally as the older and younger generations interact: farming work in the fields, tool creation at home from materials gathered in the forest, making *banig* (sleeping mats), cooking meals using bamboo, treatment of ailments using indigenous medicinal plants, and many more.

This means that even before the establishment of Lumad community schools, an innate system of learning has already been established in the Lumad community.

As time progressed, the Lumad themselves decided to raise the bar and adapt another system of learning. Lumad community schools today are concrete realizations of this.

Due to the call of the times, and with the development of society, a system of education is slowly emerging that mirrors the welfare of the Lumad, supported by centuries of knowledge, while also being further enriched as it responds to the needs of the Lumad today and in the future.

The ALCADEV (Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development, Inc.) Lumad School, as a learning institution, is intuitively aware of this. Its curriculum

gives primary importance to asserting the Lumad right to self-determination, and learning processes take into account their cultural identity, recognizing that the Lumad have their own particular rhythm and beat that mirrors their hopes and dreams, their struggles and challenges.

For those who have a particular rhythm of life, one that follows the seasons, close to the song of the earth, and breathes in the breath of the trees — learning is interspersed in the fiber of life.

People whose lives evolved in the cities are quite far-removed from the rhythm of the earth. But for the Lumad of Mindanao, education — or more appropriately, learning — is integrated with living. The mundane, ordinary, day-to-day life of students and teachers of ALCADDEV — their simple life stories and their experience of applying a sustainable consumption and production-consistent curriculum — enable us to visualize the sustainable living that can be achieved.

AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL

The United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) points out that States bear the obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill the right to education. States are to “avoid measures that hinder or prevent the enjoyment of the right to education, take measures that prevent third parties from interfering with the enjoyment of the right to education, and

endeavor to enable and assist individuals and communities to enjoy the right to education.”

But primary and secondary education schools are nowhere to be found in the hinterlands or, the nearest ones will require hours of walking on treacherous, steep or slippery mountain roads. The existing Department of Education (DepEd) schools in the area can be found in the lowlands and have few teachers and fewer facilities. Lumad students that are able to weather the challenge of distance have the added social burden of discrimination for being a Lumad, who are often treated as second-class citizens by the lowlanders.

This problem of lack of schools for the Lumad community in Caraga was decisively met and worked out through the establishment of community schools by the Lumad themselves, together with kindhearted individuals, non-government organizations, and church people. ALCADDEV is one of the schools that was realized after so many years. And just like other similar secondary education indigenous schools in the Mindanao region, ALCADDEV responds to the particularity of the Lumad with its focus as an agricultural school.

Lumad communities rely on agriculture to provide for their needs. This agricultural way-of-life is supported by ALCADDEV, whose curriculum centers on agriculture, equipping students with methods and skills in farming that they are able to bring home and apply in their communities.

ALCADEV

ALCADEV started its operations in 2004. From the start of its foundation, its purpose is to be an alternative learning system designed to provide secondary education to indigent indigenous youth from the Manobo, Higaonon, Banwaon, Talandig, and Mamanwa in the Caraga Region. Central to its learning system was its focus on agriculture, and helping develop a scientific and sustainable approach towards it. Through this, the school encouraged the Lumad to contribute to their communities by settling down and focusing on agriculture (instead of living a nomadic life and depending on hunting or gathering abaca to sell in the lowlands).

As an indigenous people's school that was created and built by the Lumad community, ALCADDEV's primary goal is to empower and equip students to be self-sufficient and self-reliant. This is important in molding the next generation of community leaders.

ALCADEV has always worked to maintain its efforts towards sustainability. Its two farms, the community and school demo farm, that are being maintained by the students as well as the Lumad communities nearby, mirror this goal. Self-sufficiency in terms of food production is achieved, learning modules and practical applications are also gleaned from the concrete agricultural experiences. Crops are harvested for the consumption of the students, teachers and staff, and also for the indigenous communities in the area

surrounding the school. The rest are sold and the income used to support the other needs of the school.

Even as ALCADDEV had agricultural ties, creating a dynamic, strong and yet practical curriculum was still a challenge. ALCADDEV's partnership with several academics, transformative education and sustainable consumption and production advocates, schools and universities contributed in developing its existing curriculum and in augmenting school reference materials. Collaborative environments were set-up in developing an improved curriculum with a central core — agriculture — from which all other learnings revolved.

16 YEARS OF SERVICE

2020 is ALCADDEV's 16th year of service to the Lumad community. It has had its share of pain, betrayal, and violence, having suffered attacks at the hands of paramilitary forces, under the machinations of greedy transnational mining companies and supported by their military cohorts.

These ancestral lands have long been under the Lumad community's protection. Their love for the land which provides for and gives them so much is a relationship that they honor with their lives. Together with ALCADDEV and other indigenous community schools, serving the Lumad community has entailed more than providing lessons and sharing knowledge and skills. For some,

it has meant sacrificing their lives. For the teachers and staff of ALCADDEV, holding up high the shield of ALCADDEV is recognizing the power of education in the continuous struggle for their land and rights. Through all these hardships, throughout its 16 years of existence, the school has remained steadfast in its commitment to provide

relevant skills and knowledge to its students, continually assisting them and committed to the promise - until they fulfill their responsibility of protecting their land, realize their dream of helping uplift the lives of their families, and their community, and eventually, the country.



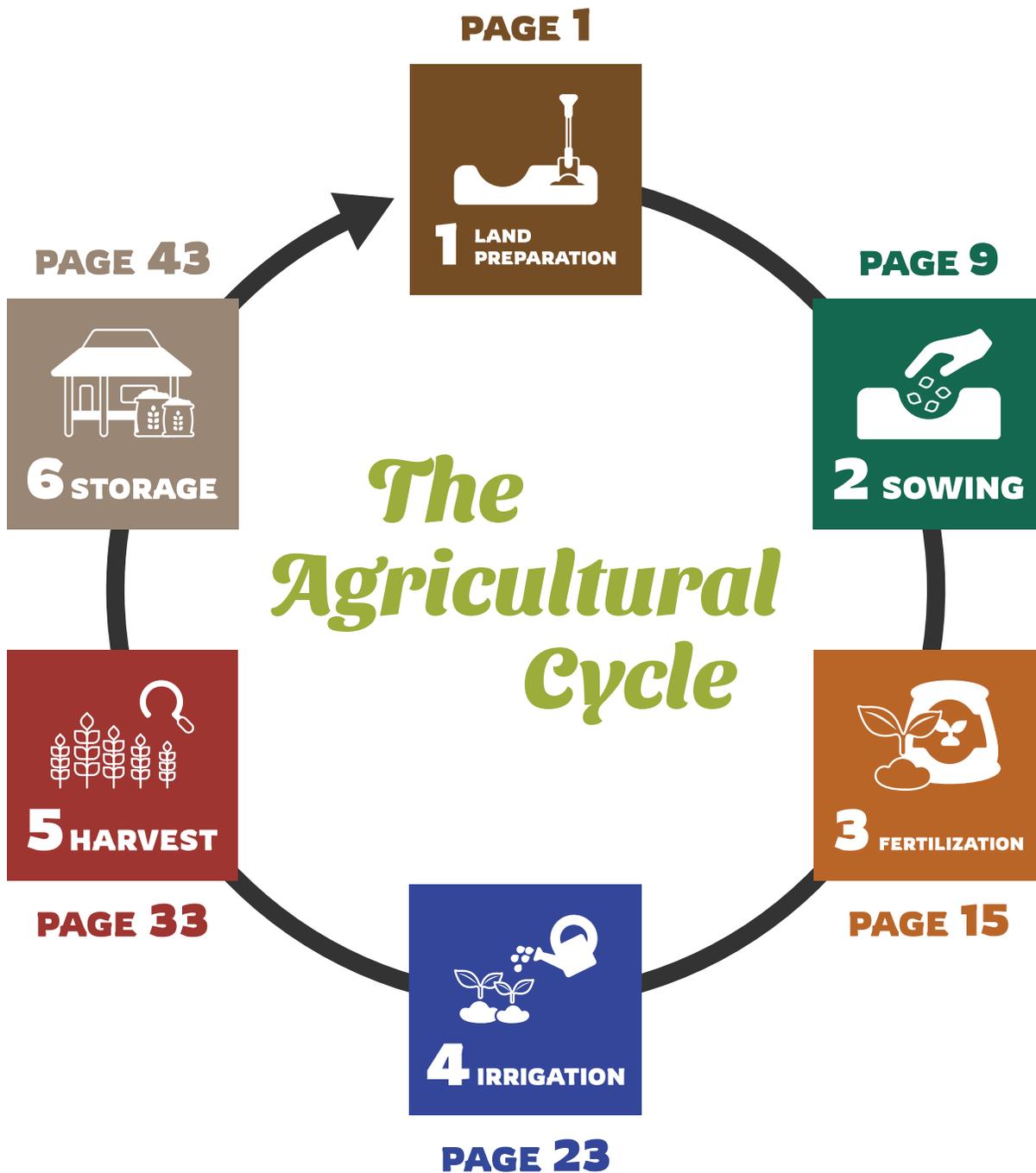
***When you use resources
without considering
the capacity of future
generations to meet their
needs, this is unsustainable.***

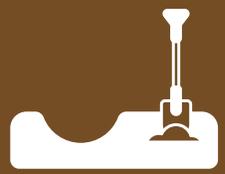
- Dr. Jean Lindo

Environmentalist, Gabriela Southern Mindanao Chairperson

“Kumusta Ka Tano?” Webinar - Peasants’ Health Programme

organized by the Philippine Medical Students Association, 31 October 2020





1 LAND PREPARATION



Ding...
Ding...
Ding...

Crisp and sharp, the clanging sound of wood hitting the old LPG tank utilized as the school bell breaks through the early morning stillness. Soon, faint rustling sounds of blankets being folded and beddings stowed can be heard in all the five dormitory houses of ALCADDEV.

Every day, at 4:45 in the morning, Marilyn, a 4th year student, along with other students, teachers and staff rise to start their day. Those scheduled to go to the collective farm area gather their agricultural equipment. Marilyn and her group mates are off to the kitchen, to prepare the morning meal, their assigned task for the day. Another team sets off to sweep the school grounds of dried leaves and branches that have fallen during the night, clean the classrooms and get these ready for the day's lessons.

For the next two hours, everyone accomplishes the tasks and duties that have already been defined and outlined in the daily and weekly planning and assessment meetings in ALCADDEV. This is their way of life – disciplined and defined, yet adaptable to change if needed and criticism should there be any. Meetings for planning and assessment of daily tasks are held regularly as part of the learning process, a practice that may sound tedious but one which the students and teachers take to heart



because of its positive effect individually and to the whole ALCADDEV organization.

Marilyn goes off to the vegetable garden with a few of her group mates to harvest the eggplants they planted four months ago. After picking the eggplants, they first ensure their harvest is weighed, noting the volume to be computed later and included in the communal farm yield production data. They hurry back to the kitchen and start slicing eggplants, tomatoes, onions, and garlic, while the others cook rice. After an hour, the food is cooked and ready - just as all the teams have finished their morning tasks and start coming in for breakfast.

Marilyn, just like her group mates, is a Lumad-Manobo. She is proud of her heritage - where she comes from, their cultural practices and way-of-life — and she is aware that this is part and parcel of her identity. Lumad ancestral lands are considered as their ancestor's living legacy. And ingrained in their consciousness is a sense of stewardship of their land, that these lands are theirs, the whole community's. One of the best images of this consciousness is their practice of sharing farm products. Each harvest time, it is common to see families sharing their produce of corn and local vegetables with each other. What is for one is for all.

One of the stories often shared by visiting teachers hailing from city schools who volunteer at ALCADDEV and other Lumad schools is the Lumad culture of oneness. A culture that celebrates being one with nature



#TatakALCADEV

As a student of ALCADDEV and TRIFPSS, I learned about choosing to do what is right.

I'm proud of our beloved school because that's where I learned how to build good character.

That's why the Lumad are striving to protect these schools, that are precious to the Lumad, from closing down.

I realized that the youth really have a huge role because military oppression against the Lumad continue. So we will continue to stand and struggle.

Cherrymae Tejero

and with each other. The concept of ‘mine alone’ is foreign, even to the children. Visiting teachers who often hold various activities or challenges in their class are amazed when they unexpectedly witness this aspect of the Lumad culture. At the end of a challenge or game, a teacher who is unaware of this culture will usually declare a winner at the end of the game or challenge, and give the winner a prize. Imagine a teacher’s chagrin when the ‘winner’ runs off and shares his bag of candies (or whatever prize the teacher gave) with all her competitors! Such a sight is extraordinary for those who are unfamiliar with the Lumad way of life.

Teacher: *Here’s your prize! (handing a bag of candies to the winner of the game)*

Child: *Thank you very much, teacher! (smiles, then walks off towards her classmates)*

Teacher: *(worried that the child will show her prize off to her classmates who lost the game) Wait... where are you bringing that?*

Child: *I am going to my friends to divide what you gave me, teacher!*

Teacher: *But those candies are for you, because you won our game.*

Child: *Yes teacher, I know you gave this to me and I will now give my friends’ share. How can I be happy if I will be the only one eating the candies?*

#TatakALCADEV

It was in ALCADDEV that we became conscious of, and felt that we the youth play an important role in society. It was in TRIFPSS and ALCADDEV where we learned how to write, calculate, and read and many more things.

It was because of this school that discrimination against the Lumad has stopped or has been reduced.

Leen Palisan Clark



Even in their music and dance, the culture of oneness can be felt and heard. Music and dance are reflective of the life and practices of the Lumad, the beats mirroring nature's innate rhythm, and with lyrics that change over time as experiences and challenges change, too. Today, most of the beats and lyrics of their songs reflect the challenges posed by the encroachment on their ancestral lands by big foreign mining companies bringing along their gigantic trucks and equipment. This is reinforced by the constant sweeping of armed paramilitary forces and army battalions into homes and fields to kill those deemed as enemies and kick out the Lumad from their ancestral lands. Although still lyrical and melodious, the words now reflect the Lumad community's anger, fear, worry, as well as determination to protect the precious resources that their fathers and mothers have entrusted to their care.

Before the establishment of ALCADDEV, there was TRIFPSS (Tribal Filipino Program of Surigao del Sur), a school built upon the initiative of the Lumad who wanted their children to have the ability to read, write and count. However, it only offered schooling until the primary level. Those who wished to have access to secondary education could only do so by sending off their children to walk around 20 kilometers, crossing steep mountain paths and rivers, just to reach the secondary school located in the town center. Naturally, there would be days when the children would be too tired to go to school. And then there were, of course, others who refused to go to school



altogether, saying that they can better help the family and community by staying home and finishing whatever tasks were needed nearby. But more often, it is the prohibitive cost of transportation and food, as well as the cost of living in the town center, that stops parents from sending their children to school. And with the added social burden of discrimination from the lowlanders, the children prefer to stay home rather than attend school and face derogatory remarks.

This situation encouraged parents of children who finished their primary education levels in TRIFPSS to dream and work once more for a school that will allow the Lumad to have more learnings. This time, efforts were exerted for the Lumad to have access to secondary education. ALCADDEV is one of the schools that was borne from these efforts.

Situated in the hinterlands of Caraga, Mindanao, ALCADDEV responds to the need for a secondary school for the indigenous community in the area. Central to ALCADDEV is its mission to provide a system of relevant knowledge, skills and values to develop the indigenous youth to be self-reliant, analytical and creative in seeking ways to improve the quality of life of their families, indigenous communities, and the country. Education in ALCADDEV aims to develop community builders equipped and able to bring the Lumad community -to grow and face the challenges of a changing world while still maintaining its unique cultural identity, and to fight for and protect their ancestral lands.



A regular school day in ALCADDEV starts as the day breaks, students, teachers and staff rising along with the sun. Tilling the soil, harvesting produce, clearing weeds - work on the demo farm early in the morning is an homage and commitment to their ancestral lands.

“We cherish the time and effort that we are able to invest in the community farm. We learn more as we practice what we are taught. We honor the role our ancestral lands have in our community as we take care of, cultivate, and harvest crops, and see with our own eyes how precious and rich this land is.”



As the night sky gives way to the sun's rays, a cool morning mist hovers over various Lumad households scattered within the Andap Valley Complex. Nature pauses just before shooing away the night, and signaling the start of a new day filled with challenges, goals and plans. It is the perfect moment for taking stock of and preparing all that needs to be done.







2 SOWING



ALCADEV's curriculum design uses an interdisciplinary approach with agriculture at its central core. From this anchor, other disciplines such as science, math, values formation and languages, are taught. All throughout the curriculum design, the focus is clear - to raise the economy of the Lumad through retracing and reviving diminishing traditions, equipping them to adapt and face the challenges of an ever-changing world, and as such, be better able to defend and protect their ancestral lands.

Focusing on agriculture ensures that the education received in ALCADEV is grounded in the cultural identity of the Lumad, one deeply rooted and connected to their ancestral lands. Their relationship with their surrounding forests and rivers, hills and mountains, the gratitude and care that the Lumad have for these, to which they owe their life and survival — this is the backdrop of ALCADEV.

It is from here that the dynamics of its curriculum revolve while augmenting the potentials, skills and intellectual capacities of the students, parents and indigenous folk as caretakers and community builders amid the changing times.

Whether it be science, history or Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE), lessons are relevant to the particular character, identity, and needs of the indigenous communities. Lessons on the major subjects are integrated into the daily tasks in the community and school demo farms.

#TatakALCADEV

I learned a lot from ALCADEV. It helped shape me especially in embracing nationalist teachings. I experienced liberating education, the negatives were turned into positives. And of course, **I learned how we shape a new society where we have the right to self determination particularly in developing our economy, politics, culture, and especially in ending discrimination.**

I feel down whenever I look back on my memories in ALCADEV. Even though I was a bit of a troublemaker, it's okay because at least I was open to change. That's the important principle that we have to strengthen.

DM Dumanglay



It is not an easy task for the teachers, but seeing how the students are able to assimilate lessons better using this method is a good incentive.



“While we are checking our monggo plants, the teacher discusses the Nitrogen-fixing cycle in the soil and why planting monggo is important for the soil’s recovery. Our lessons become very real in front of our eyes.”



Protecting their ancestral lands has always been at the forefront of consciousness of the indigenous people, especially the Lumad in Caraga, an area that is perennially under the covetous eye of large scale transnational mining companies. When lessons in history are being given, far from being bored and indifferent, ALCADDEV students perk up and join the discussion when indigenous people’s rights and history are discussed. Discovering that theirs is a shared experience with other indigenous peoples, not only in the Philippines, but also in Asia, enforces the pride and respect they have for their own cultural identity.



Before School Year 2018, ALCADEV's curriculum and method of teaching was similar to that of other DepEd and Agriculture schools. Agriculture was taught separately and major subjects like science and math were taught solely in a classroom, and were independent of the student's farming activities in ALCADEV. With the shift to a more integrated and interdisciplinary curriculum in 2018, students expressed their satisfaction and excitement during the regular assessment and weekly evaluation meetings. Feedback was positive: lessons were easier to understand.

ALCADEV is an agricultural community school under the Alternative Learning System (ALS) of the Department of Education. Learnings come from both inside the classroom and in the two farms where they are involved in the process of agricultural production. Of course, because academic competency is measured under the ALS as the basis for pursuing higher levels of education, students are assessed using accreditation and equivalency exams/tests.



RM is now in his third year in ALCADEV. He entered the school in the first year of the new curriculum.

He says, *"I remember the older students sharing with us in my first year in ALCADEV that the lessons now are much easier to understand and remember. We still have lectures during the morning classes, but we also have lessons while we are at the field. We actually learn more when we are at the farm because, aside from the lessons on agriculture, the teachers are giving us lessons on the other major subjects. Like, while we are checking our monggo plants, the teacher discusses the Nitrogen-fixing cycle in the soil and why planting monggo is important for the soil's recovery. Our lessons become very real in front of our eyes."*



When the sun's heat starts wiping away the remnants of last night's cool air, the view of the land — trees, mountains, rivers — becomes clearer. As the heat of the morning sun slowly digs into the earth, it helps the soil breathe, making it easier to sow and plant new seeds. This beautiful mid-morning view sows hope, allowing dreamers to dream of a better tomorrow.







3 FERTILIZATION



Rich in natural resources, the Lumad consider their ancestral lands as their ancestors' living legacy – having been handed down to them by the fathers and mothers before them. Ingrained in the culture of the Lumad is their sense of responsibility as caretakers of these lands and that these lands are the whole community's. Each harvest time, it is common to see families sharing their produce of corn and local vegetables with each other.



Since the Lumad economy is primarily agriculture-based, in order to support the continued development of the Lumad community, ALCADDEV's focus or center of curriculum is on sustainable agriculture. All major subjects are taught with agriculture as its anchor. This serves two functions. One is, of course the prioritization of agriculture as a bow to the way-of-life of the Lumad. Two, because agriculture permeates each aspect of their lives, the Lumad students are better able to understand abstract concepts in math, science, language and other major subjects as these are taught and used in concrete conditions.



One of the lessons under Scientific Sustainable Agriculture Technology (SSAT) is the formulation and manufacture of organic fertilizers and pesticides. Traditionally, the Lumad grew vegetable crops that thrived on freshly broken ground, relying on the latent mineral richness of the soil to feed its growth needs. In the past, subsistence farming was sufficient to support the needs of their



small community. At ALCADDEV, students are taught to go beyond this tradition as the use of fertilizers to further production is included in their learning experiences. As the lessons unfold, lessons on minerals, chemical formulations, and calculations for computing the quantity and ratio of ingredients are taught while doing actual work at the community farm.

Soil composition and the chemical interaction between the plants and soil, as well as the nutrient profiles for each plant which are essential for ensuring growth, are also learned at the same time. Students bring to their homes and communities this mix of old knowledge (agricultural practices passed on from generation to generation), plus the knowledge learned in ALCADDEV.

Agricultural production improves, all while preserving their traditions, as well as their natural habitat.

ALCADDEV houses many students, teachers and staff. Managing the food needs of the ALCADDEV community means particular focus is given to higher production yields. Subsistence farming, the agricultural model of the elders, now becomes insufficient to supply the needs of this growing community.

Student: *Teacher Lito, my father dislikes this way of planting that you are teaching us. He says it is ominous.*

Teacher Lito: *Which part of “this way of planting” are you talking about?*



Student: *It's the way we arrange the soil into a raised hedge. My father says it looks like a burial plot. He says his ancestors didn't use to plant this way and we've been able to plant and harvest and everything was sufficient for our needs back then. So why do we need to follow this new method now.*

Teacher Lito: *Oh, I get it. Well, if we just look at the hedgerows, it does look like we buried a body. Do you know why we plant it this way, on raised beds?*

Student: *Why do we do this, teacher?*

Teacher Lito: *In the past, the Lumad communities were smaller, and so didn't need to produce as much. This is what is called subsistence farming - producing just enough for the needs of the family. Today, however, our community has grown. There are more mouths to feed, and because of the economic system where we need to buy and pay for many of what we use daily, we need to have more produce. Planting on raised beds is a method of growing more of a specific crop and protecting it, ensuring that the seeds do not run off should the rains suddenly come. It also allows us to ensure that the crops we planted benefit from the compost fertilizer we added.*



Basket composting is one of the simple methods taught to the students through hands-on practice at the community farm. Along with teaching the method of planting using rows and hedges, using compost as fertilizer enables ALCADDEV to ensure better production and

higher yields. Initially, the elders were reluctant to accept these new farming methods. Over time, and as the results of these new farming methods proved to be successful, these gained acceptance with the Lumad community.

Student: *Teacher Lito, why do we have to gather the leaves from the monggo harvest, and mix these with the vegetable peels from the kitchen?*

Teacher Lito: *We are making compost for fertilizer. We need this so that the soil where we planted the pechay and the upo will have enough nutrition, and our vegetables will grow nicely.*

Student: *But why do we need to do this? Those vegetables will still grow even if we don't make and add the compost fertilizer.*

Teacher Lito: *Yes, it will grow. But look at our farm. How many pechay and upo seedlings do we have? It is so much more than what the elders used to plant. So, because we care for our land, we need to ensure that we also "feed" the soil. Then, it will give us back the care we give it, by giving us healthy, nutritious vegetables!*

Growing vegetables and root crops in the community farm supports, not just the needs of the ALCADEV community, it is also a partnership with the Lumad community in the surrounding area. Although the students are among the primary caretakers of the farm, they are also helped along by their parents, uncles



#TatakALCADEV

This is where I learned to read, write, and do math. Learned how to develop our economy, politics, and culture, and policies that will benefit us. Learned from a nationalist, mass-oriented, scientific school that isn't colonial and commercialized.

Above all, I will never forget to continue the struggle to defend ancestral lands and to raise consciousness about the true state of our nation.

Anezza de Castro

and aunts who live nearby. In this way, the Lumad are included in this learning process, acquiring new knowledge. It is a beautiful partnership as an exchange of knowledge often happens, with ALCADDEV teachers learning the established practices of the elders while they teach the improved agricultural methods, and the students imbibing all these. It is a remarkable learning synergy where every stakeholder goes home with benefits.

Taking part in the farm activities was something new for Teacher Maica. A fresh college graduate, she had decided to devote a few months to ALCADDEV and be a volunteer teacher. During one of those mornings that she stayed at ALCADDEV and decided to join the farming team – it was the day for harvesting squash.

Teacher Maica: *Is it still far?* (while trying to catch her breath)

Children: *It's just over there, teacher.* (pointing a bit upwards)

Teacher Maica: *Oh, is the collective farm somewhere up the mountain?*

Children: (answering with a smile) *Just a little bit upwards. We won't reach the top.*

After some time, (and numerous stops because of Teacher Maica's snapped slipper thongs that needed to be repeatedly repaired along the way), the farming team reached the site. Slightly below the peak of the mountain, the

cool breeze and the sight of all the squash vegetables ready and waiting to be harvested quickly wiped away Teacher Maica's tiredness.

Teacher Lori: *There's a baby squash over here. You can take it home with you to Manila, Teacher Maica. Keep it and bring it home so that you will remember this experience.*

Teacher Maica: *Oh, it's so cute! Thank you, Ma'am Lori!*



*I volunteered to be a teacher at ALCADDEV because I dreamt of teaching children. But when I got there, it was I who actually learned far more from the children than what I shared with them! **I learned how to plant vegetables, to harvest, to separate seeds from the chaff, to wash my clothes in the river, and the importance of heartfelt criticism in making us better people. I learned new languages, to share, live collectively, be part of the whole community, and so many more!***

- Teacher Maica



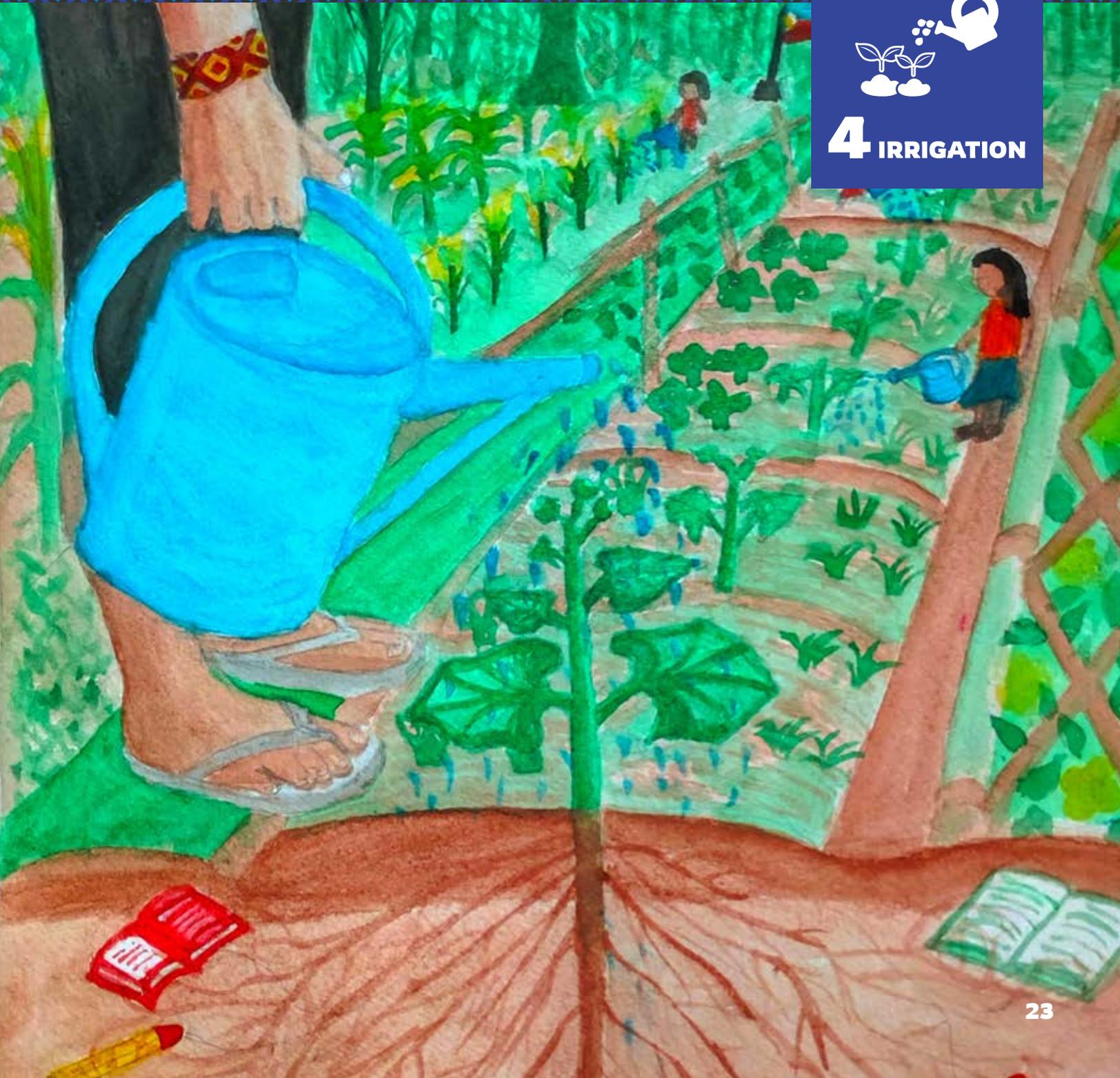
Work in the fields comes to a stop as the sun crawls toward the zenith, the noonday sun laying shadow carpets of anything standing beneath its unrelenting heat. Like fertilizer that replenishes and nurtures the soil, noon break allows energy expended to be restored with a meal. Under this bright midday sun, everything appears clearer — aspirations, goals, purpose.







4 IRRIGATION



As the afternoon winds dispel the heat, teachers and students slowly walk back to ALCADDEV after spending the day at the community farm. In between sporadic laughs is a seemingly unending chatter as they swap stories and brag about each other's experiences.

One of the first activities teachers and students embark on at the start of a school year is to 'open' the community farm. To 'open' meaning, to prepare the area for the crops they will be planting in the farm. Everyone who is available is going to be there because the community farm is central for the school and nearby Lumad community's food supply. Akin to an irrigation system that ensures necessary elements (for example, moisture and soil nutrients) needed for survival and growth are provided, ALCADDEV's community farm ensures the school's daily food needs.

ALCADDEV students and teachers are not the only ones working on the farm. Lumad communities nearby also pitch in to help out. Students, teachers, as well as some *Ambâ* (grandfathers), *Indâ* (grandmothers), *Amoy* (fathers) and *Inoy* (mothers), if they are free to join, work together on the farm from morning until afternoon. Everyone, especially the students, are aware of the importance of the community farm to attain a level of increasing self-reliance and sustainable livelihood in their daily lives. A good planting and harvest season will mean there is sufficient food for the students, for the teachers and staff of ALCADDEV, and for the Lumad community.



Over the centuries, the farming knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples have provided both ecological and cultural service in the areas they have lived in and protected. Largely unacknowledged, this preservation of traditional forms, practices and knowledge have helped maintain biodiversity and enhance food security, while also protecting natural resources. Deeply ingrained in the Lumad culture is the respect for nature - partaking only of what is needed, leaving untouched the rest so that nature continues to flourish unimpeded. This attitude and outlook is naturally passed on to the next generation as a way of life.

TREASURING TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

For generations, the Lumad living in the highlands of Mindanao have depended on a vast compendium of ethnomedicinal plants available in their forests and mountains to treat a wide range of ailments. Passed on from generation to generation, they have been using these medicinal plants to treat various illnesses. Fever, diarrhea, cough and skin diseases, among others, are dealt with by plants found in the wild – on the forest floor, along the rocky paths or roads, or just outside their *payâg* (a makeshift, temporary dwelling place).

Ordinary ailments are treated using these medicinal plants, either boiling a handful of leaves or bark and drinking the brew, or applying a poultice on the affected part. These traditional



#TatakALCADEV

Learning to stand on my own without depending on others. Learning how to analyze the causes of problems that come our way. Learning how to criticize oneself and others. Learning to accept criticism. I learned a lot.

It was in ALCADDEV where we felt and saw our role in our society. It was in ALCADDEV where we learned how to write, read, and do math. Because of this school, there was less discrimination against us Lumad.

Tipyung Solre

medicines are part of the Lumad culture and way of life. One way you can see this is how they immediately know where you can get a specific medicinal plant in the wild when someone is sick. At ALCADEV, volunteer teachers encounter this when they suffer simple ailments like headaches, or coughs and colds. They are pleasantly surprised when students recommend specific plants for their simple ailments, which make them feel better after taking.



In part, the survival of the Lumad in spite of not having easy access to doctors and local health services, is also due to this vast experience and practice with medicinal plants. ALCADEV's clinic supports the practice of traditional medicines and strives to incorporate these into the academic life of the students. Through this, a natural learning relationship exists between the school, the students, and the community as the traditional medicinal plants are shared by the community and the students to the teachers.



Teacher F: (talking to an elder who has joined the community farming activities for the day)
Ambâ, based on our farm plan, this is where we will be planting the sitao and bataw. Let's start cleaning from this point onwards.

Ambâ: *Okay. Just let me gather these wild plants first so I can take them home, then we can start.*

Teacher F: *Those weeds? Why are you gathering those, Ambâ? We can just pull out the weeds and toss these at the sides, then start building the plots.*



Ambâ: *That's right, Teacher F. You can start doing that to the other weeds so that the area is cleared for planting. But this particular weed is what I need. My grandson has kagid which now has become open wounds. This weed is good for clearing up skin irritations and is also good for healing open wounds.*

Teacher F: *Oh wow! That weed... that ordinary-looking weed is a medicinal plant? That's amazing!*

Ambâ: *(silently laughing at Teacher F) Yes, child. It's a weed that has medicinal properties. This was taught to us by our parents, and their parents before them, and their parents' parents...*

Through the years, and with each new batch of students and their families, the array of traditional plant medicine knowledge that ALCADDEV manages to gather grows larger and larger. The teachers consciously condense this knowledge into packets of learning and practice, incorporating these into the Health Education curriculum and the school's activities.

Going to the community farm then additionally means learning to identify particular plants that have medicinal and healing traits. As these are mostly weeds, it is common to encounter these plants when clearing and cleaning the plots for planting. ALCADDEV also encourages planting of the more common medicinal plants (those that are frequently used) in the school's herbal garden, having specified an area for it.



This is particularly useful when students or teachers fall sick with ailments as simple as the common cold, to the more problematic stomach pains and fevers.

Laika: *Mico, Sir R has a fever?*

Mico: *Yes, he's been feverish since before noon. Right now they say his fever is too high, he's getting delirious and is saying odd things.*

Laika: *Oh no. This morning, when I met him, he was going back to the dorm because his stomach was aching. I said to him that it might be because he ate green mango when he just had coffee.*

Mico: *Oh... wait. If you're quite sure about that, let's have him take hilbas (Artemisia Vulgaris L.). That's what my mother would let me drink when I have a fever and stomach ache.*

Laika: *Okay, I'll go to the herbal garden and get a few stalks. We've got lots of those there. You go on ahead to the kitchen and start heating up water so we can prepare this immediately and give it to Sir.*

Activities on the community farm are not only focused on the cultivation of vegetables and root crops. It is also here where students learn to identify which plants have medicinal values, and also how to prepare these plants to be conveniently used. Medicinal plants are identified in the area beside and around the community farm, and gathered to be used and processed. Because of the healthy learning

#TatakALCADEV

I won't forget how I was taught how to love the land; that farming will lead you to correct ideas and root you in collective work and production. What you learn in farming can be used in all aspects of planning and decision-making.

Remolding, weeding and farming becomes natural. You will start to miss it if you miss out on weeding for even only a day.

Net RC



atmosphere in ALCADEV, the institution has gradually incorporated modern ways or methods of preparing and using traditional medicinal plants. Traditionally, *també* (the Manobo word for medicine), is brewed from the bark, leaves or whole plants. Topical applications of *també* would mean creating a poultice from pounded leaves or scraped portion of the trunk to apply on the affected area. Merging these practices with the modern methods of preparation for herbal medicines, the clinic in ALCADEV is able to store herbal medicines and is ready to dispense these whenever needed.

One of the herbal plants especially cultivated in the herbal garden is *lagundi* (*Vitex Negundo* L.). The leaves of the *lagundi* are gathered, washed and cleaned, and dried. These are then processed and prepared to be made into cough medicine. *Kakawate* (*Gliricidia sepium* (Jacq.) Steud.) and *panyawan* (*Tinospora crispa* (L.) Hook. f. & Thomson), traditionally brewed and used as a wash to treat *kagid* (small, boil-like wounds on the skin), are processed and made into an ointment. ALCADEV teachers assist the students through the step-by-step process of creating medicinal products — from identifying the right plant medicines, washing and cleaning of the plants, to the final brewing and cooking process that purifies, sanitizes, preserves and prolongs the shelf-life of the plant medicine. Each dorm has a first-aid team and, under the leadership of the Student Council's Health Committee, are the ones primarily responsible for learning, processing and proper use of the herbal medicines.





*In one of our activities, the whole school (teachers and students) immersed for three days at one of the nearby Lumad communities to help out in their communal farm, and at the same time, learn more about també from the elders. **It was a very enjoyable experience, for the students who were the ones interviewing the elders, for me as I observed how varied the healing knowledge being shared with us was, and of course, for the elders - who were happy at the chance to teach the younger ones.***

The elders pointed out the plants and weeds that could be used for particular ailments, explaining how to use them, and even helped the students sketch the plants on their notepads! When the students returned to ALCADDEV, everyone was so excited for our “show-and-tell” reporting. Each group wanted to be the first one to show the sample of the medicinal plant that they brought with them and share their experience.

- Teacher Mich



While the excited sun hops towards the horizon, the heat wanes and the air is lighter. Weary arms and backs find respite and renewed strength as the heat lets off. A refreshed body, mind and spirit is better prepared and focused to continue working for a bountiful harvest, a better future.







5 HARVEST



In the last century, the Lumad have been systematically displaced from their traditional farming and hunting grounds. Agro-industries such as palm oil, pineapple and banana such as those in Agusan, Surigao and Davao, as well as mining companies in Surigao and Davao provinces have been encroaching on the forests and mountains the Lumad has inhabited, thrived and protected for thousands of years. In more recent times, hamletting, forced evacuation and intensifying military operations by the Philippine military and paramilitary groups (allegedly protecting the interests of the mining corporations) have been at the forefront of the Lumad's displacement from their ancestral lands.

For the Lumad communities at the heart of the Andap Valley, a vast area of high mountains and dense forests with rich natural resources straddling three regions in Mindanao, this situation has brought havoc and death. Decades of fighting for their rights and struggling to preserve their ancestral lands have continually made the Lumad vulnerable to these transnational corporations coveting the natural resources in the area.

They have become aware that those coveting their ancestral lands easily seize and take away portions of these by invoking the Lumad's ignorance and lack of education. Thus, working to ensure the next generations are given access to education has become part of the struggle to protect their ancestral lands. The Lumad believe that with education, they will be better equipped to unite, protect and fight for their

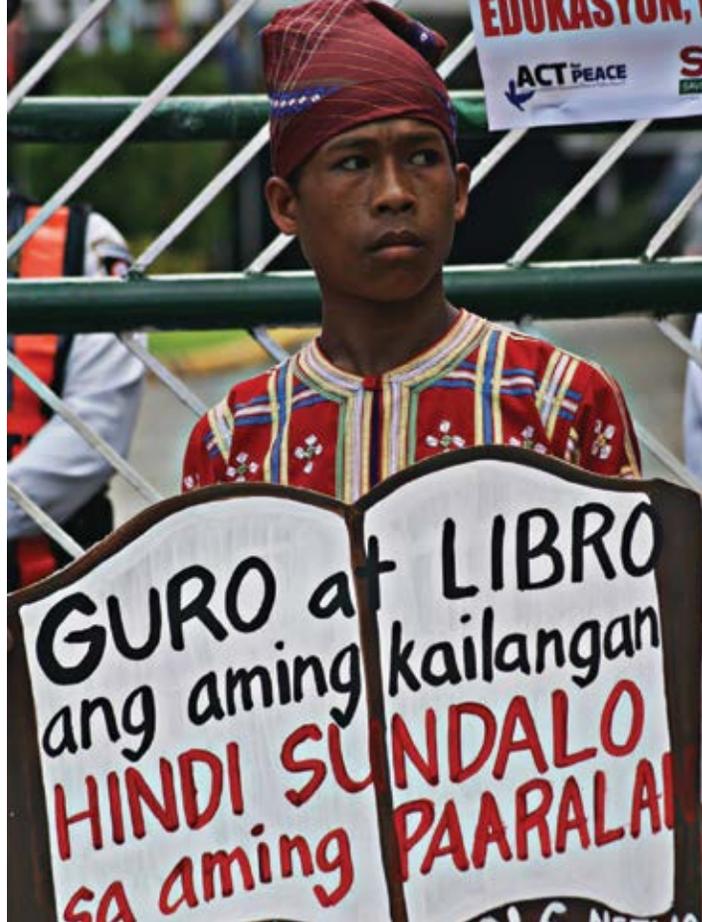


rights and ancestral lands. They could create genuine development for their communities -ensuring the greater harvest. The next generation of Lumad will be aware of their roles as stewards of the land, ready to protect it from those who wish to destroy it for their own selfish desires and profit.

STRUGGLE TO PROTECT RIGHTS AND ANCESTRAL LANDS

Through the establishment of Lumad community schools within the area in the primary, secondary, and even tertiary levels, education becomes integral to their struggles, conditions, and Lumad culture and way of life. ALCADEV Lumad School is one such school. However, efforts at building Lumad community schools have been largely strangled by the government. Currently, more than 178 Lumad schools have been shut down by the government, taking away the educational institutions that the Lumad had built themselves.

Although regular DepEd schools are open to the Lumad in the lowlands, there are two major obstacles to the assimilation of the Lumad into these schools - the discrimination against the Lumad, and the distance of the schools from their communities. Lumad communities are located within the innermost reaches of the Andap Valley while the government schools are located at the town proper. Particular to those Lumad communities surrounding ALCADEV, the nearest secondary level school is more than 15 miles away.



#TatakALCADEV

It was in ALCADEV where I learned about standing on my own and having confidence in myself, and especially standing up for the rights of the people.

Juford Tejero

#TatakALCADEV

In spite of the interest and desire to learn more, the challenge of traversing steep trails and crossing rivers just to reach the secondary school was a huge obstacle. Together with the discrimination, and the added expenses studying at the town proper entails, secondary education was too heavy a burden for the Lumad children and their families.

ALCADEV Lumad School is a response to the desire of the Lumad for their children to gain access to secondary education. A joint resolution of two tribal organizations, Kahugpungan sa mga Lumad nga Nagkahiusa sa Surigao del Sur (KALUNASS) and Malahutayong Pagkabisog Alang sa Sumusunod (MAPASU), and the subsequent assistance of private groups, paved the way for the formation of the ALCADEV Lumad School. Its school buildings and dorms were largely built with the help of the Lumad communities nearby who took the time and energy to build the school building and the student dorm - from floor boards, to walls, to the roofing. ALCADEV is truly a Lumad community school, its seed - the desire to have a secondary school that can cater to the unique character and needs of the Lumad - germinating, sprouting and eventually flowering into a tree that bears many fruits. Many ALCADEV graduates choose to volunteer their time as teachers in other Lumad community schools once they are done with their schooling.

With this, it is no wonder that the repeated threats and harassment against ALCADEV are deeply felt by the Lumad.

In ALCADEV, among others I learned:

- how to get along with my fellow students, teachers and others to be able adjust to different personalities;
- how to develop our farms;
- to develop our culture in order to reflect our current situation, through plays, poems, choreography, Lumad dance and other forms; and
- **to stand in defense of the environment by speaking out to the government about the ongoing militarization of our communities and the continuing lack of recognition of our rights as indigenous people.**

Sagot Lenn



Lumad community schools such as ALCADEV have become symbols of unity and struggle. The curriculum's focus on agriculture gives further emphasis to and strengthens the resolve to resist the intrusions by transnational mining corporations into their ancestral lands. It also gives the strength to protest against the repeated efforts at preventing the operation of community schools. With their consciousness for protecting their ancestral lands, this has led the Lumad to stand and protect their rights and the land's natural resources.

Under the leadership of MAPASU, the Lumad have been consistent and firm in protesting against the entry of transnational coal mining corporations into the Andap Valley. Since the 1980s, these mining corporations have been using all means and efforts, all means and efforts, in collusion with the Philippine government, to gain a foothold and strip the valley of its rich natural resources. Time and again, the Lumad have stood firm in fighting for their rights and protecting their ancestral lands from the imminent plunder by these transnational mining companies. Whereas encroachers use the illiteracy of the indigenous folk to gain foothold on ancestral lands, the Lumad place much value on education and encourage their children to learn the rudiments of reading, writing and counting, and worked to have secondary (and even tertiary) education for the Lumad.

This determination to protect their rights has come at a great price. Lumad communities in the Andap Valley Complex stood together as the



connection between the increasingly militarized zones and the foreign mining companies' brazen forays and activities in the area became prominent. This resulted in their being labeled and targeted as subversives or sympathizers of communist rebels by the military, and even killed point blank by paramilitary forces allied with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

The killing of ALCADEV Executive Director Emerito Samarca on the Lianga campus, as well as Lumad leaders Dionel Campos, chairperson of MAPASU, and Datu Bello Sinzo in their village is one of many similar gruesome experiences that the Lumad have been made to suffer.

(Shouts are heard in the middle of the night.)

Armed men: *Everyone! Come outside! Get out of there!*

Volunteer Teacher M: *What's happening? Who is shouting? Are the third year boys making a ruckus again?*

Armed men: *Stubborn people. Are you really not coming out here right now?!*

Volunteer Teacher M: *Who are you? Wait, wait. I'm on my way to open the door.*

(Volunteer Teacher M opened the door and came face-to-face with the barrel of a rifle.)

Armed man 1: *All of you in there had better get up and come outside right now. And don't you dare run away. If you try to run, you're dead.*



Armed man 2: *What's your position here?*

Volunteer Teacher M: *Sir, I'm a volunteer teacher here at ALCADEV.*

Armed man 1: *How many of you are inside?*

Volunteer Teacher M: *There are two of us.*

Armed man 2: *Come out right now and if you're hiding guns inside, don't dare try anything foolish.*

Volunteer Teacher M: *Oh.. we don't keep any guns here, sir. This is a school.*

Armed men 1&2: (Shouting) *Hand us your phones then get out of the compound. Move!*

Volunteer Teacher W: *Wait, I must go and get Sir Emok. He is at the other building. (leaving to go up)*

Armed man 1: *Where do you think you're going? (hitting Teacher W at the waist with the butt of his rifle)*

Volunteer Teacher W: *I am just going to Sir Emok so he can come along with us. (unmindful of the pain, continues to go to the other building)*

(Meanwhile, Sir Emok, who had been looking out, had seen the armed men hitting Volunteer Teacher W with the rifle butt.)



Sir Emok: *Please, sir... Please don't hurt my staff!*

Armed man 1: *Who are you?*

Sir Emok: *I am the Executive Director of this school. Please be gentle with the staff and students here.*

Volunteer Teacher W: *Sir Emok, let's go. We're being told to leave the compound and go to Sitio Km. 16.*

Armed men 2: *No. You leave, he stays here.*

Sir Emok: *Go... leave me behind. Take the children with you and keep them safe.*

(This was the last time Executive Director Samarca was seen alive by Volunteer Teacher W. The next time he saw Sir Emok, he was lifeless - hands and feet tied up, his throat slit.)

Each time the Philippine Army launches military operations around the Lumad areas surrounding ALCADDEV, classes and school activities and the regular day-to-day lives of the Lumad communities get disrupted. In worse cases, the Lumad communities are forced by the military to evacuate from their homes and farms.

They run away in fear towards safety. "Bombs and bullets have no eyes and ears," whisper the older Lumad as they hurriedly look for sanctuary, taking along with them only a few clothes and leaving their farms and animals

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behind. However, their worry about leaving their ancestral lands unprotected pushes them to go back to their homes as soon as it is safely possible.

This is a struggle and fight that students of ALCADDEV have taken to heart. Each one is aware that simply being a student of a Lumad community school is, by itself, already part of this fight.



We just want to educate our children, because then they may be able to defend our ancestral lands in the future.

- Abiok Ligkaian 'Bai Bibiaon' Bigkay
'Mother of the Lumads', 5th Gawad Bayani ng Kalikasan Most Distinguished Awardee



Darkness swallows the sky as soon as the sun dips under the horizon and it becomes difficult to move without a night light. A period of time after the planting season where good seeds are nurtured and protected, it is now harvest time. Though the dark night comes, a beacon shines from within the hearts of those who remain steadfast and firm against threats to the community and people's struggle.







6 STORAGE



ALCADEV is a Lumad community school. It consciously creates opportunities where Lumad culture and traditions are learned within the school's educational framework. The Lumad way-of-life is reflective of their community and environment - heavily dependent on agriculture, and with a deep reverence for nature and its resources.

Focus on agriculture, as well as Lumad traditions has fostered a healthy learning environment. Instead of a boxed and generic curriculum, a more responsive curriculum sensitive to Lumad culture, traditions and way-of-life is continuously being developed. In the process, Lumad students are able to appreciate and honor their ancestors, and at the same time, acknowledge the importance of science and development for their future.

One of the offshoots of this type of education is the positive appreciation the students have of their indigenous identity as Lumad. Their rituals and clothes are worn, not as appendages or costumes for stage performances, but as expressions of who they are — their rich history, and the unity of their community as they struggle to honor and cherish their culture and protect their ancestral lands.

Fostering the practice and learning of Lumad culture and traditions is made through school activities like community visits and Foundation Day celebrations. Teachers and students schedule visits to Lumad communities nearby and interact with the *datu* or tribal chieftain, as well as with other community elders.

#TatakALCADEV

I learned in ALCADEV that all things can be learned if you are open to learning and if you persevere.

We need to help each other to make our tasks easier. We need to trust and give criticism, support each other to continue in our struggle.

Teacher Chad Booc



The students are reminded to listen carefully, and ask questions about the practices of their elders. Songs, dances and other rituals are naturally passed on in this setting as the elders regale the young ones with their stories and the students eagerly listen and learn.

Teacher M: *Next month is ALCADDEV Foundation Day. We need to start getting ready for this.*

Layka: *Can we visit Indâ again next week? He was singing this old song and I think our group can present this for Foundation day.*

Teacher M: *Yes, we can schedule this. I think Jessel's group can also ask if the elders can teach them the dance they were talking about in our last community visit.*

Jessel: *That's a good suggestion, teacher! We can do that. And I'm sure the elders will be happy to spend time with us and teach us.*

Why are the students so receptive to the old traditions and cultural forms? How has this blended so well into the educational curriculum of ALCADDEV? In part, it must be since ALCADDEV's curriculum has, at present, evolved to go beyond a prescription approach when it comes to teaching about culture, literature and the arts.

Because the stories and songs contain images and practices that the students have grown up with, there is an immediate familiarity and pride that comes with the sense of identity.



From this also springs forth the resolve to cherish what they have at present — their school, their communities, and their ancestral lands on which all of these were formed, developed and nurtured.

PROTECTING THE FUTURE

Access to nutritious food produced in a sustainable and socially just manner — this is what ALCADDEV students together with the Lumad community have been working on. In the past, food was insufficient and supply was sporadic. Sometimes there was food in abundance. But most of the time, there was just enough food to get by each day.

With the establishment of the community farm, the development of sustainable agricultural production bridges the gaps between skills and knowledge. This has meant merging traditional practices with newfound skills which has enabled the farm to produce food sufficient to support the needs of the school and the Lumad community.

Volunteer Teacher L: *Wow! We were able to harvest so much pechay and talong! But... does this mean we are going to eat just pechay and talong every day for this month?*

Teacher K: *You're funny. We have other vegetables, too. And, after the community gets their portion, they will bring the vegetables to the town center so we will have money for salt and soap and other materials we will be needing this month.*



By simply providing a solution to the problem of food scarcity, Lumad community schools like ALCADDEV have contributed significantly to overcoming the scourge of poverty and hunger, a decades-long problem aggravated by the increasing encroachment of foreign mining companies into their areas. The community/ demo farms are meticulously planned and developed by the whole community - students, parents, teachers and other volunteers. It ensures that food production is sustainable, as well as sufficient.

When ALCADDEV first opened its doors to students, it had only ten students. Now, 16 years later, hundreds of Lumad children have emerged from the school ready and equipped to face the future. Directly connected with Lumad communities, more than 90% of ALCADDEV students are serving the community as volunteer teachers, community health workers, and para-agriculturists. They enable the communities to become self-sufficient and have enough food on the table. And they strive to foster unity within Lumad communities, and to be better organized in the struggle to protect their rights and their ancestral lands.



*During the ALCADDEV Foundation Day, we requested the elders to give inputs on Lumadnong sayaw, to teach the paglisag (the particular dance beat that is used during the dance), and also the panawagtawag (the chant that is sung during the rituals). **I would be amazed at how the students were so excited at learning these old cultural forms and traditions.***

***They really put to heart what they were learning from the elders.** We would see the high regard they placed on these cultural forms when they would create their own cultural performances for the Foundation day. These were always well-done and reflective of Lumad culture and tradition.*

- Teacher Mich





Moonlight caresses the Andap Valley, cool and gentle, quietly nurturing the hills and mountains teeming with nature's bounty. Being able to provide for the community's food the whole year round shines importance on storing and preserving produce. Cherishing the community's identity — its culture, traditions, and ancestral lands — protects this generation, and the generations to come.





